

Fashioning our own whare: a rangahau journey

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There once was a girl with no voice. She had a kind heart and carried a kete with her which was old and had a hole in the bottom. She lived with a whānau who she loved but she wasn't really sure if she belonged. Her calling was to help and support the whānau, but she was too whakamā to speak, and felt ashamed of her old, broken kete. Although she loved everyone around her and did what she could to help and support them, without a voice her influence was limited.

One day her whaea told her about a new calling—one that could be done alongside her old one—and asked the girl if she would accept it. She did. She was frustrated with having no voice, and wanted to see if a new calling would help her become more brave. With the new call came a new whānau—not to replace the old one, but to add to it. And the new whānau brought new knowledge and new spaces, and new challenges. The girl with no voice drank up the knowledge, stepped into the new spaces, and took on the new challenges as if her life depended on it. She gathered harakeke and used it to fix her broken kete. She wondered why she hadn't thought to do that before.

With the new knowledge came new kupu, which she rolled around her mouth and tasted. Some were salty and others were sweet, but they all made her hungry for more kupu, and she said so. She didn't even realise that she had spoken. She was so busy in the new spaces, jumping, stretching and running, that she didn't stop to think about the sound her voice made as it echoed in the spaces, getting louder with each utterance. The new challenges were daunting at first, but she loved the hikoi and as she walked she picked things up off the ground: a story here, a waiata there, a whakatauki, a poem... As she took them in her hands they felt familiar, and she realised they had been in her kete long ago.

With gratitude she collected them and put them back into her kete. She uttered karakia of thanks, and wondered aloud to herself who else might have a broken or empty kete. She went to find out. And as she walked, she sang.

In 2007, the Tertiary Education Commission established the Research Capability Fund which was intended to support Wānanga with increasing research capability in their institutions. Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (TWOA) put into place a plan to establish Kaiārahi Rangahau who would be based in each rohe with the purpose of “developing and supporting both emerging and active researchers” (Te Anga, 2008). As with all new initiatives, the establishment of this position created unique challenges and a steep learning curve for those of us who took up the wero and stepped into the new role. Towards the end of our first year as Kaiārahi Rangahau,

we travelled together to a story conference in Melbourne, Australia, and determined to write the story of our journey thus far. It is this story, or rather our individual stories, interwoven like muka in a whenu, which provide you with a view of something greater than its individual strands—our learnings, experiences, insights and emotions as first-time kaiarahi rangahau.

He Whakapapa

Maku anō hei hanga i tōku nei whare

I shall fashion my own house

nā Kīngi Tāwhiao

The Rangahau Strategy at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and indeed TWoA as a whole draws strongly on the above whakatauki. *I shall fashion my own house*. We build our own whare, in our own way, so that it best suits our people. The whare, a metaphor of New Zealand's oldest social institution," has been used as a framework for conceptualising and operationalising rangahau at TWoA (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2007). Rangahau, while often equated with the term "research" and while sharing many characteristics with the commonly held notion of research, for us is a uniquely indigenous concept. Rangahau has been described as "original thought, inquiry and wisdom" (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2007), but for TWoA also includes the idea of old knowledge in a new time, or the (re)claiming of "(k)new knowledge" (Edwards, 2009) and the development of our engagement with and capability in rangahau as individuals, as an institution, and as a people is a strong movement within TWoA.

Kaiārahi Rangahau were tasked with the responsibility to:

- Develop and increase staff capability in rangahau (including rangahau methods based on indigenous epistemologies and worldviews that inform indigenous ways of knowing);
- Generate an increase in completed rangahau projects based on tikanga and āhuetanga Māori;
- Generate an increase in completed, high quality rangahau outputs and outcomes that inform teaching and organisational practice.
- Enhance learner outcomes resulting from improved knowledge surrounding teaching and learning practices and;
- Build rangahau capability so that TWoA can actively and fairly compete for Performance Based Research Funds (PBRF).

