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| Speak Up – Kōrerotia Revitalising Te Reo Māori19 February 2020 |
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| Female | Coming up next, conversations on human rights with “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”, here on Plains FM.  |
| Sally  | E ngā mana, E ngā reo, E ngā hau e whāTēnā koutou katoaNau mai ki tēnei hōtaka: “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”. |
| Regan | Tēnā tātou. Tēnā koe e te rangatira i runga i te kaupapa o te rā, ko te reo Māori tērā, ā, tēnā hoki kōrua, e ngā rangatira o tēnā wahi mahi, o tēnā wahi mahi, tēnā kōrua. Ka tīmata pea me tētahi karakia: Tukua te wairua kia rere ki ngā taumata hei ārahi i ā tātau mahi, me tā tātau whai i ngā tikanga a rātau mā. Kia mau, kia ita, kia kore ai e ngaro, kia whakamaua kia tina, tina! Haumi ē, hui ē, tāiki e. Tēnā tātou. |
| Sally | Kia ora, Regan. Ko te “Whakahaumanutanga ki te reo Māori” te kaupapa o te rā. Ko Sally Carlton ahau, te rangatira o te hōtaka, ā, tokotoru ngā manuhiri i te rā nei. Today we’re talking about the revitalisation of te reo. To talk to us today about it, we have three guests in the studio who will be bringing diverse perspectives to this. We’ve got Regan Stokes, who is a kaiako of te reo Māori, and Anton Matthews who is both a kaiako but also involved in a lot of advocacy around it, and Jeanette King from the University of Canterbury, who does a lot of research into the revitalisation of languages generally, specifically te reo. If you guys could all please introduce yourselves and tell us a little bit about why you are taking part today.  |
| Regan | Tēnā koe, e hoa. Ko Mauao te maunga, ko Tauranga te moana, ko Mātaatua te waka, ko Ngāti Ranginui, ko Ngāti Pūkenga, ko Ngāti Ingarihi anō hoki ōku iwi. Ko Kupu tōku ingoa Māori, ko Regan Stokes tōku ingoa taketake. Nō reira, kei te mihi ki a koutou.So my name is Regan Stokes, I’m head of reo Māori at Hagley College. This is my sixth year there and over the last, I guess, seven or so years I’ve been teaching some community classes in te reo Māori as well, kind of on the side. I also do some extra contract work but my main mahi is working at Hagley and trying to put reo into the community when I have some time in the school holidays. So, he pai tērā. Nō reira, kei te mihi au ki a koutou.  |
| Anton | Kia ora i te iwi. Ko Anton Matthews tōku ingoa, he uri nō Te Rarawa me te ika, kei te mihi au ki a koutou katoa.Kia ora, my name is Anton Matthews. I hail from Te Rarawa right at the top of the North Island but currently living here in Ōtautahi with my whānau and I, much like Regan, try to get out into the community and do my bit and try and share our beautiful language, te reo Māori, and our culture (because those two things go hand-in-hand) with as many people as I can. And one of the ways that I do that is by trying to incorporate it into my business - so my whānau, we own a business, a restaurant business of all things - but trying to find ways, creative ways, to weave the language through our business. Obviously we have people that come through our business every single day and if we can share a little bit of te reo Māori when they come and dine in our restaurant then that’s a good thing in our opinion. So yeah, that’s a little bit about what I do. Busy trying to get the language out there in front of as many people as I can.  |
| Sally | Ka pai. What are some ways in which people are exposed to te reo when they come into the restaurant?  |
| Anton | Oh well look, I mean it can be something as simple as just saying “Kia ora” when they walk through the door. You know, you can greet someone when they come through the door by saying, “Hello, welcome to Fush” or you could choose to say, “Kia ora, nau mai, haere mai ki Fush” and you might get a few sideway glances but then that gives you an opportunity to engage and have a conversation and say, “Oh well what I’ve just said is ‘Hello, welcome to Fush’ but I’ve said it in te reo Māori” and that gives you an opportunity and an ‘in,’ I suppose, to engage with the guests or customers and have some dialogue about te reo Māori. And that stuff’s really helpful, I think, because you’re talking with everyday people and I think that’s really where the biggest potential is. If we can engage with just normal New Zealanders and teach them something then that goes a long way to, as you said, revitalising and rejuvenating our language and making it something that’s less scary. That’s my goal really, is just to make it accessible and to normalise it in our community.  |
| Sally | And Jeanette? |
| Jeanette | Tēnā koutou. Ko Jeanette King tōku ingoa. He uri au… Ko Ngāti Pākehā tōku iwi me tipu au i Te Tai o Poutini i Hokitika i te rohe o kati waewae, nō reira tēnā koutou katoa. So yes, I’m Pākehā, I started learning Māori when I was about 15 years old - a long time ago - and actually, I’m a trained teacher like our other two here with us today and I did teach at a secondary school but now I teach at the university and te reo has been my lifelong passion so both for teaching and for researching.  |
| Anton | Jeanette was one of my teachers.  |
| Sally | Oh no way! Regan was one of my teachers! To get us started, why does te reo need revitalising? Why are we even having this discussion today? |
| Regan | He pātai pounamu tērā. I mean we’re all familiar with the history to varying degrees but te reo you know, 200 years ago was the main reo of this country and obviously some things have happened between then and now to change that. Obviously you can go over the history and the Native Schools Act and all of the statistics that kind of followed but I think we’re in a good place now as a country where there is increasing hiakai or hunger for learning te reo and that’s of all iwi. I don’t know if you could both agree with this but I think it’s really cool that everybody seems to be wanting to learn te reo; it’s not just Māori, it’s Pākehā, it’s tau iwi, its people coming from overseas, it’s yeah… I think we’re at a fairly strong tipping point now to actually revitalise it. It’s very easy to think that we’re in a fairly strong place - you can turn on the TV and hear reo Māori or turn on the radio and hear reo Māori - but when you when you look at the actual statistics, it’s pretty sobering in terms of the amount of fluent speakers that we have at the moment.  |
