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Tai is of Ngati Porou descent and is currently employed as Māori Research Advisor at the health Services Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington. Her BA was in Maori Studies and Social Policy and she completed an MA (Applied) in Social Science Research in 2001. Her research interests are in the area of Maori health.

Valuing Māori Ways of Knowing and Being

All ideas, thoughts and research methods have their own epistemology and ontology. In 2002 the former Associate Minister of Health (Māori) and current co-leader of the newly formed Māori party, Tariana Turia said 'we need to identify the indigenous tools, adapt them to a changing world and use them'. This presentation, is based on work for my Master's thesis where data came from six pakeke and six academics all of Ngati Porou descent. The original intent was to explore Kaupapa Māori research but what emerged from the research process was a view and understanding of the world through a tribal lens. Māori are not a homogeneous group. While there are aspects of the worldview which other tribes share, the ways in which they express these realities differ. This is because of the mana motuhake (sovereign) nature of Māori knowledge systems and how it is passed down through generations. This presentation explores this tribal worldview, which is perceived as the genesis of tikanga and conditions tribal knowledge. A 'two house' or Ngā Whare e Rua model by Moana Jackson and Atareta Poananga (Ngati Porou) will be used to critique the placement of Māori research within mainstream institutions, within which many Māori researchers must work. This model addresses some of the tensions, which arise for Māori located within an academic institution. While reaffirmation, reclaiming and revalidation of Māori ways of knowing and being are key goals of this presentation; it also raises issues about the place of tribal realities within academia. Academic institutions premised on universalism have resulted in the re-ordering of what was once co-equal knowledge that ran along a horizontal plane to now creating a hierarchy of knowledge.