These responsibilities were to be fulfilled by conducting the following activities, among others:

- Support with bibliographies, references etc
- Produce at least five rangahau outputs produced from each region
- Collect and record rangahau activity which is completed and ongoing in the rohe

- Support with rangahau proposals for academic upgrades i.e. Thesis and PhD proposals
- Support with internal contestable fund applications and other rangahau funding applications if needed
- Develop and deliver Rangahau training initiatives for regional staff
- Guide staff on the PBRF process and required documentation

And all this was to be done alongside our fulltime positions as Kaiako, Academic Advisors, and Kaiako Matua, while being rangahau active, and at all times conducting ourselves within the recently articulated kaupapa wānanga framework. Kaupapa Wānanga is an articulation of Wānanga ways of knowing, doing and being which support Te Tirohanga Whanui of TWoA, which is the conscious pursuit of mauri ora:

Kia whai 'Mauri Ora' i nga mahi katoa.

That all activities of Te Wananga o Aotearoa actively support learning journeys that seek to maintain, enhance and advance Mauri ora - conscious well being.

In action, Kaupapa Wānanga consists of four takepū which are “a tool for embracing and inviting te ao Māori practices, thinking and behaviours” in all we do. Ngā takepū are: Kaitiakitanga—to care, responsible trusteeship; Koha—making contributions of consequence; and Āhurutanga—safe space, to make the world a better place; and Mauri Ora—wellbeing, realising fullest potential” (Hunia, Pohatu, & Ngāpō, 2009). Āhurutanga was created for us as a team (six Kaiārahi Rangahau, our own mentor,” and two other rangahau kaimahi) to travel to Melbourne, attend a story conference, and simply get away from all the distractions in our hectic lives and just *get some mahi done!*

The inspiration we felt in this space meant that, when asked to write 500 words each about our own journey as Kaiārahi Rangahau, our voices were varied, colourful and deeply personal. The call to write “about our journey” was received in the way it was given—not necessarily literally or explicitly about the journey. Some narratives were written in the first person, others were not. Some talked of our recent experience travelling together while others gave a much broader view of the past twelve months or even further back. Some stories were told transparently while others were metaphorical. Some authors, like the kumara who never speaks of his own sweetness, were more comfortable writing about their own mentors, leaving us to read the story hidden between the lines to learn of their own journey. Some accounts appear on the surface to be altogether unrelated to the author’s journey, but at the same time are representative of a pivotal moment in the journey, and the growth achieved along the way. Having taken all this into account, however, what we get is a deep, broad, emotional as well as critical insider view of the journey of TWoA’s first kaiārahi rangahau, how we influenced the journey, and how that journey affected us.

Te Haerenga

—My Research Journey,” by Thomas Tawhiri

<i>Tenei au, tenei au,</i>	<i>Here am I, here am I,</i>
<i>te hokai nei i taku tapuwae</i>	<i>Swiftly moving by the power of my karakia</i>
<i>Ko te hokai-nuku</i>	<i>Swiftly moving over the earth</i>
<i>Ko te hokai-rangi</i>	<i>Swiftly moving through the heavens</i>
<i>Ko te hokai o to tipuna</i>	<i>the swift movement of your ancestor</i>
<i>A Tane-nui-a-rangi</i>	<i>Tane-nui-a-rangi,</i>
<i>I pikitia ai ki te Rangi-tuhaha</i>	<i>who climbed up to the isolated realms</i>
<i>Ki Tihi-i-manonoI</i>	<i>to the summit of Manono</i>
<i>rokohina atu ra</i>	<i>and there found</i>
<i>Ko Io-Matua-Kore anake</i>	<i>Io-the-Parentless alone</i>
<i>i riro iho ai</i>	<i>He brought back down</i>
<i>Nga Kete o te Wananga</i>	<i>the Baskets of Knowledge</i>
<i>ko te Kete Tuauri</i>	<i>the Basket called Tuauri</i>
<i>ko te Kete Tuatea</i>	<i>the Basket called Tuatea</i>
<i>ko te Kete Aronui</i>	<i>the Basket called Aronui.</i>
<i>Ka tiritiria, ka poupoua</i>	<i>Portioned out, planted</i>
<i>Ki a Papatuanuku</i>	<i>in Mother Earth</i>
<i>Ka puta te Ira-tangata</i>	<i>the life principle of humankind</i>
<i>Ki te whai-ao</i>	<i>comes forth from the dawn</i>
<i>Ki te Ao-marama</i>	<i>into the world of light</i>
<i>Tihei mauri ora</i>	<i>and so it shall be!</i>

