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| Speak Up – 20 May | |
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|  | Coming up next conversations on race relations and human rights with Speak Up – Korerotia here on Plains FM. |
| Sally | E ngā mana,  E ngā reo,  E ngā hau e whā  Tēnā koutou katoa  Nau mai ki tēnei hōtaka: “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”.    Join the New Zealand Human Rights Commission as it engages in conversations around race and diversity in our country. Tune in as our guests “Speak Up”, sharing their unique and powerful experiences and opinions... May you also be inspired to “Speak Up” when the moment is right.  Kia ora and welcome to Speak Up – Kōrerotia, I’m your host Sally Carlton, a human rights specialist at the Human Rights Commission in Christchurch. Ko te kaupapa o tēnei rā ko Māori te Ōtautahi. The theme for today’s show is Māori in Christchurch. The show will feature our guest Regan Stokes who has been active in increasing awareness of and participation in Te Reo Māori language in Christchurch and currently teaching Māori language and culture at Hagley Community College. Kia ora Regan. |
| Regan | Tēnā koe. |
| Sally | To start with this is a Māori show so we’re going to start in the traditional Māori way, if you could give us a mihi or a pepeha. |
| Regan | Ka pai, tēnei te mihi ki a koe Sally; ko koe te kaihautū o te waka nei. Ko Regan Stokes tōku ingoa, nō Ōtautahi au. I tipu au ki konei, engari ka rere tōku whakapapa ki Tauranga; ko Ngāi Te Rangi te iwi. Āe, nō reira kia ora i te kōrero nei; kia pai ngā kōrero nei. Kia ora I’m Regan Stokes, I am from Christchurch, I grew up here but my whakapapa goes up to Tauranga so Ngāi Te Rangi is my Iwi. |
| Sally | And so how long have you been in Christchurch? |
| Regan | I was born here - so 24 years. I’ve never lived anywhere else so I guess I know this whenua fairly well. |
| Sally | And when did your people move down from Tauranga? Any idea? |
| Regan | A lot of my whānau are still up in Tauranga but my father studied in Dunedin and then eventually moved to Christchurch before meeting my mum who is from England, Nottingham and she moved or her whole whānau moved to Aotearoa when she was seven, to Rotorua and then eventually came down to Christchurch as well. So both of my parents are still based here. |
| Sally | And do you mention both Tauranga and Nottingham in your mihi? |
| Regan | Ae, tino pai, that’s a really good question and one that I’ve been thinking about because obviously I’m both Ngāi Te Rangi and Ngati Pākehā from my mum’s side but I’ve never actually been to Nottingham or England yet. So I’ve actually got a trip planned to Europe in July this year during which time I will visit all of my whānau over in England and visit where my mum grew up in Nottingham and things and I imagine that when I come back my mihi will probably change. But at the moment I don’t, just because I guess I feel like I don’t know that place yet. |
| Sally | So if we’re talking about mihi, how much of someone’s mihi is up to them to choose what they want to include in it? |
| Regan | […] te tikanga so it’s really up to whoever to decide, there’s a basic structure so you generally start with your pepeha, your maunga, your awa, your waka, your iwi, if you identify with those things. And then move into your whakapapa, your family if you wish, starting at the top with your grandparents or even higher and then working your way down to yourself. But when I teach mihi I always tell people that it’s really up to them what lines they include, so some people may include only certain family members if they feel like they’ve got a strong connection to them and may not include others. Some people may not include a mountain if they don’t feel like they have a particular affiliation to a mountain which is obviously a lot better and a lot more genuine than just kind of plucking one out of nowhere. So while there is a structure it’s really up to the individual I guess to decide what they put in there. |
| Sally | One question I always have when I’m trying to think about it is I don’t affiliate to any particular physical location, I think it’s probably because I’ve moved around a lot and so anywhere that I am I feel like I’m home. So I don’t have any particular physical location and so other than saying “ko ao te iwi” or something like that I’m never really sure. Have you got any ideas around that? |