| Anton | To add to that, from a personal point of view, if I think about just myself and then I think about my wider whānau, and I said earlier on, that te reo and my Māori culture go as a pair, sort of like yin and yang, if you lose one then inevitably you’ll lose the other. Because so much of our culture involves te reo - so for example, if you wanted to perform a haka you need te reo. If you want to talk about moko or pōwhiri or any one of our sacred ceremonies, you need te reo in order to have that conversation - so that’s why I say they go together. And for me, if you removed the Māori element out of me, I’d just be a totally different person. So talking about things going as pairs, a big part of me is my culture and who I am and so to lose the language would mean to lose a big part of who I am and a big part of my whānau and so from a personal point of view it’s really important to me that I do everything I can to maintain that and teach my children the language and the culture that goes with that. But then I think on a macro scale, looking at our country, I think it’s really important as New Zealanders even if you’re not Māori to embrace te reo and Māori culture because it really does distinguish us from everyone else around the world - it’s so unique, no one else has the haka, no one else has some of the things that we have as a nation and so if we lose te reo, we’ll lose all of that cultural thread that runs through our country. So from a national point of view, I think it’s really important to do what we can to revitalise all of those things and it starts with the language.  |
| Jeanette | That’s right and as you’ve both said, increasing numbers of non-Māori are now learning te reo and becoming involved. Back in the ‘70s and ‘80s when I was first learning te reo it wasn’t so popular for non-Māori to learn te reo - but also there was a bit of distrust also, I have to say, from the Māori population because at that stage revitalisation efforts were still very fledging but now they’ve been going for a long time. Everyone growing up now is growing up in an environment where we’ve got kohanga reo and kuru kaupapa even if they don’t partake or get involved in that. So te reo is around us and it’s a part of their whole environment and like Anton says, it is part of our wider identity for me as a New Zealander, as a non-Māori New Zealander engaging with the reality of the country where Māori are tangata whenua and so we’re manuhiri (guests) here, I think it’s important. You hear the stories of non-Māori going overseas with their backpacks and then asked to perform some sort of indication that they’re from New Zealand and they’ll try to do a probably not very good haka or a waiata or so on. So it’s been kind of a tokenistic in the past perhaps element that we’ve drawn on to represent us as New Zealanders. So we’ve always felt that Māori language and culture are part of us but I think it’s becoming more embedded and more real and so it is important to all of us to revitalise the language for our cultural identity as New Zealanders.  |
| Sally | Regan, you mentioned that statistically things aren’t looking so great even though, I guess, on a surface level they might seem like things are doing pretty well. Do we have a sense of just how many people speak te reo?  |
| Regan | He pātai pai tēnā. In terms of statistics I can kind of draw off the top of my head without having a rorohiko [computer] in front of me. I know there’s been some issues with the last few Censuses but the ones that I remember is when I went to a Kura Whakarauora Reo which was an initiative by the Māori Language Commission who for a long time have been support kura reo which I definitely think is the best way to learn te reo Māori, the kind of five-day immersion marae programmes and we’re very lucky to have Ngāi Tahu here supporting kura reo in a huge way both for Ngai Tahu and non-Ngāi Tahu people in Ōtautahi and Te Waipounamu. But it was about, I think, three years ago that the Language Commission started doing Kura Whakarauora Reo which was not about learning te reo in terms of “This word means this” and “This is how you say ‘Hi’” and you know all those sorts of things, it was about language use and rather than just teaching people te reo Māori, now I have night classes and you can teach people for a whole year, they come two hours a week and it’s fantastic and by the end of the year they’re pretty strong with their reo. But then of course you send them away in November/December to what is effectively the desert, I think is what Ruakere Hond said, where there’s no reo. That’s kind of what you’re talking about in terms of the normalisation. So I think efforts recently have turned to not just teaching te reo in terms of “Here’s the grammar, here’s the vocabulary” but also teaching how to use it. So what are some strategies that you can take home? How can you make a language plan? And things like that. And at that hui it was pretty sobering in that they said that as of the 2013 statistics, there were about 6,600 fluent Māori speakers within the Māori population. Unfortunately the statistics were a bit better for within Māori populations than non-Māori, but that’s under 7,000 speakers who could speak well or very well - would describe themselves as such. And of that group, there was about 3,500 fluent speakers who used te reo Māori as the primary language of the home, that’s nationwide. So when we look at revitalisation literature, one of the main ingredients that we need to revitalise the reo is tuku ihotanga, so intergenerational language transmission, which means three generations speaking in this case te reo Māori as the native language at home and then when we apply that to… well there’s maybe 3,500 people nationwide who are doing that sort of thing, that’s fairly worrying. That’s not to say that to be a part of this you have to kind of go to full fluency and go OK, my next child is going to be raised with te reo Māori from birth. As Anton said, the normalisation is really important and it’s important to feel comfortable saying, “Kia ora, kei te pēhea koe?” you know, on the street or wherever you are. And that contributes to everything. But in terms of the core work to bring it back as a used, normal, spoken language - we’ve got a bit of mahi to do.  |
