

Tiana Pēwhairangi Trego-Hall and Lily Kay Matariki O’Neill in conversation with Anna Hinehou Fleming and Verity Armstrong: Rangatahi from Te Ipu Taiao – Climate Crucible, NZAP Conference 2021

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RANGATAHI

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Abstract

Ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi — The old fishing net is replaced by the new fishing net. This whakatauki reminds us that our rangatahi, our young people, as our next generation, are the ones that will take the lead. The following kōrero emerged from the rangatahi panel which Tiana and Lily were part of at the NZAP’s Te Ipu Taiao Climate Crucible hui in March 2021. We received much feedback and gratitude around the indigenous perspective that each young person brought with regard to the current climate crisis, and so we asked them if they would be interested in a follow up interview that could be published. As Aotearoa’s next generation, we were interested to further explore their experiences and feelings as indigenous rangatahi living in Te Ao Hurihuri, our ever changing world.

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Whakarāpopotonga

Ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi. He whakamaumaharatanga mai tā tēnei whakatauki ko ā tātau rangatahi, ā tātau taiohi, te reanga whai muri mai, ngā kaitātaki mō apōpō. I puta mai ngā kōrero e whai ake nei i te rōpū rangatahi i roto nei a Tiana rāua ko Riri i te hui a Te Ipu Taiao Climate Crucible hui a NZAP i te marama o Poutū-te-rangi 2021. Tino koa, tino maha ngā kōrero a ngā taiohi i whakahokia mai e whakaputa ana i ō rātau tirohanga mō te āhuarangi mōrearea ōnaiane. Nā tēnei ka pātaihia rātau mena ka aro ake rātau ki ētahi uiuinga, ka tāia nei pea ā tōna wā. Nā te mea ko rātau te reanga e piki ake ana, e tino kaikā ana mātau ki te whai haere i ō rātau wheako me ō rātau whakaaro — ngā taiohi tangata whenua e noho ana i roto i tēnei Ao Hurihuri, tō tātau ao e kore nei e mutu te hurihuri.

Keywords: climate crisis; rangatahi; whenua; indigenous.

Introduction

Ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi
The old fishing net is replaced by the new fishing net

The above whakatauki gestures towards the role of rangatahi as leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand, now and in the future. The following kōrero, which was undertaken via Zoom, emerged from the rangatahi panel which Tiana Pēwhairangi Trego-Hall and Lily Kay Matariki O'Neill were part of at NZAP's Te Ipu Taiao Climate Crucible hui in March 2021. We engaged in this kōrero several months after the conference, and further explored Tiana and Lily's experiences and feelings as indigenous rangatahi living in Te Ao Hurihuri, our ever-changing world.

Anna: Tutawa mai i runga
Tutawa mai i raro
Tutawa mai i roto
Tutawa mai i waho
Kia tau ai te mauri tu
te mauri ora ki te katoa
Haumi e, hui e

All: Taiki e.

Anna: Kia ora koutou. Thank you for coming. As I said, I think it'll be really neat if we can just have a kōrero similar to the one we had earlier on in the year. I'm really interested to hear what your thoughts might be and some of them might have even shifted or evolved given so much has happened since March. Maybe if we just start with one of our opening questions which is the same way we started back in March. What is your sense of how young people are being impacted currently by the climate crisis?

Lily: I think, just in a general sense, not just indigenous youth, but all young people have grown up with that fear factor of the effects of climate change because the first climate change reports came out back in the seventies but I think they only started being taken seriously at the turn of the 21st century. A lot of us have grown up with that. I'd call it a bit of a shadow over not just our experiences day-to-day but our futures. I think that has been a major contributor to climate anxiety and I think also it feels quite a deep passion in a lot of young people to move for social change and invest in renewable energies and giving land back and all that type of stuff.

I think that we are a generation, that it's our job now to fix it, we don't have any other choice. Like I said back in March, as an indigenous person, I don't think of it as a responsibility but I do think of it as a privilege. I think it's my privilege to be able to restore whenua.

Anna: That puts quite a different spin on it, doesn't it, being able to see it as a privilege rather than just this responsibility that's been left to you.

Lily: Yeah.

Tiana: I think also a lot of indigenous voices are being heard now so our values, our whaakaro such as mana motuhake are being recognised by Pākehā now; it's not about me and you, it's about us as a collective. I think that's what a lot of young people nowadays are taking on board and are more willing than their predecessors to work with indigenous people to find solutions. They're listening to us and I think that's a great thing. I just wanna tautoko what Lily said.

