



Over the next few months this column will feature extracts from the [Matike Mai Aotearoa Report on Constitutional Transformation](#) which is already attracting a lot of commentary, both good and bad.

That commentary is indicative in itself that the report is already fulfilling one of its most critical recommendations – i.e. the promotion of ongoing formal and informal korero amongst the peoples of Aotearoa about the need for and possibilities of constitutional transformation in our beautiful land.

Matike Mai Aotearoa, the Independent Working Group on Constitutional Transformation, was first promoted at a meeting of the [Iwi Chairs' Forum](#) in 2010. The Terms of Reference given to the Working Group were deliberately broad –

***“To develop and implement a model for an inclusive Constitution for Aotearoa based on tikanga and kawa, He Whakaputanga o te Rangatira o Niu Tireni of 1835, Te Tiriti o Waitangi of 1840, and other indigenous human rights instruments which enjoy a wide degree of international recognition”.***

The Terms of Reference did not ask the Working Group to consider such questions as “How might the Treaty fit within the current Westminster constitutional system” but rather required it to seek advice on a different type of constitutionalism that is *based* upon [He Whakaputanga](#) and [Te Tiriti](#). For that reason this Report uses the term “constitutional transformation” rather than “constitutional change”.

A Forum Representative, [Professor Margaret Mutu](#), was appointed the Working Group Chair and [Moana Jackson](#) was invited to be its Convenor. Members of the Working Group were nominated by Iwi and other organisations or were co-opted. The Chairperson and Convenor facilitated 252 hui between 2012 and 2015. The rōpū rangatahi that was convened by [Veronica Tawhai](#) presented 70 wānanga.

The Working Group also invited written submissions, organised focus groups, and conducted one-on-one interviews. The views they received canvassed a number of topics such as the relationship between Te Tiriti and democracy, what is meant by a treaty relationship, what is a constitution, and other related issues such as –

- The meaning of tikanga and its constitutional relevance.
- The relationship between the Hapū referred to in Te Tiriti and the current Crown policy emphasis on Iwi.
- The effects of increasing immigration of the Tiriti relationship.
- The ongoing implications of the emigration of our people overseas.
- How to engage with others to progress the kaupapa.

The Matike Mai Report synthesises those views and acknowledges both the complexity of the issues our people were asked to address and the insights which they brought to the whole kaupapa. It also recognises, as our people did, that there will be opposition to the ideas presented and that more work needs to be done.

The Report should be read as part of an ongoing dialogue into the future. We stress however that it is not a new dialogue as the kaupapa of constitutional transformation has been part of Māori political debate for over 170 years.

Copies of the report are available online and from [Te Runanga-a-Iwi o Ngati Kahu](#).

<sup>1</sup> Edited extract (pp. 14 – 17) of He Whakaaro Here Whakaumu, the Report of Matike Mai Aotearoa – The Independent Working on Constitutional Transformation