My research journey in Te Wānanga o Aotearoa begins with a tauparapara passed down from our tīpuna. It tells the story of Tane-nui-ā-rangi, the progenitor of mankind and his journey to the heavens in search of knowledge. In a metaphorical sense this ancient chant seeks to explain how the ira tangata came to know things from both the earthly and spiritual realms passed down from te ira atua. The tauparapara reinforces the view that nothing is ever static and although the destination may be unknown, it is the journey and the story gained from the journey that enriches one's experience of life.

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa has its own mauri ora; it enhances and brings to life the aspirations and visions of Māori and the culture and values that underpin who we are. TWoA is a vibrant and dynamic Wānanga and although we have faced challenges we are on the cusp of an exciting period in our development; one of change and transformation. The creation of the Kaiārahi Rangahau position is part of this transformation, and rangahau is at the forefront of our movement forward. Under Government legislation we are the kaitiaki of Āhuratanga and Tikanga Māori, and rangahau is a key component of our kaitiakitanga to preserve indigenous thinking and knowledge.

We are a young academic institution only twenty five years old and although we may not have the academic research history of mainstream universities, we are a Wānanga with a Māori worldview that is dynamic, unique and indigenous to Aotearoa New Zealand. We offer new and fresh perspectives into an academic world which can in my experience regurgitate and recycle old thinking. We give our academic partners an alternative way of thinking that is creative and innovative and a direct link to indigenous thinking that enhances a way of being. Universal truth and a Māori way of being is evident in our values and our applied Takepū (applied principles) that naturally direct our activities, our actions and behaviours. This enables us to shift to states of innovation, participation and contribution (Kaupapa Wānanga). The Takepū are alive and practiced through-out our Wānanga this cannot be duplicated in a laboratory, a language lab or in a thesis.

My image of a "researcher" was rather draconian; some intellectual locked away in a dark corner, working on some random idea that they were passionate about, producing a paper that would gather dust on some discreet library shelf. The Kaiārahi Rangahau in TWoA was far from that image. The role was to build meaningful relationships, raise rangahau awareness and identify possible activity that would contribute to build TWoA-wide rangahau capability.

My initial reservations about being a kairangahau were based on what I felt was lacking as a mainstream researcher in a university. A good friend made me realize that in reality, I'd been engaged in rangahau for years and didn't even know it, as a performer, composer, tutor and judge of kapa haka, and as an ākonga of Māori weaponry, whakapapa, hapū and iwi history, whaikōrero and oratory skills and Te Reo Māori.

What my friend made me realize is that in TWoA I could contribute and koha back. I knew then that I am in the right place and doing what I am passionate about: being and living Māori.

Thomas speaks of Wānanga, a space in which ako occurs. A space about hui, kōrero, sharing of knowledge, and growth. He describes his change in understanding of what research and rangahau are, and of how he can contribute to the whānau—how he does bring skills and understanding and experience which is of value. He also speaks of being and living Māori, and Wānanga is an intrinsically Māori space, in which values and ngā takepū are key. In Wānanga, our kete are filled, as was Thomas’.

Whaowhia te kete Mātauranga
Fill the basket of Knowledge

—Ngā whakaaro o roto - reflections from and within” by Brigitte Te Awe Awe-Bevan

When Tāne climbed to the uppermost heaven to obtain ngā kete wānanga he was helped by the weaving together of ngā hau. Ranga comes from the word raranga. Ranga and hau are hence brought together to form the word “rangahau”, which could be referred to as one of the first research projects undertaken (Rogers & Te Awe Awe-Bevan, 2008).