Lily: It's become less ethnocentric, Eurocentric. Obviously, we still have a long way to go but in the past it's been western knowledge systems of ways and knowing and doing and everything else. I think indigenous knowledge systems are being valued more in a sense because people are finally realising the value of indigenous knowledges, particularly around climate change. I know in Australia at least, with backburning to prevent bush fires, that's an indigenous practice that was ignored which resulted in centuries of devastating bush fires. This year, after the 2020 bush fires, they've finally brought in indigenous elders and indigenous knowledge systems into Government enterprises to lead backburning which has resulted in, I can't remember the exact statistic, but 40% less spontaneous bush fires. I think that's just a small example of prioritising diverse knowledges and histories and ways of knowing and doing and existing in the world.

Verity: I was wondering how, for both of you, what experiences from your lives really brought you to the passion for thinking about climate change and what your connection with that is?

Tiana: Growing up I always heard the phrase, "If you're born Māori your life is already political from your birth." Knowing that, even though I present as a Pākehā

European but growing up in Te Ao Māori, that was something that came naturally and something that I grew up with. As I've talked about previously in my publication, *The Politics of Toheroa Soup*, I was only seven when I was going out and collecting traditional kai moana to feed my whānau and I know that's the reality for a lot of rural Māori who depend on Papatūānuku, Tangaroa for their kai. It's something that is in their lives daily, weekly, and it's just ingrained in them that I suppose urbanised Māori don't have to think about as often. When you've been brought up like that, you already have an awareness of your surroundings, "I can't get those mussels, they're too small," or "My garden's looking a bit empty, I need to go and weed the garden or help her to grow." You become dependent on your natural resources. I think for me that was always embedded in me because I was fortunate enough to live in an urbanised setting but also in a rural setting where I went home often.

Going up to my Nan's for summertime, she didn't have water in the water tank just to have a shower; we went to the creek to go and have our showers and our baths and our wash. That's been happening for generations, before Pākehā came with their water systems. I suppose my answer to that is it's always been there, having that in our consciousness. Even having a rural marae away from the cities, our kaitiaki, our kaimahi that work on the marae, they need to know how to operate a marae without running water or without certain utilities that you do have in the big cities. It's always been there.

Lily: I think that's so true that when you're born Māori or indigenous it's just part of who you are. Your identity is politicised immediately and climate change is another one of those big things that is turned into politics when it's actually a human rights issue, frustratingly. I completely agree with that. Obviously, I grew up in Australia, I grew up in a really urbanised setting and I would go home to my whenua to visit my whānau and get those insights that I don't get from daily life about who I am and my cultural identity. Going home helps put your life into perspective as yourself, as being part of a bigger picture and I think that is just so integral to Māori identity that is so different from European. It's not as individualistic, everything you do as a Māori is for your community. I'm yet to meet an indigenous person who is self-serving which I think also contributes to the passion that indigenous young people have for climate change justice.

Because I didn't have the opportunity to spend much time on my whenua, I have interacted with mostly indigenous Australians and I found that different community of young Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islander Australians that wasn't accessible to me through my own culture just because I didn't grow up in Aotearoa. I have that when I need it but it's just not around me. The way I look at my indigenous heritage and my identity is more through a global lens of community and the commonality of experience between all indigenous peoples around the world.

Verity: It was about your personal experiences and how that brought you to this kaupapa

which I think you've spoken about really well. What I'm hearing from the both of you is the importance in both of your lives about the collective and about being part of something that is more than just yourselves and your nuclear family and something about being connected to a sense of something that's much larger than just us. I wonder if that idea is in there, too, about conversations about climate change or potentially where we find ourselves now, that idea of being connected, woven together, not just with the people around us but with the world around us, too. I wonder if anything in that resonates with either of you?

Tiana: I don't wanna generalise. Te Ao Māori, we are holistic people. We believe Papatūānuku is a being, our atua are beings and we're supposed to treat them accordingly. Papatūānuku is our mother, she provides for us. In our world, we don't bomb mothers, we don't set fire to our mum — I'm talking about the climate change now. Because of our world view, that shapes how we treat our environment, much differently to how Europeans or the western system have treated the environment over the years.