| Jeanette | Yeah and home is important, we focused on that and especially Ngāi Tahu with the Kotahi Manu Kāika initiative where revitalising language in the homes. It’s not just the homes - that’s why what you’re doing, Anton, is really important - because it’s homes, neighbourhoods and communities. Because if you’re using te reo in your home, it’s pretty hard to keep that up by yourselves, so to speak, but your example of walking into your restaurant and saying, “Kia ora, nau mai ki Fush,” that’s a really great incentive and you’re immediately normalising te reo but you’re also offering an opportunity for someone who speaks Māori to respond back. Whereas if your first words are in English, well then whoever is entering will probably speak English back and then only perhaps later realise oh they could have been speaking…I had an example like that recently when I caught the train from Kaikōura to Christchurch and the woman who was the guard and I went up to her to get on, and just said, “Oh kia ora” so I started speaking Māori back to her and she was a Māori speaker. Now if we hadn’t started off speaking Māori, we wouldn’t have known that. So it’s getting it out there into the community to support people in the homes as well.  |
| Anton | I mean, I agree with both of those points. As a young father I’ve got a couple of children, one is seven and one is five. Basically the whakarauora, the idea to really try and push te reo through our business, came from exactly what Jeanette’s just said. Because I did make a decision when my child was born, my mātāmua, my eldest to only speak te reo Māori to her and with the exception of pet names like ‘babe’ and ‘darling,’ I really, hand on my heart, you know you can ask anyone, I only speak te reo Māori to them. And it’s hard, it really is difficult. So putting in all of this time and effort at home but then my at that stage, four-year-old daughter would go outside and she would say things to me at home in te reo Māori and then say those very same things in English outside of the home. And this is a four-year-old who is unaware of the Native Schools Act, unaware of all the politics about te reo Māori, but she had figured out that speaking te reo Māori outside of the home wasn’t normal. And so Jeanette’s point is absolutely spot on, that we need both things. We need the stuff going on at home, we need parents and grandparents, that tuku ihotanga, that intergenerational transmission of te reo Māori in the home, is so important because that’s where we spend most of our time especially as tamariki. After that in schools - so if you can get some te reo Māori wrapped around them in kura, even better - but that’s where businesses and organisations need to jump on board and say actually, you know, after school you go to the supermarket or you go to the park or you go to wherever you go, and it’s important to have a te reo Māori presence there. Even if it is just a “Kia ora” because what you said, Jeanette, about starting a conversation and setting that standard at the beginning, it’s really important. It’s sort of like smiling, when you smile at someone they tend to smile back at you. When you say “Kia ora” to someone, nine times out of ten, maybe not quite but you know, you’re certainly more likely to get a “Kia ora” response if you start with “Kia ora.” Whereas if you just say hi… When I jump on an Air New Zealand plane, if everyone said “Hello,” it’s quite awkward to respond with “Kia ora,” you sort of feel a bit silly. It’s almost like you’re forcing it on them. If they say, “Hello, sir” and you say, “Kia ora,” it feels a bit uncomfortable; whereas if they say, “Kia ora, sir,” it’s only natural to respond with “Kia ora” and so I can’t emphasise how important it is. The schools are doing a great job, there are mātua (parents) doing a wonderful job, grandparents doing a wonderful job in the home but businesses, organisations… We need to do our part as well and that’s really what we’re trying to do with Fush is we’re trying to encourage other businesses to say hey, what part does te reo Māori play in your business? because it’s really important to the revitalisation of the language as a whole.  |
| Sally | Perfect. Well we’ll have our first song and then we will get back into what is actually being done by government, by business, by community, in terms of taking up this mantle.  |
|  | **MUSIC BY PŪKANA & WHĀNAU – MAIMOATIA** |
| Sally  | Nau mai ki ti hōtaka tika tangata “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”. Today we’re talking about the revitalisation of te reo Māori and in this segment we’re going to be thinking about what is actually being done. Anton, you’ve mentioned the importance of business getting on board, you’ve mentioned how your business is doing and you’ve also touched on Air New Zealand which I think is a really key example, they seem to be doing quite a lot of leadership in this space. If we could think more about business and community and government, what’s going on.  |
| Anton | Well I could probably start because it’s the space that I work in the most. It’s got to be authentic. A business or an organisation has to want to do it for the right reasons so perhaps looking inward, looking at your staff. I mean, we live in a society now where there are often 20 or 30 ethnicities sitting around the table in a big organisation so you should want to do it for the little guy anyway. If you’re someone who has come from afar to Aotearoa, you actually get quite inspired when you see a board member or someone at the top doing what they can to whakamana te reo because what that does straight away is it sends a message to the minorities sitting around the table that oh, this person actually is taking some interest in te reo Māori. So that’s the first thing. You should do it just to inspire the staff that you have or the people that work in your organisation - but it does need to be authentic and it has to come from the right place. And I think a little bit of education around the history of te reo and the journey that it’s made over the last 200 years goes a long way to helping the people at the top make those decisions for the right reasons. But then I can also put a very, very strong case forward for the commercial reasons why you should want to do this and I’m speaking from experience. We never ever integrated te reo Māori for commercial purposes. Well, I did it for my children, really, because I didn’t want them to not feel like they could be themselves - going back to my earlier point: take te reo and Māoritanga away from me and I’m a totally different person - and I didn’t want my children to feel like they