From hui, wānanga, conferences and academic forums in Christchurch, Ohāki, Wellington and Palmerston North, to storytelling in Melbourne, the past 12 months of my journey as a Kaiārahi Rangahau at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa has been a continuous circle of ako; sharing, searching, finding, and learning.

I have observed the skills of my colleagues in their communications and sharing of information, building up the rangahau capabilities within staff of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa in their own respective rohe; and seeing where my practice can be improved within my rohe. Great relationships have been formed, and I feel very humble to be amongst such talent and intelligence. Furthermore, my own role as a kaiārahi rangahau in the Papaioea rohe has observed the incredible pūkenga and talents of staff - all of them unique.

Beautiful compositions portraying topics of the day, histories of the past and visions for the future are being composed, re-composed and exposed, presented in the beauty of te reo Māori; portrayed and expounded in the splendour of whaikōrero, karanga, kapa haka, mōteatea, haka, poi, waiata and waiata-ā-ringa. Artwork providing historical and contemporary overtures are being created and re-created and exhibited continuously. Abstracts and papers towards conferences, workshops and publications further illustrate indigenous thought of tikanga Māori, āhuatanga Māori, and āhuatanga ako.

These enormous talents emerging and being exposed through rangahau are only the tip of the iceberg and will continue to be portrayed and grown in the tapestry of time as abundances of ngā kete wānanga, that will overflow with the unique knowledge that is revealed. Bringing together the work of staff as a collective towards the development of rangahau culture within Te Wānanga o Aotearoa to me, has been a humbling learning experience.

The term whānau is a metaphor for a collective of people striving towards the same goal. For me, my colleagues are my whānau: kaiārahi rangahau, all Māori kairangahau, indigenous to Aotearoa, collectively recognising rangahau as Māori world views and truths (Tawhiri, 2009). We guide and support each other through ongoing rangahau and the use of electronic and kanohi ki te kanohi wānanga as we strive towards the same goal. Time spent together as a whānau is a rarity and therefore a tāonga, and weaves together intelligence and passion, sharing visions for the future of indigenous rangahau ā whānau. Expressions of tino rangatiratanga and indigenous world views are passed on to others to provide understanding, and we as kairangahau continue to journey and use rangahau, wānanga and ako as platforms to guide, learn and reflect from and within.

Brigitte's story has a strong theme of whanaungatanga: whānau as a collective group on a journey together; whānau as peers supporting and learning from one another; new relationships formed and others strengthened. The term "whānau" to describe these relationships is fitting especially in the context of the Kaiārahi role and the tuakana-teina relationship. Tuakana and teina are siblings—one older and one younger, whether in age or experience. The relationships built with our peers, our "whānau," extend beyond the collegial and become familial, and through these relationships we share responsibility and we find strength.

Ehara i te mea, he kotahi tangata nāna i whakaara te pō

It is not the case of only one person who shares this responsibility;
several people should be credited for the event in question

—Memorabilia" by Leilana Harris

My first thoughts when given the privilege to attend a story telling conference in Melbourne were excitement and doubt. The excitement was caused by the prospect of experiencing the beautiful, colourful, ancient aboriginal culture. Little did I know that the only taste of aboriginal culture I would experience was an aboriginal man walking his baby in a pram. The doubt was a little voice in my mind, saying, —Can't you just go to the pā to hear stories? What a waste of time! Telling stories is what our people DO!"

My final thought when leaving Melbourne, Australia would not be excitement or doubt but rather, —unforgettable in every way.”

We were greeted by a raven perched on an airport fence which for me was very welcoming. Amongst all of man’s creation, God’s creation would steal the show; a beautiful pitch black raven smiled against a bland, concrete setting.... I was absolutely convinced that the winds and the lands of Australia had felt the presence of people from a sister land, and our visit was being sanctioned by the ancients who had sent a raven to welcome us on to their whenua.