| Regan | So in regards to iwi it’s obviously a tough one in today’s modern world, te ao hurihuri, the spinning world but for iwi I generally say…and other teachers might say other things but I generally recommend people to just identify with the ethnic group that they feel affiliated to. So they might so “Ko Ngati Pākehā te iwi” or “Ko Aotearoa te iwi” if they feel like New Zealanders are their people or even if they’re from England and only just recently moved here they might still consider England to be their whenua, their land, and English people to be their people so they might say “Ko England te iwi” or “Ko Ingarangi te iwi”. So the word iwi is often translated to mean ‘tribe’ but I prefer the translation of ‘people’ because then it puts it into a much more modern context and moves it away from that primitive connotation that you get with a word like ‘tribe’. So if you think of English people are the people or New Zealanders are the people when you say you are “Ko so and so te iwi” line then that makes it a bit more natural I think. |
| Sally | Great, and I mentioned that you are a teacher at Hagley, if you could explain a little bit about the work that you are doing there? |
| Regan | […] So I teach Māori at Hagley and I just started this year after teaching English for two years at Burnside High School and one thing I really like about the way that Hagley has organised their school this year is that they’ve made Te Reo Māori compulsory at Year 9 so I’m only here for two terms because before I was offered the job I had already planned to go to Europe and England to expand my mihi so I’ve been teaching four classes of Year 9s in Te Reo Māori which is about 100 students over two terms in the Year 9 cohort and I’ve also got one Year 10 class of six students in Te Reo Māori so I just teach the Year 9s and 10s and most students haven’t learnt too much so it’s really a beginners basic course in Te Reo Māori that I’m teaching there. |
| Sally | And can the students continue with Te Reo Māori later in their schooling careers? |
| Regan | That would be the hope so even though I will still be travelling next year I really hope that they will be able to find another Te Reo Māori teacher and I’m hoping to help them find someone so that it can continue because a lot of students that wouldn’t have picked it if it was an option actually have found out that they quite enjoy it and a few have come and said oh yeah, I’m going to do Māori next year which is really cool to hear so they should definitely have that option next year I would hope. |
| Sally | Ok, well we’re going to have a break and you’ve chosen a song for us today, if you could explain a little bit about what you’ve chosen and why you chose that particular song. |
| Regan | So this song is ‘Tauranga Moana’ and it’s a song that talks about the whenua of Tauranga which is where I whakapapa to. It talks about Mauao which is the name of the primary mountain up in Tauranga. Most people know it as Mt Maunganui which literally means ‘mountain’ or ‘mountain, big’ if you say ‘mount’ in the form of Maunganui. But Maunganui was the name that it got given later and its original name is Mauao which means “caught in the light of day”. There’s a korero that goes with that. So the first, yeah one of the lines is Mauao Maunga and Tauranga Moana which is obviously the name of the sea that surrounds Tauranga so it’s just really I guess probably one of the most well-known songs from Tauranga Moana, it reminds me of where my marae and iwi are and it’s a nice slow melody. |
| Sally | Here we go then, thank you. |
|  | **MUSIC – TAURANGA MOANA** |
| Sally | Ok so we’re back in the studio here at Plains FM 96.9 with Regan Stokes who is our guest today speaking about Māori in Christchurch. Now Regan, one of the topics I would be interested in exploring a bit more is the idea of Ōtautahi. Ok Regan so to start with then maybe let’s think about what does ‘Ōtautahi’ mean in Te Reo Māori? |
| Regan | Ka pai, so I guess before I say anything I should just give a quick disclaimer that I am Ngāi Te Rangi so my iwi is in Tauranga so I am not Ngāi Tahu myself and Ngāi Tahu would obviously be best qualified to speak on the significance of place names around Christchurch because obviously they hold the korero and they hold the history so - ko rere te mihi ki a rātou.  Last year I did a research project investigating some of the significance of Māori landmarks around Christchurch including the name Ōtautahi and for that myself and my friends were lucky enough to speak to Dr. Te Maire Tau who is a Ngāi Tahu historian working at the University of Canterbury. So while I’m not Ngāi Tahu I can say to the best of my knowledge and memory what I’ve been told - but just bear in mind the best source would be the source itself which would be Ngāi Tahu.  