couldn’t be them and their true self in our business. So that was why we created an environment where it was normal and acceptable and actually encouraged to speak te reo Māori in our business. Without knowing the future implications, that has made our business just skyrocket because now we are a face for hospitality businesses in Christchurch who want to encourage and normalise te reo Māori. That’s brought about so many opportunities. Currently I’m talking to a major soft drink manufacturer and looking to put out the first 100% te reo Māori branded soft drink, it’ll be sugar free as well. I’m also talking… collaborating with a tomato sauce company who makes and manufactures tomato sauce to put out a te reo Māori-branded tomato sauce. So opportunities start to come your way. And I’ve said to lots of people, the first bank who stands up and says we’re going over and beyond what we need to normalise te reo Māori in our bank, you’ll get every iwi in the country banking with you. You’ll get every business like Fush banking with you because we want to invest in places where the people get it, they support the same core values that we support. So there’s actually a really strong commercial reason why you should look to embrace te reo Māori as well as the cultural side of things and the feel good side of things as well.  |
| Jeanette | I’d like to talk a bit about what’s happening out at the University of Canterbury because we’ve got a strong bicultural competency and confidence aspect for all our students. But actually you’re right about the leadership, when that was brought in a few years ago, what they also decided was that all the senior people at the university needed to learn te reo, at least a little bit to be able to not only introduce themselves but also every meeting I go to, it’s being opened with te reo Māori even if it’s just very brief: Tēnā koutou. But usually it’s got another phrase added on as well like, “Nau mai ki tēnei hui” and so a little bit. And the top down really does send a message, you’re quite right because everyone is saying, “Oh ok, not only have we got to try and incorporate biculturalism into the curriculum for our students but it’s becoming more popular.” In our reo courses, we’re having more and more staff coming and doing our courses and that’s academic staff, and general staff so te reo is actually gradually seeping throughout the whole culture of the university - and as you say, it starts from the top.  |
| Anton | And that’s powerful, you can’t underestimate that.  |
| Regan | Ae tautoko. I think a really big part of the revitalisation effort that should be discussed is local iwi. Here in Ōtautahi, we’re very lucky to have Ngāi Tahu and Ngāi Tūāhuriri leading a lot of this charge. I personally think that Ngāi Tahu is kind of leading this countrywide. Kotahi Manu Kāika, which you mentioned, is a great initiative - 1,000 homes, 1,000 speakers of te reo Māori in those homes - and the amount of resources and interactive maps and things like kā huru manu is a really great cultural map online that I use a lot in my teaching. We’re very lucky to have a huge thrust from local iwi, whether that’s setting up of kaupapa or kura reo or things like that, yeah, kind of paving the way. So wherever you are - and I think, you know, this is countrywide - wherever you are it should always be led by local iwi and we’ve got a particularly strong example here.  |
| Sally | Regan and Anton, you are both involved in community reo classes – have you noticed over the last few years an increase in attendance? And if so, why now?  |
| Regan | Unfortunately I don’t have as much time for them now as I did which is why it’s great that there’s more and more kaupapa now. But I remember when I started back in 2013, like put out a pānui for a course and suddenly there’s 80 people and you have to find a bigger venue and all that sort of thing. I imagine you’ve had that rarua as well. They always fill up, there’s never enough out there and yeah if I had more time, I’d always love to put more on. It felt back then that maybe there was a rising tide and I think we’re kind of seeing that now. I only put a handful a year now but they always fill up within a few days and it’s fantastic, as I said before, to see not only Māori but Pākehā, tau iwi, a variety of iwi, wanting to come and learn te reo. I think we’re finally starting to get to the point where we’re recognising it as a national language, as you were saying before, rather than something that is only for Māori. And a lot of Pākehā students who I’ve taught have commented and said that through learning te reo, that’s kind of been the missing ingredient that they’ve wanted in terms of establishing their own identity as a New Zealander, as a Kiwi, because of its link to the natural world and the seasons that we have. There’s no other language where you can say for example, “Kei te poho kererū au ki a koe” which is how you say “I’m proud of you”, which means “I have the chest of a kerurū to you.” If you think of the kerurū and how it puffs up its chest is yeah… There’s no other language that is so aligned to our native flora and fauna.  |
| Anton | Look, to answer your question, absolutely. I mean I wasn’t running community classes for a long, long time. We just did it probably just for something to do, you know. By that stage we had translated our menu into te reo and we’d put little table talkers on the tables just to try and encourage people to try and order their kai in te reo Māori and we found pretty quickly that a whole bunch of questions were coming in and they all seemed to be similar questions. People were expressing to us that they were really keen to actually learn this and so we thought ok, we’ll answer all of your questions at once and we’ll put on a class. It was really this simple. It was never planned to be what it turned out to be, and much like Regan said, we put out a pānui, we put out a notice, and we were just inundated. We thought probably 20, maybe 30 people including mum and dad might turn up and it was far more than that and so we had to find a bigger venue. It’s really hard to find time, it takes a lot of energy. The energy isn’t… I don’t mind putting in the energy but time, finding time is really hard. So what I’ve tried to do is I’ve tried to think about how can I best use my time and so I’ve sort of tried to find ways to get a message or a kupu or a phrase or whatever in front of as many people as I