

SPEECH

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CELEBRATING 500,000 HOURS OF MĀORI LANGUAGE BROADCASTING - FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

Tēnā tātou kua whakarauika nei ki konei, ki te whakanui i te ekenga o te rima rau mano haora (500,000 haora) e pāpāho ana i roto i te Reo Māori. Kua tangihia a tātou mate ki ngā marae o te motu, moe mai koutou, okioki. Ki ngā Minita Pāremata, ngā Mema Pāremata, me ngā manuhiri tuarangi – nau mai, haere mai ki te pōwhiri a Te Māngai Pāho.

Ministers of the Crown, Members of Parliament, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen - welcome and thank you for joining us tonight as we proudly celebrate a monumental milestone - 500,000 hours of Māori language broadcasting!

I say 'monumental' for several reasons, firstly because we have accomplished this in little more than fifteen years, and in doing so, have radically transformed the face of broadcasting in this country; and the very nature of how we are seen and perceived globally.

Of even greater significance however, is that we are marking a milestone of abiding belief in, and passion for te reo Māori. It was this passion and belief that spurred on the early language pioneers to nurture initiatives like the kohanga reo and kura kaupapa movements and other revitalisation initiatives such as kapa haka competitions and measures to foster local dialects.

In today's commercially-driven world, where the almighty dollar predominates, it is perhaps too easy to forget that our celebration tonight was founded and ignited by people who asked for nothing, who sought neither fame nor fortune and whose only desire was to use, see and hear te reo Māori as the rich and living language it is.

It is an honour and privilege for me to stand here tonight, not only in my capacity as Chair of Te Māngai Pāho, but also as General Manager and as a past president of Te Roopu Wāhine Māori Toko i Te Ora, the Māori Women's Welfare League.

As many of you will know, the League has been an ardent champion of te reo Māori - a commitment seeded and nurtured by our first president Dame Whina Cooper ONZ, DBE, JP.

Against a backdrop characterised by the growing migration of our people from their homes to the cities, she was adamant "...*that our tradition and culture not be lost to us...*"

In fact the League's first policy statement written in te reo Māori expressed the organisation's desire to ensure the survival of the language in the home and as part of the curriculum of schools and training colleges.

That was 1951. Fast forward nearly 25 years, to what I describe as a rallying point in the history of this country – and the figure of Dame Whina dominates – this time as leader of the 1975 Land March.

That march subsequently spawned a series of breakthrough events - amongst them the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal which in 1986 issued its findings on the Te Reo Māori Claim.

At this point it is fitting to acknowledge the efforts of the New Zealand Māori Council led by Sir Graham Latimer and Ngā Kaiwhakapumau i te reo Māori headed by Huirangi Waikerepuru, who, with a voluntary legal team led by Dame Sian Elias and Martin Dawson, took the claim to the Privy Council in London.

The claim saw the Māori Language Act 1987 pass into law, resulting in the creation of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori and te reo Māori being recognised as an official language of New Zealand.

Of course it didn't stop there. In Māori broadcasting terms we are well acquainted with the ensuing series of court cases and negotiations to do with the Māori broadcasting radio spectrum, broadcasting assets, and a broadcasting policy for Māori on TV.

In 1993 Te Māngai Pāho was established and was eventually tasked with funding 21 iwi radio stations. Almost a decade later, in 2004, Māori Television was launched and began beaming te reo into the sitting rooms of every household nationwide.

But before I go any further, let me acknowledge the first Māori radio station, Te Upoko o Te Ika established in 1982, and followed closely by Radio Ngāti Porou, Tūranga a Kiwa and Radio Tautoko.

We now celebrate the achievement of more than 500,000 hours of Māori language broadcasting funded by Te Māngai Pāho. Television programming has reached 14,000 hours, whilst a staggering 500,000 hours have been provided from Māori radio programming.

Over the years Māori radio has steadily grown its capacity such that today stations are funded to be on air for a minimum of eighteen hours per day with at least eight hours of Māori language broadcast a day, seven days a week!

With the formation of Te Whakaruruhau o Ngā Reo Irirangi – the Māori radio industry group - the iwi radio network has matured to become the predominant deliverer of te reo Māori hours for broadcast. Te Māngai Pāho remains committed to continuing to develop the infrastructure and in-house capacity of iwi radio over the next five years.

In the short time it has been on air, Māori Television has become firmly established with a growing New Zealand viewership.

The innovation it has applied to coverage of events like Anzac Day, and the fact that viewers seek out television as an important source for programming that shows culture, history and language - is evidence that Māori Television is well down the path to becoming a permanent fixture in New Zealand's broadcasting environment.

The service has created unprecedented opportunities for te reo Māori and kaupapa Māori television programme makers. In this respect I would like to acknowledge members of the independent production sector who continue to raise the bar with the quality of their programming.

The launch of Māori Television's second channel TE REO on the Freeview and SKY platforms further expands the possibilities available to cutting edge te reo programming directly in every home around the country.

Looking back I believe we do indeed have much to celebrate. Despite the detractors, te reo Māori on the airways has triumphed! Through the efforts of our people, past and present, we have designed a future in

which all of us, Māori and Pakeha, alike can hear and use te reo Māori as an ordinary part of our daily lives.

On behalf of the Board and staff of Te Māngai Pāho I would like to acknowledge those that have gone before us, and to congratulate everyone who has contributed, including our broadcasters; associations like Te Whakaruruhau o Ngā Reo Irirangi and Ngā Aho Whakaari; all our production companies and individuals and agencies working in the Māori language broadcasting sector - on reaching this magnificent milestone of over half a million hours of Māori language broadcasting!

With you, we look forward to building on and surpassing this target and meeting the challenges of maintaining the language and cultural values unique to our country and which stamp our sense of national identity in a global environment.

On behalf of Te Māngai Pāho, I would like to take this opportunity to thank this and previous governments for the financial support they have given to Te Māngai Pāho for iwi radio and Māori television.

Kia ora tātou.