What I’ve been told so - e pā ana ki o Ōtautahi - so regarding the name of Christchurch in Māori, “o” means “place of” and “tautahi” was a Ngāi Tahu ancestor or tipuna who had a pa or settlement around the banks of the Ōtākaro Avon River. I’ve been told that it was the area near where Barbadoes Street is now so there’s a monument around that area known as the bricks where one of the first European waka or ships sailed up the Ōtakaro River and that’s where Tautahi’s pa was. So as often happens in the Māori world, when someone holds mana whenua over an area - meaning they hold the mana of the land - once they die, the name of that area of land, they kind of inherit. So when Tautahi passed away, that area around that particular branch of the Avon Ōtakaro River became known as ‘Ōtautahi’. And last year when I was doing a project for FESTA [Festival of Transitional Architecture] about Māori place names in Christchurch, Dr. Te Maire Tau who works at the University of Canterbury and is a Ngāi Tahu historian, he mentioned that there’s actually an interesting story about how Tautahi inherited that site because… This is just based off memory from almost a year ago… What Temaire said was that it was Tautahi’s uncle who originally held the mana of that area but Tautahi’s uncle didn’t have any children so when Tautahi’s uncle passed on, Tautahi then inherited that area because of his uncle. So it’s, I guess, almost by luck that he got it. And then obviously the area became known as Ōtautahi and then in the 1920s, 1930s that became the adopted name for Christchurch as a whole. So Ōtautahi began to refer to the entirety of Christchurch so you can imagine Tautahi will be pretty happy given how much his mana has grown over the years. |
| Sally | Back in the past what was the significance of Ōtautahi and particularly I suppose the river for Māori in Christchurch? |
| Regan | I guess it’s a little difficult for me to speak on that because I’m obviously not Ngāi Tahu myself so this isn’t my own korero here. But from what Te Maire Tau told us last year, the Ōtakaro River was a really important mahinga kai site - so a food gathering site - and so there was settlements such as Ōtautahi along the Ōtakaro River although the principal area, the main areas of living were obviously over at Kaiapoi, Te Waihora, Lake Ellesmere and then over in Banks Peninsula, Rāpaki way and Koukourarata (Port Levy). So whilst the area that is now Christchurch City was only really used seasonally for food gathering, the market square became a really important site for Ngāi Tahu at the time. Market square is what is now Victoria Square because that is where the first I guess markets were set up. And Ngāi Tahu obviously wanted to participate in those but due to some issues with land sales and promises not being kept, they were never allowed an area of land to set up temporary camps on in the city, even though to my knowledge - and again, I’m not a Ngāi Tahu historian; I may not be getting this completely right - when they sold a lot of their land that was under the provision that they would keep their mahinga kai sites, so areas around the banks of the Ōtakaro River, but following the sale that area was then sold and then not returned which was obviously the promise of that land sale. So that caused a lot of issues that went on for hundreds of years. |
| Sally | And is the mahinga kai tradition still being carried out? |
| Regan | Certainly in areas of the Waimakariri River which is north of the city but to my knowledge not within the Opawa or Ōtākaro Rivers (the Heathcote or Avon Rivers). I can remember hearing on Tahu FM a public service announcement saying that the rivers were polluted so no-one should be eating any whitebait or anything from them, that was last year I heard that, so by the sounds of it tragically that’s come to an end at least until some of these restoration projects are carried out which will hopefully happen soon. |
| Sally | That would be good wouldn’t it, the pollution is not great.  Now Regan, you mentioned FESTA, the Festival of Transitional Architecture, and I know that you organised a walk around Ōtautahi and the different Māori sites, could you talk a little bit about the traces I suppose of the past or the Māori heritage that are still visible in Christchurch and why did you decide to organise that event for FESTA? |
| Regan | Sure. So I guess myself and my friends Joshua Toki and Damien Taylor, we wanted to… Well we were approached by Jessica who was the Coordinator of FESTA and she was wondering if we could think of a project that introduced or integrated a bicultural narrative to the FESTA project. And after a while I kind of realised that there really isn’t much of a Māori narrative throughout the landscape of Ōtautahi, and I think while that’s improving a lot now post-earthquake certainly in the past I believe it’s been lacking. So the idea was just to show people some of the sites that are of importance, that are still there but where that information or historical narrative has kind of been quite unknown for a long time. So we kind of did a cycle or walking trail between five sites in Christchurch.  