The conference was held at a remarkable, historic convent. I could see that its walls held a multitude of stories. As soon as I walked through the gates, I knew this would be an experience I would never forget.

It was obvious from the introductory session that my take on the idea of a —conference” was about to change. I found myself continually comparing my past conference experiences with this story telling conference. What I expected would be story telling from an indigenous aboriginal perspective, turned out to be indigenous experiences from another land—a land I would never have related the word indigenous with... England.

The next two days would challenge my belief systems and open me up to a world I never knew existed. Well maybe I did, I just turned a blind eye to it. I tasted a culture that was something out of my ordinary’—a culture that would colour me in and go outside of the lines. The richness that was shared in all of the kōrero was amazing. I was being inundated with stories from people from all different spaces and places and I loved it, I truly loved it.

And not only was I affected but my contributions impacted on others. Who would have thought that my take on Cinderella would excite people? That’s when it became apparent to me that no matter what land, culture or background you come from, you have a story to tell and your story is relevant. This visit gently reminded me that we all have a story and that the need to tell that story to the world with unconditional love is imperative.

Our sister land waved us goodbye with her warm wholesome winds and Papatuanuku welcomed us home with open arms.

Leilana’s story gives us insight into āhurutanga. It speaks of a space being made, provided, and accessed, and describes the profound effect that space and the experiences in it had on her. Her growth in this space has shaped her as a kaiārahi rangahau and opened her to myriad possibilities: Conferences don’t always fit into the conference —box.” Stories have power. Not just Māori ones. Not just indigenous ones. Given this āhurutanga, Leilana spread her wings and took flight in a very short time.

He manu hou ahau, he pī ka rere
I am a young bird, a chick just learning to fly

–My Mum” by Kahutoi Te Kanawa

Never before in my life have I felt such a void as when my mum passed.

In the first few minutes after being told of my mum’s passing, I was overcome by the knowledge that she would not have to suffer anymore. Then in the days to come during the tangihanga, it was evident that her loss to our family, community, hapū, iwi and the nation would be felt.

She truly left a legacy of stories. We, as a family, have our own stories about her, but hearing stories from other people gave an insight into their association with her and how she touched them so deeply. As thousands attended the tangi, they were saddened by her loss just as much as we were. Their tributes gave us further insight into the care, love and joy she attributed to other peoples’ lives. These were moments in time. Moments she gave to others in which she shared her knowledge and skills willingly; from her only surviving sibling who talked about their childhood, to the friends, weavers, artists, educators, kaumātua, kuia, cousins, and even the homeless child that saw her as a mother figure.

I was overwhelmed at the sight of so many people attending her tangi to pay their last respects. These stories will forever live on in my memory. Here was my mum, resting peacefully and deservedly so. She is tired now and has lived a lifetime of loving, giving, sharing and kinship that can be passed on. So how does one receive this knowledge she leaves behind to pass on? The recipients of this knowledge and skill have a great responsibility now to keep the legacy alive and to rekindle the hopes, dreams and aspirations of what my mother left behind for us to continue on with.

As we adorned ourselves with the cloaks she made for each and every one of her children, our whāngai and Dad, this showed without doubt her lifetime’s work and love for us. This is a feat in itself, to have each member of her family adorned with a cloak. This is a true gift of aroha and honour.

Wearing our cloaks to honour mum, as we proceeded to take her to her final resting place, was a sight that many people who were in attendance will never forget. They talked about that for days, and said that they would probably never see this again in their lifetime. Although we as a family were aware this is a rare sight to see, especially today, once again Mum elevated us, even in death. I am fortunate to have learnt some of the skills that have been left by her and will treasure this for the rest of my life and will continue to pass this on. However the stories that we heard about our mother from other people, reminded us, that “unity brings strength.” My Mum tried to do that with many people she associated with, and we feel that loss.