can and so what I’m currently trialling is recording videos and putting them online on You Tube and then thankfully somebody at Stuff NZ has picked it up and gone hey this is really cool and they’re happy to publish it as well. That’s an effective way to try and get in a five-minute video, potentially in front of hundreds of thousands of people if everyone tunes in and watches it. Get a message, get a word or a kupu, or an idea in front of a lot of people. So it’s an effective way, an efficient way, to get a message out on mass. I tell you kind of playing with that idea at the moment but certainly if I advertise a class, it’ll be full in 24 hours. There’s a real hunger and desire. People email and talk to me every day: How can I learn te reo Māori, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa is full, what do I do? University classes, as Jeanette has said, are full. Polytech, full. There is an overwhelming desire to learn which is really, really cool and it’s quite heart-warming and it gives me hope.  |
| Sally | This might be a great place to have another song and then we’re going to pick up the idea of teaching, I think, and the importance of actually, I guess, having a formal if that’s the right word, introduction into the language. We’ve got Stan Walker, ‘Tēnē Rā Koe,’ which is one that you had chosen, Anton.  |
|  | **MUSIC BY STAN WALKER – TĒNĀ RĀ KOE** |
| Sally  | Today we’re talking about the revitalisation of te reo. We’re all in agreeance, I think, that things are really, really improving and that’s fantastic to see but he roa te ara, there’s still an awfully long way to go. We’ve been talking about teaching and classes and something that I’m really keen to hear is, do we need people to be taking an active interest or could it be done more like you’re trying to do, Anton? Is there enough momentum there to have it going like that or do we need to encourage people still to be coming in and actively learning?  |
| Jeanette | You need everything, you need to mix it up. Most of us have who have ever tried to learn other languages know that the best way is to actually be attending a class. You can have all the willpower in the world but going along to class gives you a regular commitment. But apart from that, it’s building up the whakawhānaungatanga in the class often and you get a good cohort of people, people that you might see outside the classroom environment. At the university, we’re quite constrained by the way we can teach and that really means that it’s not necessarily the optimal way. You turn up at a certain time, two hour class, we can’t often easily put on sort of wānanga style learning environments although we have been doing that over summer school. We’ve got a wānanga course because we find our students are really, really wanting that opportunity to speak the language and use the language. And we also have a café reo once a week in term time where people can get together and just kōrero because that’s what you say about the normalisation. So it’s not just what’s happening in the classroom, but to have opportunities for people to speak the language and so on. So I think you need everything. Like your video clips, it all adds to it.  |
| Regan | I tautoko. I’d love to say we’re at a stage where we can leave this kōrero and hear people speaking fluent reo Māori on the street - and you do hear that more and more but it’s not like a normal enough occurrence yet. So if we were at that stage then yeah, you could just kind of walk along the street and pick it up by osmosis. Like people say the best way to learn Japanese, for example, is going to Japan rather than attending lot and lots of classes. So I think we’re still in the kind of active stage where we need people that are hiakai, that are keen to go to classes or use the internet or videos or Māori TV or things like that to kind of get the ball rolling. Then it’s about creating speaker communities. For example, if you go to a marae and meet somebody and te reo Māori is the first language that you speak together, then you’re way more likely to use reo Māori when you see them again. It’s kind of like what you were saying with the Air New Zealand example, if you hear “Kia ora” you’re way more likely to respond with “Kia ora.” So we still need people to be going to classes but increasingly we need to create those language communities and that happens naturally around schools, around businesses, around iwi and so on, but yeah, everything and more of it is, I think, what we need.  |
| Anton | Yeah absolutely and I agree, I think Jeanette’s point about whakawhānaungatanga is really important because after you leave your class, then what? We often see this during school holidays with tamariki, their reo proficiency drops right off and then they have to kind of make up for that in the first couple of weeks of the new term. One of the wonderful things that classes do is that it does force relationships with other like-minded people so after your class, yeah you can go and have a coffee and continue on the conversation. Te reo is a spoken language. I mean you can write it down but really, if you’re not speaking it and you’re not practising it, it’s really, really I would say almost impossible to try and remember. You have to be able to keep your tools sharp, so to speak, and your tool being your tongue and being able to actually speak it regularly is the best way to learn te reo Māori and hear it as well. So yes, I think you do need to go to classes. The stuff that I was sort of talking about, the video clips - that’s an extra, that’s just something to kind of do when you’re sitting on the wharepaku or bored and sitting on your couch waiting for a meeting. Then you can kind of tune in and learn something but look, if you’re really wanting to learn te reo Māori there is no substitute for trying to immerse yourself in it as much as you can. Find like-minded people to talk to, have the motive for a cup of coffee and practice. Go to places where it’s normal to hear te reo Māori and just practice. Volunteer at your local kohanga reo and just practice. Do what you can to try and immerse yourself into te reo Māori. There is a whole portion of people out there who have already made up their minds, they’ve already decided I wanted to learn te reo Māori and they’ll go and seek out opportunities and ways to learn it. What I’m really trying to do with that mass media stuff is to try and shift people who haven’t decided that it’s important to them yet and try and introduce them in a really comfortable non-threatening way to te reo Māori and make it something that maybe they should be interested in learning. There are a whole bunch of people teaching awesome classes, there’s no point in trying to reinvent the wheel, they’re already doing a great job. But there’s also this big group of people over here who aren’t even interested. What can we do to try and spark their interest and get them to kind of take notice of what’s going on over here? That’s where the videos that Stuff produces, that’s where they’re really useful because they do actually get in front of the masses who perhaps haven’t even given it any thought yet. |