It started Victoria Square which used to be site of Market Square which I was talking about before, so a really important centre for trade. And then the second site was at a church site nearby which is reportedly where Tautahi was possibly buried, although Te Maire Tau said that it was likely he wasn’t actually buried there - so all we can really say is that it’s an urupa or cemetery within his whenua so within the area that he had control over. And then it went to Pilgrims Corner which is in Little Hagley Park where there was a protest by local Māori in the late 20th century because having not been given provision for land for the last hundred years they were occupying that site as a possible place to set up a marae. And then the fourth site was at Pūtaringamotu, which is Dean’s Bush, which is kind of the last remnant of an important forest in the traditional days. And then the last site was Te Herenga Ora at Burnside High School which is the name of the group of cabbage trees, I guess in the front corner of the field, on the corner of Memorial Ave and Greers Road. And those [tī kōuka](http://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/ti-kouka-the-cabbage-tree/)or cabbage trees were said to have been a really important landmark for Māori who were travelling towards Te Waihora, Lake Ellesmere via or from Kaiapoi and those trees that are there now are the children of trees that have been there for hundreds of years. So they’re a really important site for both Māori and Pākehā because they were used as a landmark for early settlers as well. |
| Sally | I remember you saying - for everyone, I was in Regan’s Te Reo Māori class last year - and I remember you telling the story about the Principal deciding to keep those trees. |
| Regan | Ah yes so the first Principal of Burnside High was pressured to chop those trees down to make way for a rugby pitch but to his credit he decided not to. |
| Sally | Great. Well, we’re going to take a break now and have a listen to some more waiata. |
|  | **MUSIC – KOTAHITANGA BY OCEANIA** |
| Sally | Kia ora and welcome back to Speak Up - Kōrerotia, show of the Human Rights Commission. We’re speaking with Regan Stokes about Māori in Ōtautahi, Christchurch. The Census shows, Regan, that the number of Māori are increasing in Christchurch: in the 2006 Census, Māori made up 7.9 or 7.6% approximately of Christchurch’s population and now it’s about 8.1%. So it’s a small increase, but it’s nonetheless an increase. Have you , particularly I suppose as a teacher of Te Reo Māori, that the visibility of Māori has changed in your lifetime? |
| Regan | I guess I’d have two answers to that question, teno pai te patai. Firstly I guess I think things are definitely changing. So to start with the positive: it definitely feels like there’s a groundswell of people wanting to speak Māori, of Māori being heard more around the city and I think a lot of that comes from schools picking it up more, mainstream schools. So I teach some community night classes in Te Reo Māori and I’ve had a lot of parents that have come along and want to learn Māori because their kids come home with it from pre-school or primary school which is really cool. |
| Sally | That’s fantastic. |
| Regan | Yeah so like singing songs and just saying phrases and they feel like they’re being left behind and to their credit they come along and learn Māori. So in that sense I think there’s definitely more people wanting to learn Te Reo Māori.  On the other hand, though, I think there is still some issues with people being happy to identify with Māori. Like when I was growing up if I ever admitted that I was Māori to someone they’d kind of instantly ask how many parts Māori I was, which just meant that in the end I just stopped telling people that I was Māori. And teaching over the last few years: I remember when I was teaching at Burnside High School as an English teacher, there was still a lot of kids that knew that they were Māori but didn’t really want to take on that part of their identity or identify as Māori. And obviously adolescents - so 12, 13, 14, 15 - identity is a really fragile thing. But I think there’s definitely still some whakamā or some shame or resistance in standing up and proudly stating that you’re Māori.  It is improving but it’s a really slow, slow thing to improve and I think also with the teaching of Māori, often kids are taught things like numbers and colours which is good that they get some Māori but in my experience what that means is that when they get to Year 9 they’re less likely to want to pick Māori because they see it as kind of a novelty subject because they may not have learnt actually sentences or things like that. And that seems to still be happening, that was something that I was coming up against. When I was in Year 9 myself I had no interest at all in picking Māori as a subject because I knew a few numbers and colours but I thought that was boring and some of the kids that I teach now in Year 9 have said that that’s kind of the background that they have had at primary school, you know if they’d been given the choice they wouldn’t have picked Māori at Year 9 but because they have to take it at Hagley for Year 9 they actually quite enjoy it and might take it on next year. |