Kahutoi’s story invokes powerful images of koha. The koha of korowai made by a mother for her children. The koha of knowledge and skill passed on through generations and shared

with community and country. The koha of love expressed by a nation at the passing of a treasured tohunga raranga. And that koha can now be seen in the work that Kahutoi does as a Kaiārahi Rangahau. This story also shows that being given the opportunity to write was a koha for Kahutoi, a place to express her loss and grief and start to reconcile herself with them. In return she gives as a koha to us, her story. Her mother's koha to her now becomes her koha to others, and the legacy continues.

Te ohākī o ngā tāngata mātua

The bequest of the ancestors

"...and they lived happily ever after." by Shelley Hoani

This is the 'fairytale' ending that many of us may recognise from our childhood. It is just as familiar as the infamous words 'once upon a time.' But just as not all stories end with happily ever after, not all stories start like a fairy tale, either. My story, this story, begins with a text message and four simple yet life-changing words: "Aunty passed away tonight."

Aunty passed away tonight and with her goes a lifetime of memories and experiences yet to be spoken, yet to be shared. But in the days that follow those that are left behind remember with fondness the many scoldings she meted out and the feathers that she ruffled. With tears in our eyes we laugh as each of us recounts a memorable moment or a favourite expression and then collectively and as if on cue we break out into a waiata, one of her many favourites. United in our loss, comforted in our memories and consoled by our stories, we drift back and forth between the past and present, ever mindful that our futures are forever changed.

Aunty passed away tonight and I think to myself where to from here? I haven't just lost an Aunty I've also lost my mentor and my guide. Once she stood beside me guiding my karanga with her reassuring voice and a lifetime of experience. But now she silently leads the way as my karanga heralds her spiritual return 'āwairua nei' to the homestead where she lived and loved. How do I honour this great woman who took me under her wing and introduced me to tikanga and āhuatanga Māori? How do the words of my karanga find their way to the surface when I can barely breathe, when my heart is so heavy? I have no answers, all I know is that life goes on and if she were beside me today she would tell me (in a loving yet firm voice) to 'hære tonu; 'to keep going.

Aunty passed away tonight and as I watch my cousins around me I now realise that I am not the only one whose life she influenced. "Mā te wā e tohu" was a favourite expression of hers, "time will tell," she would say, and in that exact moment I know that this is one of those times that she spoke of. With that knowing comes the realisation that I am not alone, that we are not alone, and along with that also comes the remembrance of another gem that she shared with us during her lifetime: "i runga i te aroha me te rangimarie" – "in love and peace." As

I look back on my life's story perhaps this is the 'happily ever after' that speaks to me, that guides me and in the end prepares me for the text message: –Aunty passed away tonight”.

In Shelley's story we sense mauri ora. We sense the peace and wellbeing she finds as she recognises the koha that have been given to her by her beloved aunty. What a powerful epiphany to recognise that the aunty who has passed on also prepared Shelley for her passing? That in a time of such loss and grief, there is recognition that through her teachings, this aunty contributed to Shelley's own well-being, and because of those contributions Shelley is well, even in such a difficult time. The story is rich with symbols of wellness—the karanga, the ability to hold fast to the teachings, the whānau's ability to sing, spontaneously and collectively, as though their aunty were still here singing along with them.

Whāia te Mātauranga hei oranga mō koutou
Seek after learning for the sake of your wellbeing

[untitled] by Te Kapua Hohepa-Watene

Once upon a time, or rather, E ai kī ngā korero, there was a beautiful blue waka called 'Te Wānanga o Aotearoa'. This waka travelled up and down the country and anyone could jump on board. The challenge was to take the first step. To make this step less threatening, Captain Bentham and his crew created two big yellow safety nets called 'aroha' and 'manaaki'.

Once aboard, each passenger was given a bright red scarf with the word 'whānau' on it. Whenever they wore it they felt safe, warm and happy. They knew they could approach any of the crew, who were wearing silver 'kaitiaki' scarves, for anything that they needed.