Because we believe Papatūānuku is a being and our atua, the world around us, are living things, we treat them as such. Even before the concept of climate change or pollution came to our shores, before Europeans came to Aotearoa, I think that sense of taking care of her was always there, or taking care of Te Ao has always been there. I don't think that's changed because Pākehā have come up with the words climate change or that we need to now suddenly take care of our world. For Māori, that's always been there and if anything what has changed is the way we consume the products of Papatūānuku and Tangaroa. Over-fishing, over-using resources — something that we didn't do traditionally but now because of new world views that is something we've gotta consider, our whānau's over-digging toheroa, we've gotta say something to them. That whānau over there, they're planting pines, what's that gonna do for our forest? Plant traditional kauri or pōhutukawa. I guess my point is I've always seen it as Māori have always been traditional caretakers even before climate change was a concept. I see it as there wasn't a need for climate change to be a concept because there wasn't a problem for us.

Lily: It just made me think about how we can't really begin to heal Papa if we aren't healed ourselves. Just for instance, for urbanised Māori or people who are at the beginning of the Te Reo journey or you're trying to identify yourself and articulate who you are in a colonised society, it can be hard to enter into that big community space of fighting climate change, finding that passion, if you're so disconnected from your identity culturally in any sense, really. I think what's really insidious is that colonisation is still doing the work to dispossess Māori, indigenous people all over the world and hold us back from our truer selves, I suppose you could say. In a lot of circumstances, I know some of my whānau that are stuck in the hamster wheel of colonisation and the substances they've brought to us and the priorities that they've brought to us, it's quite sad. I think that's where a lot of the tension arises; we're all running at different speeds as individuals and we're trying to

rebuild our cultural identity in a society that it feels like it doesn't want us to almost. I think that can be a real challenge in terms of restoring whenua.

Tiana: Add on to that, I feel like Pākehā do pick and choose when they want to engage with Māori, and only engage with Māori, I feel, when it is on their terms or when it is of best interest. That doesn't apply to everyone but even conversations recently, I've heard on social media, a woman wrote, they were talking about the use of the word "Aotearoa", "I'm not Māori, I'm a Kiwi," this was a Pākehā woman, and the response was, "'Kiwi' is a Māori word," and anyway the argument just kept going and going. I do feel like there is mātauranga that does need to be protected when it comes to engaging with not just Pākehā, but others outside of our culture in terms of our traditional practices and how we take care as well, because I feel that our culture isn't for sale. It's not for everyone to have access to; it's for Māori and, yes, you may be privy to certain information but at the end of the day, it wasn't your people affected by your actions, it wasn't your people's whenua that was taken away and built for housing for many people that aren't from this whenua. I think there does need to be recognition of historical injustices somewhere as well and that people can't expect to come to us for all the answers or what they want from us without giving back to us, I suppose. Reciprocity is what I'm trying to get at.

Lily: Yeah it's been quite paternalistic. Like they're doing this to protect you but really it's just restrictive.

Tiana: Even DOC at the moment up here in Northland, under the guise that Māori aren't using their whenua, DOC is coming in, the saviour, saying, "We'll take Māori land and put it under conservation." To me, that's still colonisation, whether for a good thing or a bad thing. That's not your land to take, that is private Māori land and whatever guise you come under DOC, Government, "You need a new road," that is still a form of colonisation. Their argument is because we're not using the whenua. Just because you're not seeing us build a house on the whenua or some commercial buildings, doesn't mean that it's not in use. Even if it wasn't in use, it's still not yours to take but that's what's happening up here.

Lily: Yeah, it's like they use the word "conservation" as an excuse. Just paint it with a broad brush of 'we're helping out' but it's just under a new name, I think, it's just colonisation in a terrible disguise, really. It's awful.

Verity: It's heart-breaking and I think it's so true Lily, what you're talking about, that disconnection from culture and from self. I know that one of the earlier speakers was talking about the idea of climate crisis having emerged because of a general disconnection throughout the world and how the idea of capitalism has come in and disconnected us from ourselves and, as you say, with colonisation that's happened for Māori and for indigenous people — that disconnection from their culture and how important that connection has to be and has to be totally

integrated. I wondered, for you both, thinking about rangatahi now, what you see as the task for your generation?

Lily: Big question.

Verity: Huge question, isn't it? Now that we've done our bit!