| Sally | Have you got any suggestions as to how that might be changing or how it could change? If you think that just learning the numbers and colours isn’t encouraging kids to take it, how might they be encouraged to? |
| Regan | I think it is already changing because a lot of schools are going beyond that with teaching Māori, primary schools I mean so that’s really awesome. But it’s a really hard dilemma because to teach language properly you need to have a good knowledge of the language and you need to be well supported with a lot of resources and activities and games and things like that and I guess it’s just a classic problem where if you have a minority language where you have “X” amount of people that can speak the language and then a smaller number that are teachers and can teach the language and then a smaller number that are teachers that have been well supported that have enough time in their jobs to prepare lessons and enough support to teach the language… well, then it suddenly becomes a very small group of people. So I think it’s just a matter of probably starting with tertiary providers who train future teachers and just making their Māori programmes more substantive and giving new teachers the confidence to actually be able to speak some of the language confidently rather than just phrases. |
| Sally | Sorry to interrupt, I know that a lot of teachers use the commands, “E tū”, “E noho”, those sorts of things and it’s great that they’re integrating Māori into the everyday classroom, but the fact that they’re always commanding, I’m sure, must have some sort of impact on how children view the use of Te Reo Māori. |
| Regan | Yeah, I think teachers do an amazing job in general - like it’s an incredibly full-on profession and with the amount of work that there is to do outside of classroom in preparing and marking and planning and that sort of thing, not to mention possibly learning a whole new language being Te Reo Māori - I certainly take my hat off to all primary school teachers because I really think it’s an amazing, amazing job they do. But at the same time, yeah, if kids are just hearing “E tu” (“Stand”), “E noho” (“Sit down”) then Māori can quite easily become a military language that they really have no interest in pursuing further. It’s a really hard one though, because you don’t want to put off people for using what Māori they have and I think it is definitely improving, it just requires more support. |
| Sally | Ok thanks and the support you think might come from tertiary education providers first of all. In terms of Māori becoming more visible, you have spoken a bit about identity and people slowing claiming it more, claiming their Māori ancestry. Have you noticed that anything has changed in Christchurch in terms of acceptance of Māori, also in terms of acceptance of the language I suppose as well? |
| Regan | I’ve only been learning Māori for about three years so it’s fairly hard for me to say, but I’ve been quite blown away by the amount of interest there seems to be in the community of people to learn Māori. And I think that largely is because it is being heard more, whether it’s through the schools or in the workplace or it’s becoming an important part of many aspects of modern New Zealand culture I guess, in terms of how it’s changed, I can’t really comment on that. |
| Sally | No that’s fine. Just one more question then before we take a break. What triggered your interest in learning and then teaching Te Reo Māori? |
| Regan | I always knew that I was Māori but at high school I had no interest in taking it as a subject which I wish I did now. But when I was - I think I was 19 - when I went to my first marae stay up in Motueka for a whānau occasion and I guess I just kind of saw a world that I’d never really been exposed to before. And it’s quite interesting when you’re in a situation like that because you immediately feel on the outside but kind of wanting to be in. So yeah, pretty soon after that I just started going to night classes around the university and then I eventually enrolled in Te Wānanga O Aotearoa and I also learnt a lot from the book He Whakamarama by John Foster. So I guess over the years it’s just kind of fostered.  And then in regards to teaching it, I was trained as an English teacher but I think two years ago I just started teaching some friends in the evening, Māori, just as a way to kind of consolidate what I was learning because obviously the best way to learn is to teach it to others and also because I knew there were other people that wanted to learn it and I felt like I knew the basics OK. So I could do that and then that kind of morphed into a full-on community course the following year and people keep wanting to learn which is really nice. |
