

HIREME, Hemi (Ngai Tuhoe, Ngati Awa, Ngati Raukawa)

Kia ora tatou. My name is Hemi Hireme and I am currently the Director of Maori Advancement at Waiariki Institute of Technology in Rotorua. Some of my time is spent reflecting on what 'Advancement' might actually mean, while much of my time is spent actively collaborating with tribal groups and subgroups to facilitate the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and applied skills as part of a broader Waiariki Iwi Regeneration Initiative (WIRI).

Ma wai ra e taurima? Who cares for the guardians - In support of the continuity of cultural consciousness.

Fast-food burgers – it fits some people's lifestyles to eat them, but it's also nice to be able to go home once in a while and taste mum or dad's real home-cooked burgers!

Diaspora – it fits some people's lifestyles to go away, but it's also nice to be able to go home once in a while to regain their sense of who they are.

The future – going home and eating fast-food burgers!

This presentation is about one community college's initiative to support the continuity of cultural consciousness at "home". For most iwi in Aotearoa, "home" is their marae, their hapu. It is their turangawaewae – that part of the universe reserved especially for them to stand. It is the nation that most have left, and it is the nation to which most will return. The people who choose to stay with their marae, on their turangawaewae are the *ahi kaa* – they keep the home-fires burning. Where ever iwi travel, in Aotearoa and elsewhere, they will always have their cultural and spiritual "home". And like most homes, there is uniqueness, there is difference.

This uniqueness and difference is found in language – the dialectical differences that identify iwi. It is found in genealogy, in history, in song, in technology, and in food. It is found in the knowledge and skills that are most relevant to that iwi, to that nation. Identity is multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory.

Disturbingly, our iwi communities are telling us that the rate with which the transfer of this knowledge and skills is able to take place is becoming increasingly more laboured. Our old people tell us they want to pass on this knowledge. Our young people, both local and away, are telling us they want to learn. But somehow it is not happening fast enough. And so increasingly more and more of our old people are taking their knowledge and skills with them.

We are trying to help. Conference participants may be interested in the challenges this brings for our institution – intellectual property, programme design and approval, quality assurance, returns on investment, contribution to the economy, capability and access, relevance and excellence. It is interesting because should these not be the imperative of the iwi?