| Sally | Are there benefits of going into the classroom and learning the culture at the same time as the language? |
| Jeanette | Well culture is always embedded actually in any language, really, that you go to learn. Just even at the basics: one of the first words you might learn about introducing members of your family, you’ll discover that Māori have quite different ways of thinking about family relationships. Words like tuākana and tēina, older and younger sibling of the same sex as yourself - see, you can’t even say it very easily in English. So immediately you realise oh, there’s a different way in thinking about the world, in fact thinking about my family and how I relate to my family. So culture just is embedded in any language and te reo is no different. And that’s right, so you’ll be learning all about these sorts of things as well when you’re learning te reo.  |
| Anton | What Jeanette’s saying, and I totally agree, is that it gives you a window into a Māori way of thinking, it’s almost like putting on a new pair of sunglasses and you see the world differently. You know, when you start to learn te reo Māori, you’re learn about pepeha or mihi mihi. If you’ve never been exposed to pepeha or mihi mihi, you’ll think why on earth are these people talking about mountains and rivers and oceans as if they know them personally. And so it does give you a really unique view into a Māori way of thinking. When you understand the connections that Māori people have with things like for example, mountains and rivers and so on, then you can start to understand some of the political conversation that goes on at the moment around freshwater. Why are Māori so up in arms about freshwater? Oh I get it now. Because they’ve always been connected to their waterways and so on and so forth. So it does start to fill in some of the pieces of the puzzle, you know, the wider big picture. So it does give you a really, really unique and valuable insight into Māori ways of thinking and that can help in all sorts of areas: political, education… We can really start to solve some of our big issues as a culture and as a society when we start to understand the language and the culture. So that’s probably what I’d say about culture and language going together.  |
| Regan | You can’t learn reo without tikanga, they go hand-in-hand, and the classroom is a good space for people to start out their journey in te reo Māori but it’s great to see a lot of people continuing that and ending up having… you know, going to the marae to learn or on their own kind of journey that takes them beyond the classroom. But certainly you have to learn one with the other, they’re inseparable.  |
| Sally | I saw somewhere that some recent research has suggested that for te reo to survive, it’s not just anyone who should be learning -although obviously the more people who learn the better - but young Māori need to be learning te reo for it to really survive. Jeanette, have you come across that sort of idea in your research at all?  |
| Jeanette | It’s true that you want a really solid body of speakers who are Māori, who are going to be speaking Māori. Non-Māori aren’t… The language doesn’t belong to us, it belongs to Māori and it’s their language so even though others like myself might use it, we do need increasing numbers of children like Anton’s. But the more and more people, I think, that do learn the language, I think that overall it is encouraging for Māori as well to learn te reo. It makes it a safe environment hopefully that people think, “Oh gosh, te reo is valued.” And that’s, I think, part of what you were saying about the businesses before, Anton. Like you said, if there was a bank that was going to really put a huge commitment into te reo, they’d have so many people on board. So when you feel valued as a person, that your culture is valued and your language is valued, I think that has huge benefits for our whole society.  |
| Anton | And ‘value’ is a funny word because there’s lots of ways that you can place a value on it. But I think to Jeanette’s point, if you’re a young 15 / 16 / 17 year old thinking about what am I going to do for the next 20 years of my life and you want to be a lawyer but there are no law firms saying we really value te reo Māori, that doesn’t give you a lot of hope. And so that’s where I think you’re absolutely right to say that we do need young Māori to embrace te reo Māori but we also need our wider community to really place value upon te reo Māori because that will give those younger people hope and determination to actually carry on persisting and learning te reo Māori because they can see oh, there’s a light at the end of the tunnel. I can be a lawyer in that law firm because that law firm really values what I can bring to the table in te reo Māori. Or if you don’t want to be a lawyer and you want to be a builder or you want to be an electrician or you want to run a restaurant, whatever, if you’re really one of those kids that sits in the class doodling all day, how many tā moko artists are there who make a great living, put food on their table by learning tikanga and te reo around tā moko. So we need our young people to see a variety of pathways. One thing we haven’t talked about yet, and it’s a little bit of a taboo topic, but the reason why we don’t have as many te reo Māori teachers as we could have is because there are far more lucrative opportunities out there. Where if you’ve grown up and you’ve got this wonderful skill and you’ve dedicated 10,000 hours or more learning te reo Māori and you’re faced with I can go over here and make X amount of dollars teaching it. That’s probably the best pathway to revitalising the language but actually I could add a zero to that and go