| Sally | Well that’s very exciting and we’re going to take a break now with another waiata. |
|  | **MUSIC BREAK** |
| Sally | Now, Regan, you’ve attended a few courses recently about the Māori language, if you could maybe tell us as little bit about them and also why you wanted to take part. |
| Regan | So in the last school holidays myself and some friends went to Otakou Marae in Ōtepoti (Dunedin) for a five day kurureo which means, well it’s essentially a five day wānanga, staying on the marae and speaking only Māori. And a lot of the country’s top language experts come to teach people and essentially improve their Te Reo Māori. So that was a lot of fun; it’s just really beneficial being in an environment where people are only speaking Māori for a week obviously and we learnt some really interesting things like phrases to include a Māori wairua or Māori spirit in our language because obviously as second language learners it’s quite easy to just replicate phrases from English.  One of the most interesting phrases I learnt was how to say “It’s no big deal” in Māori so a saying for “It’s no big deal” would be “He raru ki uta” so “he raru” means a problem and “ki uta” means inland so if you say “he raru ki uta” you’re saying it’s no big deal because it’s a problem inland and you’re surrounded by your iwi, your people and resources to help deal with that problem. Whereas if you say he raru ki tai - ‘tai’ meaning out at sea - then that’s meaning OK you’ve got a big problem on your hands because you’re out at sea, you’re probably by yourself or with one or two other people and you’re at the mercy of Tangaroa who is the atua of the moana. So that’s one example out of a huge amount that I got from that week.  And the week after that I was actually in Ōtepoti (Dunedin) again for a language conference called Te Kura Roa which is a research project between Victoria and Otago University investigating the value of minority language. So they had a lot of speakers talking about Māori language revitalisation efforts and they also had a few international speakers. There was a lady from the University of Sydney who is working to write an Australian educational curriculum framework for teaching Aboriginal languages and there was a professor who has helped to revive Hebrew, one of the Jewish languages and there was also a professor who…well she works at the University of Chicago but she’s helping to revive Greenlandic in Greenland which is a country with only 57,000 people I heard. So that was really fantastic as well just for hearing lots of ideas about how we can move Māori into a more prosperous future, Māori as a language I mean. |
| Sally | What an amazing opportunity to have taken part in. One thing that struck me when you were talking then is as an Australian and knowing that there are however many hundred Aboriginal languages and then contrasting that with Te Reo Māori - which definitely is a minority language but is on such a much stronger footing than so many of those Aboriginal languages which were spoken by a small number of people anyway but are now spoken by even fewer people - the languages are endangered but there’s obviously sort of levels of ‘endangeredness’ if you can say that and from my point of view Te Reo Māori is actually doing fairly well. |
| Regan | Absolutely. |
| Sally | It has a fairly strong foothold in New Zealand, there’s discussions about it becoming compulsory in different levels of education, that sort of thing.  So when you went to this programme about revitalisation of languages did you learn any key ideas about how these languages can be bolstered? |
| Regan | One of the interesting korero that I heard was from the professor who has helped to revive Hebrew and he was kind of saying that Hebrew kind of lay dormant as what he called ‘post-vernacular language’ - meaning as a kind of ceremonial religious language - for about 2000 years until the Jewish people were in a position where they could revitalise it and it was through kind of sheer determination that that happened. And one of the wero or challenges that he gave to us was… Well in terms of Te Reo Māori, in its current state it’s a post-vernacular language. So it’s heard on the marae; it’s heard on Māori television; it’s heard in some schools and so on and there’s probably enough resources to keep it going at that rate. But is that all you want from it? Do you want it to be a ceremonial language or do you want it to become a vernacular language, meaning that it’s spoken every day and it’s heard in all facets of society again? So his question to everyone was really: What do you want? How far do you want to go? Are you happy with just maintaining it the way it is now, or do you want to actually start teaching it to children as a first language again and start reclaiming its status as a vernacular language? Which I found really, really interesting. |
