

Report of the Maori Forum 2030 held at Te Awhina Marae on Wednesday, May 13th, 7.30pm:

Report by David Armstrong

This event was organised and hosted by the marae (mainly Ann Martin) and promoted in social media and news media by Vision Motueka. The goal was for the five Maori entities to present to the wider Motueka community information about the history and current work of their entity, and their goals and vision for the future. The five entities represented were Motueka's own local iwi (Ngati Rarua & Te Atiawa), Te Awhina Marae and the two Maori business entities (Wakatu Inc & NRAIT).

A count of 95 people attended the hui, with an estimated two thirds being non-Maori. Most present expressed surprise at this large turnout and the positive and happy nature of the meeting. Many non-Maori reported their great interest to learn so much about the Maori presence in Motueka that they were unaware of beforehand, and said they appreciated better the problems faced by Maori entities and the efforts being undertaken to develop a more solid base, both cultural and economic.

After a short introduction by the author of this report, the meeting was MC'd (in typical entertaining style) by Barney Thomas, introducing each of the entities and the speakers. His first and most startling comment (to outsiders) was that this event was the first time ever that all five entities had been present in korero under the same roof. The five entities made presentations, four of them using PowerPoint files. (The four files can be downloaded from this website.) A few questions were asked and comments made from the audience, but in general the presentations were done quickly because of pressure of time.

This report will not go into the detail of what was presented by each of the presenters - much of that can be seen by looking at their PowerPoint files. The presenters were:

- Te Atiawa o Te Waka-a-Maui Trust - Joy Shorrock & Glenice Paine;
- Te Runanga o Ngati Rarua - Wayne Greenway;
- Te Awhina Marae - Ann Martin;
- Ngati Rarua Atiawa Iwi Trust (NRAIT) - John Charleton;
- Wakatu Incorporation - Ropata Taylor.

The first four speakers emphasised responsibility that their entity held, since the treaty settlements, for cultural revitalisation underpinned by a strong financial base and stability. The vision in all cases was very long-term and intergenerational. One of the biggest problems they face is fulfilling the role expected of them to be Maori representatives on a wide range of government, agency, NGO and other community groups. In many cases, their resources are spread far too thinly to achieve this goal. However, given that their treaty settlements are not yet even one year old, a lot of work has been done to set up organisations and strategies required to move forward on that base. This was often not helped by many of the Maori leaders being representatives of more than one of the entities, wearing different "hats" for different occasions.

The final speaker, Ropata Taylor, spoke at length about Maori political history in the area. This included early agreements with the first European settlers on purchase and use of land, which within 20 years were broken. Productive land was lost and confiscated to the point where Maori were

marginalised and most left their tribal area for other parts. This began to turn around in 1977 when Wakatu Inc came into being following the Hunn Report on "the Maori problem", and gradually began a strategy of selling land that was under perpetual lease and using the funds to buy unencumbered land. Now 70% of Wakatu's assets are in land and 30% in food, beverage and seafood. Ropata's presentation was direct, factual and inspiring, gaining a strongly positive response from the audience.