over here. At the end of the day, we’ve all got to put food on our table. So I think if we really want to talk about that word ‘value,’ one way that you put value on something is economic and we do need to actually understand well why is it that - and no disrespect to anyone in the room - but why is it that you can get paid a lot more to go and teach in a tertiary institute versus a kohanga reo when actually kohanga reo, which is our young babies… teaching them would probably do far more for language revitalisation than teaching adults and I’m not saying it’s too late to learn when you’re an adult but actually if you want to have maximum impact, teach the babies. But no one is teaching babies because you can put far more food on the table doing what I do which is going and teaching corporates for stupid amounts of money. So there’s another way to value te reo Māori is actually saying hey, let’s pay these people what they deserve and get them working in the places that we know we’re going to get the most impact. Because I was a teacher once upon a time and I’m not anymore.  |
| Regan | I agree that through the youth is one way in and the younger generation now, I think, is a really strong generation in speaking te reo Māori. We’ve got a lot of rangatira coming up through the ranks and leading their own worlds with the skills that they have. One issue around that is that obviously kohanga reo and kura kaupapa are a great vehicle for learning te reo, tikanga and cultural identity but the vast majority of our Māori tamariki aren’t in those whare. So most of them are in schools such as Hagley where I teach, Kura Orakei or mainstream schools, and I think there’s quite a responsibility on mainstream schools to actually give proper reo Māori programmes and genuine value given to those programmes and so on.I think it’s something that we need to improve on but are improving on as the years go by. I think the early childhood sector is really strong in using the reo Māori, primary school is improving, secondary depends on where you are, and then obviously there are tertiary pathways as well. But if we can give a positive experience in learning te reo Māori to our young people, you know our teenagers and even younger than that, then they will carry that and they will hopefully go on into fluency but with everybody that you teach, you know if it’s a beginning class, like anything there are….we’ve all got busy lives, we love to all become fluent but there will be a small proportion of that beginners class that will make their way through all the difficulties of learning a language to get to the fluent stage and that is a big question, I think, we have as a nation. We don’t have enough beginner classes, not at the higher end. How do we keep those intermediate and advanced speakers stimulated and learning and kura reo fills a huge gap there but again kura reo… you know, will fill up in one day. I always say to my ākonga at Te Puna Wai o Waipapa, at Hagley, if you’ve studied reo Māori up until Year 13, this is a great pathway for you, you’ll never be looking for a job if you’ve got te reo Māori whether you want to be a teacher, lawyer, doctor, environmental scientist, social worker, reo Māori adds something to all of those things and in the corporate world, as well, I think it’s really starting to rise as well. In today’s world it can be difficult to find work but if you have te reo Māori, that really is something quite unique.  |
| Sally | Kōnei te waiata tuatoru: Ruia, ‘Te Onekura.’ |
|  | **MUSIC BY RUIA, TE ONEKURA** |
| Sally | One thing I’d really like to touch on is, Anton, you were in the news not that long about Wattie’s using New Zealand place names to promote their product, tomato sauce. And I guess in one respect you could say well this is an example of people trying to normalise te reo but on the other hand it can also be seen as quite disrespectful. And I know every year someone is saying ho ho Hokitika and people not appreciating that kind of use of te reo. So I guess while we’re saying the more use it gets the better, there are also some dangers in misappropriating the language as well. Any comments on that would be great.  |
| Anton | The Wattie’s thing, once again, wasn’t meant to turn into what it did but it did. I mean it’s normal to mispronounce the name Wanaka. I don’t think there is an English name for Wanaka. Everyone calls is Wanaka except they don’t pronounce Wanaka correctly, they pronounce it Wanaka and so what that Wattie’s campaign was doing was reinforcing the mispronunciation of that particular place name. If they had run a campaign around the correct pronunciation Wanaka then that would have been cool. And in fact less than a week later Burger Fuel hit the media - and this is nothing to do with me although they did name a burger Fush & Chups - but the particular fish that they were using was hoki and most New Zealanders would pronounce that fish hoki as in hoky-poky and so when Burger Fuel played on that mispronunciation and wrote hokidoki or something like that or okidoki or something like that anyway. And so they were playing on once again the mispronunciation of the word hoki and encouraging people to continue to mispronounce it as hoki. Then to their credit, probably because it turned into a big deal, they later came out… they didn’t change the name of their burger but they had a wee blurb below it which educated the public how to say hoki, hoki and so I think they pronounced it ‘hawk key’, ‘hawk’ like a bird, ‘key’ like a car key and so that was actually a nice sort of turn of events because they acknowledged that actually we got it wrong saying hoki, that actually encouraging New Zealanders just to continue mispronouncing te reo Māori is not cool in 2020 and actually what we could do with our platform is use this as an opportunity to educate the public about how to pronounce the word hoki in this case correctly. I do take your point that more isn’t always better but more of correct is absolutely better. More of incorrect is never going to be better. So using the word hoki in your promo is fine so long as you’re telling people how pronounce the word hoki.And Wanaka… You know, I drove down to Wanaka last weekend and we drove through Omarama. Now I stopped in Omarama and I spoke to people and not one single person pronounced it Omarama, it was always Omarama. Now my knowledge around Omarama is that it’s actually Ao mārama and it’s an old whare wānanga, it’s a sacred place of learning. There’s a lot of history wrapped up in that name and so when someone says Omarama, oh, I don’t know, it’s kind of like a gut punch when we know that Omarama is actually Ao mārama and Ao mārama was a whare wānanga, one of our original institutes of higher learning. It’s a really sacred place, a lot of our rangatira and tohunga worked and walked those streets and those lands and so when someone says Omarama it’s sort of like disrespecting another sacred place. Like ANZAC: New Zealanders wouldn’t stand for the mispronunciation of ANZAC but we’re quite happy to bastardise Wanaka and Omarama or Omarama. So that’s what that was all about.  |