| Sally | Very thought-provoking. I know one thing that you always say which strikes me is that you would really like people just to say “Kia ora” in their everyday life as opposed to using “Hello”, and how that sort of small use of Te Reo Māori - small but everyday use - could be a beginning for it becoming more normalised. |
| Regan | Absolutely, yeah. Just the other day - like, two or three days ago - I was buying groceries and lately I’ve been trying to just, whenever I’m at a dairy or petrol station or supermarket or whatever only using Te Reo Māori but then being really expressive with my hands so that people still understand me and it’s not frustrating for them. But you just hear it more because people actually like being spoken to in Māori, I’ve never had anyone that has been annoyed that I’ve spoken to them only in Māori because I’ll always kind of, if I want to I’ll say “e rua” and put two fingers up and things like that . And I spoke Māori to the person who was serving me and I said “Kia ora” and she said “Kei te pēhea koe?” and we had a full conversation in Māori and it was awesome! And just to think that there are actually I think more people that know some Māori or are fluent in Māori than you think, but if you don’t greet using “Kia ora” or “Tēnā koe” or whatever, then you never really have that opportunity to have a korero with them. So the smallest thing like a greeting, if that was used more often then it just means that people are more likely to engage in Te Reo Māori. |
| Sally | So one of the things I’d like to move onto is if there are any challenges to learning or to speaking Te Reo Māori. One of them, I think, is this is idea of: Do you know if people are going to speak it back to you? Have you got any other ones that come to mind? |
| Regan | Yeah there are heaps of challenges with learning any language as a second language. With Māori in particular I think a lot of people, particularly if they’re non-Māori, themselves feel like it’s a taonga or a treasure that’s reserved only for Māori. And as a Māori person myself, my opinion is that it’s really a taonga for Aotearoa, for all of New Zealand because if we really want to become a bi-cultural, bilingual nation - which will have huge benefits for everybody - everyone needs to embrace Te Reo Māori whether or not you’re Māori or not. And I’ve personally never met anyone that is against Pākehā or non-Māori people learning or speaking Māori, but I think certainly maybe in the past there was a perception that only really Māori should be speaking.  I think that’s starting to dissolve now which is really good because I think it’s been long acknowledged by research that if Te Reo Māori is something that’s only for Māori people it will really die out just because there’s not a big enough speaking population to maintain it. As a language, I think Māori is quite simple and logical to learn so I’m learning a few other languages at the moment and getting to know all the feminine and masculine articles and things is quite tough - but Māori is quite simple by comparison. In saying that, there are some difficult parts of learning Māori, some really small words that mean a lot. But I think if anyone really wants to learn it and can commit to it, anyone can learn it regardless of their age, absolutely. |
| Sally | As someone who has learnt many languages including Te Reo Māori, I would agree with you that it’s a lot more simple grammatically than a lot of other languages but I also agree that some of those small words can have a whole raft of hidden meanings. And that’s part of what’s really interesting for me about Māori is the different meanings and the tikanga that comes with all those different words and how you can really look into all of those different meanings. I think that’s fantastic about it.  Actually we’re just going to listen now to some of my classmates at the Wānanga O Aotearoa, they’re going to be speaking about why they have chosen to study Te Reo Māori. |
| Sally  [in classroom] | Why are you studying Te Reo Māori? |
| Male 1 | I would like to study Te Reo Māori because… For one reason I’ve always wanted to learn Te Reo Māori, it’s in my whānau, I am Māori myself and I want to be able to go up to my marae and communicate with my whānau in Reo language, in Reo Māori. |
| Male 2 | I always wanted to be able to speak Te Reo Māori, I come from a Māori family like Nathan and just I think it’s important as a Māori that you know how to speak Māori and I want to be able to speak Māori to my children. |
| Female 1 | I’m studying Te Reo Māori for my mahi and for my family so I can teach my grandson his whakapapa. |