Lily: The word that just came to my mind was probably "healing", in a lot of senses. I know still in discussions of climate justice and social movements around that when I'm in spaces with a lot of young people, it can be difficult to come to a conclusion about what our targets are because it's so intersectional. Or I should really say, it's not quite intersectional enough in the sense that a lot of Pākehā youth in those spaces are still, not their own fault, just have been raised in the Eurocentric kind of 'land can be owned' ideology that a lot of POC youth don't recognise as an important factor- so it can be hard to have those discussions in a diverse group because, depending on your cultural background, you have different priorities. Which is why I think that the more connected we are to ourselves and to our culture as Māori, the more we can do to help our Papa in healing, which really starts with healing ourselves and our people and communities.

I don't mean that to sound segregational because we should all definitely be coming together but there is that point where you have to draw that line between actually this is ours and ours only. I think it's just gonna be one of those really long, difficult conversations that we just have to keep having. It's probably more damaging to just throw your hands up and go, "This is too hard, I am too exhausted to have this conversation anymore, I can't do it." It's unfair but it's always indigenous people at the front lines defending land that's already been taken from us once. We're doing the work and we just have to keep going, I think. Just a lot of difficult discourse and rearranging of priorities.

Tiana: I think Lily summed that up perfectly. I think we need to start with ourselves first as people, as Māori, before we can go to Government and say, "Hey this is what we wanna do." If we're not all on the same page, we've got one waka here and then another waka at the back here trying to catch up or have opposing opinions. I think the more that we can work together, heal together then I think we can create a better world for everyone.

Lily: We're only as strong as our weakest, right?

Tiana: I think it's evident, not all Māori are on the same page and that's okay, you don't have to be on the exact same page at the exact sentence but as long as the heart is there for the kaupapa and that we know that we're there for the kaupapa. In this case it's climate change. That we're here to better ourselves and to better our world. How we go about bettering the world may be different from the people over here but if it's gonna create the same outcome then that's all we can hope for.

It might be controversial but even with COVID at the moment, I know Māori who are on the fence about getting the vaccine and then other Māori who are all for it and then those that are completely against it. Again, that has to do with historical injustices, the flu pandemic, for example, in the early 20th century. I do think that Māori rightfully have hesitation towards the Government and are sceptical about Government initiatives to help us because of what they've done in the past. I think that's fair, too, but, as I said, if we can all get on the same waka or on different waka but get to the same destination, then I think we can make the world a good place.

Anna: Do you have anything you wanna add to that, Lily?

Lily: I've been seeing a lot of that kind of stuff on Facebook, especially with my Māori whānau around Aotearoa. A lot of the responses I found, especially on the internet, from Pākehā Kiwi, is they go straight to judgement which I find really challenging to interact with because there's clearly that disconnect of understanding the history of Aotearoa. I think a lot of the time it's brushed over with this- we're a team and everything's fine, we have Māori words for all the Government- and it's really easy to forget for Pākehā in Aotearoa the legacy of the violence of colonisation is still around and it's in living history, it's happening now. I think there needs to be more understanding for Māori perspectives, especially around this topic. This is just a great example about vaccinations, of course there's going to be distrust but I think blaming Māori for that distrust is the wrong approach. I think that it should be — What is the Government gonna do about it? They should be the ones responsible for fixing that relationship, not Māori, and I think that it's disgusting that Māori are blamed for that relationship. Sometimes it feels like Māori are doing 80% of the work, more than that, to heal themselves and it should not be our responsibility to do that.

Anna: I'm wondering if we start to bring it to a close. I think one of the parts that I really liked about what you said before, Lily, and what we've all talked about, and it's a very psychotherapy kind of idea — is that disconnect of the self and what happens when that's at play. I think what you acknowledge is when you've got that kind of rupture then this is what comes from that — we end up in different crises and different states of change. If we start to bring it to a close; is there anything that you two would like to end on or any thoughts that you feel like you'd like to finish off with? Potentially what your hopes might be?

Lily: I'd like to speak optimistically. I think the healing work that we need to do is 100% about decolonisation cos no matter what angle you look at any crises Māori or indigenous people are facing, if you take enough steps back, it'll lead to colonisation. I think healing starts with ourselves and I think it would be awesome to live in a world where the priorities of the Government are in line with the priorities of the people of that whenua.

Tiana: I think Lily wrapped it up pretty on point with that one. Ideally, I would like to live in a New Zealand, in an Aotearoa where Te Tiriti is being upheld 100%. Whether or not we're gonna get there, that's the big question, if we're ever gonna get there. The only way to improve it is if, I suppose, Pākehā are able to meet us at our level, are willing to hear what we have to say and take on board our needs and our wants, to mend those relationships of colonisation. Until then, we've got a lot of work to do, both parties. Māori, healing ourselves and, I suppose, the Government, the rest of Aotearoa, being willing to hear us and actually listening to us cos you can't solve everything on your own.