| Sally | To finish up then, what would you like to see happen in terms of revitalising te reo? What would be on your wish list?  |
| Regan | I was at a kura reo a few years ago and Te Haumihiata Mason was teaching us and she’s a former Māori Language Commissioner and she raised a really good point. She was like, we have lots of lovely islands around Aotearoa and it’s been proven that for language to be strong and healthy and survive, it needs to in some cases have some isolation. So she was like why don’t we make Makoia Island in Rotorua reo Māori only? Or Matakana Island, where I’m from in Tauranga, reo Māori only? And hypothetically that would be great - very huge issues if that was going to be an actual thing that happened - but you know on a more realistic front, it would be great to see speaking communities created where reo Māori is the main language. So if we had a developer who created a small co-housing development or something and you needed to be on your journey of learning reo Māori there and you had like a mixture of fluent speakers and learners and so on, that would be I think a really strong move that we could make. That’s a huge pie in the sky pipe dream but that’s the main difficult with reo Māori. If you want to learn Spanish, you can go to Spain. If you want to learn Japanese, you can go to Japan. If you want to learn reo Māori? We’re already here … but everyone is speaking English. So beyond kura reo, like five-day immersion courses, there isn’t a place that you can go where you can only speak reo Māori and we definitely are getting there - like Fush is a really good example where you can go into a business and use reo Māori and encourage to use reo Māori - but in terms of speaking communities, it would be lovely to see within the next decade somebody with a lot of money, more money than me, set up something like that and that could be a government/iwi collaboration. Yeah I think that’s kind of the missing ingredient and you wouldn’t want to turn it into like a tourist place where you know anyone can kind of walk in off the street and go oh I want to speak Māori today but just creating those pockets where it’s encouraged. And more teachers, if I could conjure up many more kaiako tomorrow, that would be great because it’s very difficult filling positions.  |
| Anton | And I’d love to see all of those things as well. For me personally, I think I’ve decided in my mind that I’m going to spend the rest of my life ensuring that my kids can talk about their entire world in te reo Māori. I really want them to be able to chop and change between te reo Pākehā and te reo Māori comfortably. It’s not something that I was able to do and I still struggle at times, I can’t describe to you how an insurance policy works in Māori, I can do it in English. I can describe how a mortgage is structured in te reo Pakeha, I could not begin to tell you how to do that in te reo Māori so I’m still on that journey myself. My dream is that my kids could tell you how a mortgage is structured in te reo Pākehā and te reo Māori. To have that level of proficiency in te reo Māori that they’re able to talk about their entire world. And so that’s probably my main focus, is my two tamariki - and I can probably say now, I’ve got another one on the way so it’ll be three. My focus is my whānau, my immediate whānau. And then I think probably on a macro scale, just do what I can to normalise the language. At the moment when I walk through the supermarket speaking te reo Māori to my children, people look. Not in a bad way necessarily - I mean some of them might, but that’s alright - but people look because they go oh that’s unusual, I wasn’t expecting to hear te reo Māori in Hornby today or in Wigram today. So they’re looking because they’re curious. I suppose I want to change that. I don’t want people to look, I want people just to go oh yeah, no big deal, heard that before, I’m used to hearing te reo Māori every day. At the moment I think in Ōtautahi where we are you might hear it once a week if you’re lucky depending on where you hang out but I want people to hear it several times an hour and kind of go oh, it’s just part of who we are now. Whether I can talk about my entire world, maybe, maybe not, but I’m used to at least hearing te reo Māori being spoken. I’m quite capable of picking up the phone and saying, “Kia ora, kei te pēhea koe?” Have some basic conversation in te reo Māori.  |
| Jeanette | You know the government’s got the aspirational aim of a million New Zealanders being able to have just a basic conversation ability, like you said, at least, by the year 2040. That is a huge aspiration but this is the time in my life - and I’ve seen a lot in the whole revitalisation history over the last 40 or so years - that I really do think that we might be close to the tipping point that you both mentioned before and you know, if we’re going to get a million New Zealanders, well the Māori population is what 600,000? Well we need a whole lot of non-Māori speaking it too. It’s really great to see the increased interest and we just hope with the normalisation that’s really going to strengthen both the quantity of reo that we hear around us and the quality, being able to get the depth for the people who really want to take it to the ultimate level.  |
| Sally | Well, kua pau te wā [We’re out of time]. Kia ora, kia ora, kia ora. That was an amazing conversation. Thank you so much for coming in and sharing your very diverse perspectives but for the same aspirational goal.  |
| Regan | Tēnā tātou. Hei whakakapi, ka karakia: Kia tau ngā manaakitanga a te mea ngaro ki runga o tēnā o tēnā o tātou kia mahea te hua mākihikihi. Kia toi te kupu kia toi te mana kia toi te reo Māori, ka tuturu, ka whakamaua, kia tina, haumi ē hui ē tāki ē.   |