

Zoe's journey with Te Ao Māori and episode Karakia

About Karakia:

Karakia are prayers or incantations. They are generally used to ensure a favourable outcome to important events such as tangihanga, hui and unveilings. However, they can cover every aspect of life. For example welcoming the dawn, farewelling the day, ensuring a safe journey, for different types of illness and more.

Karakia, in their true essence, are ritual chants invoking spiritual guidance and protection. Traditional karakia which were often chanted or sung, call on many of our Atua for direction. These karakia are poetic and full of beautiful imagery and metaphor. It's important to understand that there are not always appropriate English words that can fully reflect the essence of the Māori words used – often literal translations need to be considered metaphorically.

Waka Kotahi recognises and respects Te Tiriti o Waitangi and will work with Māori to build strong, meaningful and enduring relationships to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Te Reo Māori is highly valued and we actively promote Te Reo Māori within our organisation and in the work we do. This includes using karakia when appropriate.

My journey with Te Ao Māori:

My journey with Te Ao Māori began as soon as I got to Aotearoa New Zealand in May 2018 and I was introduced to idea of whānau (a family group, chosen family etc.) by my partners relatives here. As I started to work within the New Zealand Public Service I realised how critical and important Te Ao Māori, bi-culturalism and understanding and respecting the Treaty of Waitangi was. I have made a personal and professional commitment to Te Ao Māori which includes learning Te Reo Māori (Māori Language) and weaving the Māori worldview throughout my work at Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency. I am still on a journey, and so am not a perfectly fluent speaker but I am deeply committed to getting it right. To pick my karakia today I consulted with our Māori Strategic Advisor, discussed what I wanted to achieve and then what karakia would suit best. I also practiced and practiced my pronunciation and received coaching from the same advisor. This is quite literally, the very least I can do and I hope that you enjoy being part of my journey today.

Opening Karakia : Whakataka te hau

Whakataka te hau ki te uru
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga
Kia mākinakina ki uta
Kia mātaratara ki tai
E hī ake ana te atākura
He tio, he huka, he hauhu
Haumi ē, hui ē, tāiki ē!

Cease the winds from the west
Cease the winds from the south
Let the breeze blow over the land
Let the breeze blow over the ocean
Let the red-tipped dawn come with a sharpened air.
A touch of frost, a promise of a glorious day.

Closing Karakia: Kia whakairia
Ka whakairia te tapu

Kia wātea ai te ara
Kia tūruki whakataha ai
Kia tūruki whakataha ai
Haume ē Hui ē, tāiki ē
Restrictions are moved aside
So the pathway is clear
To return to everyday activities
Enriched and united