Anna: Verity, did you have anything?

Verity: I just wanted to add that when you said that, Tiana, I was thinking, there were a lot of Pākehā and people from overseas as well I know, listening to you both at the Climate Crucible and I think were really hearing you, and inspired about what you had to say and how valuable and important it is for the future. I really want to thank you for that too.

Tiana: I don't wanna come off anti-Pākehā, not at all, I am Pākehā myself, I'm Māori and Pākehā. I do think, like Lily said, that is a big thing- decolonising ourselves, cos for a lot of Māori you either present Māori, you don't present Māori, you've been brought up or you haven't been brought up in Te Ao Māori so I do think that is a very big challenge for us. I don't wanna come across anti-Pākehā but please listen to us.

Anna: Kia ora. Kia ora kōrua, thank you very much again. It was really great to be able to hear from you both and your thoughts and ideas which just have such a depth and truth to them, so I'm really excited that we get to bring something else from you. The response that we had from our Climate Crucible talk was that people are I think hungry for this perspective, and I was just thinking when you were talking, Tiana, maybe it's about non-Māori to maybe not be joining us on our waka but at least being able to come alongside so that we can reach the same point rather than going wiwi wawa away from each other. Kia ora kōrua.

Anna: Poupoua ki runga
Poupoua ki raro
Ki taku aroaro e
Kia mau, kia ita
Kia ita, kia mau
Kia tu, kia tu
Tau ana, tau ana
Haramai te toki
Haumi e, hui e

All: Taiki e!



Tiana Pēwhairangi Trego-Hall, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Whātua, Tainui iwi and of the Numangatini people from the Island of Mangaia in the Cook Islands. Tiana graduated last year from the Auckland University of Technology with a BA in Māori Development and Māori Media. She is continuing her studies this year and is currently doing a PGDIP in Health Science. She has spent her life between Auckland and Kaihu, a little settlement in Northern Kaipara. In these communities, she is filling her kete with knowledge from kuia, koroua (elders) and whānau. She hopes to one day utilise the skills gained from her education to better the lives of whānau, hapū and iwi in Te Tai Tokerau.



Lily Kay Matariki O'Neill, Rangitane, Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi. Lily is in her final year of study at the University of Sydney, studying Art History and Indigenous Cultures, with an honours thesis in Indigenous art making pre and post colonisation. With a passion for curation, Lily is currently a Youth Collective Member at the Art Gallery of New South Wales with future plans in the study of Indigenous art curation and making overseas. Growing up in Eora Country/Poihakena (Sydney) and returning home to Porangahau, Waimarama and Danniverke, Lily has connected to whenua and tikanga, growing every year.



Anna Hinehou Fleming (she/her/ia) is of Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine, and Tūhoe whakapapa and also connects to South London in England. She was born in Tāmaki Makaurau and continues to live there with her whānau alongside Te Wai o Taiki. She is a registered psychotherapist and a member of Waka Oranga, National Collective of Māori Psychotherapy Practitioners and the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists, Te Rōpū Whakaora Hinengaro. Having worked in various health and social services for over 15 years, Anna's therapeutic approach combines her professional and personal experiences and has a focus on attachment and developmental theory from an indigenous Māori perspective. Now based at the Department of Psychotherapy and Counselling at AUT, Anna enjoys being a part of the journey of training psychotherapists and providing an indigenous focus within the University space. Contact details: annafleming.therapy@gmail.com



Verity Armstrong is a Kai Tahu woman from Aotearoa New Zealand. She also has strong connections to clans MacKintosh and Armstrong. While her whakapapa is from the bottom of Te Waipounamu in the stunning Oraka/Aparima area, she grew up in Tāmaki Makaurau. Verity worked as a social worker in the area of childhood trauma, and then trained as a psychotherapist through AUT. She worked for an organisation specialising in domestic and sexual violence, and is now in private practice, specialising in sexual trauma. She also has an interest in sex positivism, relationships and love. Verity joined the rūnanga of Waka Oranga after experiencing their support and wisdom throughout her training and beginning years as a psychotherapist. Verity is married to her partner of many years, and has three tamariki. Her experience of mothering and being in relationship, and all of the learning this involves brings her a wealth of experiences, feelings and growth. Contact details: verityarmstrong@gmail.com