Along the journey there were some scary taniwha who tried to stop the waka but when the crew put up their 'kotahitanga' sail, the taniwha were left behind. The waka also had several flags flying on it which were the colours of the rainbow.

One day some of the crew members called 'tewhānau manaaki rangahau' (later known as 'te kahui rangahau') decided to put up a new purple 'rangahau' flag beside the others. It was very heavy, so crew members from different parts of the waka were called upon to help them out. These crew members were called 'kaiārahi rangahau'. Fortunately, some songs had already been composed for the flag raising ceremony, including: –'Foroa te Nukuroa', –'Wānanga 2020', –'Te Toi Awhio', –'Te Toi Roa' and –'Te Mata Wānanga'.

After attending other flag raising conferences around the world, including a meeting called –'WIPCE', they realised that everybody on the waka could participate in the ceremony in some way or another. Some could compose waiata, others could perform 'haka', while still others could carve or paint the flagpole, weave some strong ropes, or write a book about it.

The day finally came and the flag had been coloured with bright _koru‘ designs and smelt crisp and fresh.

As the flag was being raised a bird called _PBRF‘ landed on it and asked if it could change the shape and colour of the flag. The kaiārahi were not happy with the proposed changes and said –Kāore. If we changed the flag it wouldn‘t look, feel or fly right,” so the bird flew away.

As the flag got higher, some of the crew became weary. The kaiarahi had a korero with the whānau and discovered that everyone needed more time and space. They also learned that more kaiārahi were going to be needed in order to keep the flag flying once it was raised. One of the ways to encourage the crew was to acknowledge that they had already conquered many seas and raised many flags; this flag was no different.

Then one day, when the sea was calm and the sun was glittering on the big blue waka, a white bird called _wainua‘ settled on the front of the waka. The crew were inspired and the rangahau flag was raised. For the time being, everyone lived happily ever after....kia tau te rangimarie.

Te Kapua’s story speaks to us of kaitiakitanga—of the group who were given the task of raising the new flag; rangahau. It speaks of that responsibility and how the weight of it was measured and shared with other kaitiaki. The kaiārahi in the story learned and gained strength from those who went before them: the captain of the waka, the kaitiaki who raised the other flags, the crew of the waka and the whānau on board. Te Kapua’s story oozes indigeneity in the colours, the symbols, the sounds, the people and the collective desire to build their own whare—or in this case—raise their own flag.

E ai ō harirau, hei rere mai
You have the wings to fly here

He Aromatawai

As for my story? Well you’re reading it. I was the girl who had no voice. Our collective journey brought us to this place and brought me the voice to tell it. And in this moment, in this space, we as the Kaiārahi Rangahau take a moment to pause and reflect. Our stories show knowings discovered and rediscovered about ourselves, our abilities, our responsibilities, our indigeneity and our right to rangahau. Our stories tell of kete repaired and refilled. Julie Kaomea (2004) explains how rangahau can affect us in these ways:

Above all else, indigenous research should be about healing and empowerment. It should involve the return of dignity and the restoration of sovereignty, and it should ultimately bring formerly colonised communities one step further along the path of self-determination. We should think on these factors as they apply to our own research, and if and when we decide to proceed, we should do so humbly, in an effort to serve. (p.43)

And serve we have, and healed and empowered we have been. Our kete have been filled, our flags raised, our korowai worn, and our karanga and our voices have flown to our whanau. Through Kaupapa Wānanga we are returning dignity and restoring sovereignty, and in doing so we are building our whare; a whare rangahau which we are building for ourselves, in our own way.

Maku anō hei hanga i tōku nei whare
Ko ngā poupou, he māhoe, he patete
Ko te tahuhu, he hīnau
Me whakatupu ki te hua o te rengarenga
Me whakapakari ki te hua o te kawariki
I shall fashion my own house
The support posts shall be of māhoe and patete,
the ridgepole of hīnau
The inhabitants shall be raised on the rengarenga
and nurtured on the kawariki

nā Kīngi Tāwhiao

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