| Male 3 | I’m studying Te Reo Māori because my mother spoke fluent Māori but in my lifetime I only heard her speak it twice to my grandfather so it’s kind of sad that we were never brought up with it and yet she was fluent. But she was of the generation where: learn English, become mainstream and you’ll get a job. So I guess I have an opportunity now to learn and understand. |
| Female 2 | I’m studying Te Reo Māori because I’ve got a couple of young kids and I’d like them to be able to speak it and at least know the basics. |
| Female 3 | Because it’s part of who I am, as being Ngāi Tahu and it’s been five generations since the language has been in our whānau and I’ve kind of been handed the baton to bring it back to us. |
| Female 4 | It interests me, it always has and I would like to be in the New Zealand Police, I’m in the recruitment process at the moment and so it’s one of those things that I think would be beneficial to help other people in my work place. |
| Female 5 | I’m studying Te Reo Māori because I’m in education and I think it’s important as part of our children’s education that they learn some Te Reo. |
| Sally | Ok and we’re back now, just one more question for you Regan. You belong to a very casual conversation group, if you could just give us a little bit of information about it please. |
| Regan | So firstly ngā mihi e nui ke toku hua ko Jamie Stevenson. So Jamie Stevenson is a friend who set up a speaking group in Te Reo Māori because just kind of found that there weren’t many places to speak Māori with other speakers around the city so it’s called Ngāi Hōkaka Ki Te Reo Māori and there’s a group on Facebook so if you’re interested that’d be the best place to go, just search Ngāi Hōkaka Ki Te Reo Māori. And they meet weekly at different places around the city and essentially just speak Māori. There’s a wide range of people with different abilities that go so it’s pretty laid back, often people just bring one new word that they’ve learnt and then share it with the group and then just work on things together or work on community projects in Te Reo Māori to get Māori out into the community. But it’s a really good initiative by Jamie and anyone maybe who has learnt some Māori and then doesn’t really know where to go from there should definitely go along.  Because one of the problems that was highlighted at that conference I went to is that what we do as Māori teachers is we get new students at the start of the year, we teach them Māori for five weeks a term, a year, however long… and then we release them out into the wild which is essentially a desert for Māori speakers. So then we start with a new group of students and we teach them again and we feel like we’re revitalising the language when in fact maybe what we should be doing is think about how we can create speaker communities, which is what Jamie has been doing. So that there are places to speak Māori and communities that can start using Māori as part of their daily life because that’s really where the revitalisation will come in. If we can teach it to our children, if we can start using it in all aspects of life, just casual conversation, playing a game of cards, things like that, that’s how the language will be revitalised. |
| Sally | Yeah great and I highly recommend that if you are interested in speaking some Te Reo Māori that you do look up the Facebook group because it’s a good one to belong to.  Now just to finish off it’s Matariki coming up at the end of June, it’s the Māori New Year and that’s the reason we are talking about Māori today so keep an eye out for any events that might be taking place. And that just about winds up this month’s Speak Up - Kōrerotia, so tune in again next month, it’ll be the 17th of June, and we’re going to be talking about refugee issues in Christchurch and more broadly because World Refugee will be coming up next month. Ka kite i te marama. Thank you very much, Regan, for coming in. |
| Regan | Kia ora ka kite ano. |
| Sally | And just as we’re finishing up, here are some of the favourite words in Te Reo Māori of my classmates at Te Wānanga O Aotearoa. |
| Male 1 | ‘Tu meke’, ‘wanane’ - they both kind of mean awesome. ‘Karaphiua’ = ‘Go for it’ and ‘Emara’ which means ‘My bro’, are some of my favourites. |
| Female 1 | ‘Manaaki’. |
| Sally | Because? |
| Female 2 | I do it all the time at mihi and so they call me manaki at work. |
| Female 3 | I like ‘Āe mārika’ which is ‘That’s right’ and ‘Tu meke’ = ‘Awesome’. |
| Female 4 | ‘Koia, koia’ which is Ngāi Tahu… ‘Ki waha’ which means that ‘We can do it, yes we can’. So I use ‘Ka pai’ a lot and because I’m a relief teacher, I go into the class and I introduce myself in Māori and “E tū” and “E noho” usually sit in there somewhere, ‘Whakarongo mai”. I do commands quite often in Māori. |