

NEW ZEALAND IN 2030

FUTUREMAKER OR

FUTURE TAKER?

PROFESSOR MASON DURIE
PROJECT SPONSOR

INTRODUCING INSIGHTS AND QUESTIONS
FROM THE FUTUREMAKERS PROJECT

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This paper contains the introductory and closing sections of Professor Mason Durie's presentation of the insights and questions from the FutureMakers project. The content covered in the rest of his address can be found in the set of 10 FutureMakers cards available at the lecture and on <http://futuremakers.ning.com/>

INTRODUCTION

LOOKING BACK

Two institutions were established in New Zealand 150 years ago which, although not conceptually new to the world, but did signal a spirit of change and a prescription for a new type of society at least as far as colonial New Zealand was concerned.

Their endurance over 150 years suggests that they have been valued as important touchstones in a world where change and uncertainty have tended to outweigh constancy and predictability. Yet in 1858 they might well have been considered out of place in a country that was in the midst of a forced transition from a tribal society to a modern nation state.

THE DIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

In 1858 the Church of the Province of New Zealand was established and recognised as part of the wider Anglican Communion and Charles Abrahams was consecrated as the first Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Wellington. This year, 2008, under the direction of the 10th Bishop of Wellington, celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of the Diocese have been held throughout the region.

KINGITANGA

The second institution to be established in 1858 was the Kingitanga, the Maori King movement. Over the preceding four years tribes throughout the country had discussed the possibility of joining forces in order to strengthen their position in the face of settler hunger for land and political rush to by-pass tribal conventions.

Eventually Potatau Te Wherowhero was chosen as a King, not to rule over the tribes but to foster a spirit of unity among the tribes so that the Maori position could be better articulated. This year, Kingi Tuheitia presided over a series of events that celebrated

the anointment of his great great great great grandfather, Te Wherowhero as the first Maori King in 1858.

TAMIHANA AND MATENE

Although at first glance the Diocese of Wellington and the Maori King might seem to have little in common, except perhaps for a temporal relationship and an Anglo-Saxon way of doing things, the origins of both owe something to two quite extraordinary young Maori men from Ngati Raukawa in Horowhenua.

Quite by accident Tamihana Te Rauparaha, the son of renowned warrior Te Rauparaha, and his cousin Matene te Whiwhi had come into contact with a Maori teacher who had been taught to read and write in a missionary station near Kerikeri.

Impressed by his skills and the message he carried, the cousins decided that a missionary should be procured for the Ngati Toa and Ngati Raukawa tribes. They travelled to Kerikeri and persuaded the Reverend Henry Williams to send a missionary to Otaki.

Octavius Hadfield, then a young priest and only a recent arrival to New Zealand, was chosen and under the patronage of Tamihana and Matene arrived in Waikanae in 1839, subsequently devoting most of his life to working in the Horowhenua and Wellington region, initially as the Archdeacon of Kapiti, and then from 1870 as the second Bishop of Wellington.

Some years later, in 1854, the two cousins made a further tour around the North Island. Having travelled to Europe and been impressed by European monarchs and their influence in uniting their subjects, Tamihana Te Rauparaha, aided by Matene te Whiwhi promoted the idea of a Maori King who might foster a sense of tribal unity as a way of reducing land alienation and overcoming political oppression. For the tribes, coming together under a common cause was quite a novel idea. But eventually it was embraced and in 1858 Potatau was persuaded to fill the role.

THE FUTURE IS BEHIND US

It may not be clear why events that occurred 150 years ago could be relevant to a seminar where the future, rather than the past, is under discussion.

There are two reasons. First, we should not discount the past as a guide to the future. Maori have a saying: 'Titiro whakamuri, kia anga whakamua' the future is behind us. We would be naive indeed if we believed that earlier generations had not faced equally challenging times and developed strategies that would take them into new and often unknown worlds.

FUTURE MAKERS

Second, Tamihana Te Rauparaha and Matene te Whiwhi were not content to let a new world unfold before them. They wanted to shape the future rather than simply allow a future to shape them. In the words of the title for this address, they were future makers not future takers. In that context it is a great privilege to participate in this year's Victoria University School of Government Spring Lecture Series and to consider the type of society that our children and grandchildren will inherit.

As a small country - even one which, in our bolder moments, we like to think can punch above its weight - New Zealand is destined in many respects and in many areas to be more of a future taker than a future maker.

We are too few to exercise much influence beyond our own shores and it will always be true that most of the ideas which shape the world will originate elsewhere and that most of the developments which shape events will occur elsewhere.

This is obvious when we contemplate:

- Geopolitical shifts, in particular the rise of China and subsequently India to super power status over the next 30 years;
- The impact of globalisation, good and bad and of our increasingly interconnected world, economically, socially, culturally and environmentally;
- Rapid advances across a range of technologies (biotechnology, nanotechnology, ICT). Consider, for example, how mobile phones and mobile computing have transformed our social and work habits within the space of a decade; and
- Moving beyond the tipping point that leads to irreversible and catastrophic climate change and the huge global effort that is needed to mitigate such effects or, more likely, to adapt to their consequences

These dynamics will rewrite the world's future whatever contribution New Zealand makes. But that does not relieve us of any obligation to prepare or, at the very least, to think about what these trends might mean for us.

- Do we know where and how we could be a future maker?
- Do we have the knowledge and skills to pull together the right data about the past and the present as a starting point for thinking about the future?
- Do we have the capability and infrastructure to think about responding to a wide range of external influences, both incremental (climate change) and sudden (financial oscillations)?;
- Do we have the spaces to ask ourselves the right questions and to build a shared understanding of the options available to us?

THE FUTUREMAKERS PROJECT

The FutureMakers Project is an attempt to create such a space. FutureMakers is a collaboration between three organisations all of which have an interest in our ability to take the long view and a mandate to help build this capability: Landcare Research, The Institute of Policy Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, and Secondary Futures a project of which I have the pleasure of being a Guardian as it elicits New Zealanders' vision for the future of secondary schooling.

The FutureMakers partnership was formed in May this year with the objective of bringing together information and people to try to cast new light on the challenges and choices facing New Zealand over the next 20 years.

Aware that a range of futures work had been done in the government sector, but not pulled together, the partnership started by commissioning a meta-analysis of that futures work, to see what the overall picture looked like.

With the help of the State Services Commission and the Future Practitioners' Forum, they collected over 100 futures related documents. The bulk of this work focused on trends and trend analysis. Across this material there was a surprising consistency of message about the kind of short term future we face. However there was a dearth of exploratory work going further out into the future 50 years or more (though this work has been done elsewhere in New Zealand, for example the 100 year and 1000 year visions by Ngai Tahu and Ngati Raukawa.)

The project brought together experts in the social, technological, economic, environmental and political arenas, first to discuss the existing analysis and to test the

future trends identified in it, and then to start to tease out some of the emerging patterns of change that could be seen and the possible futures they suggest.

My own involvement as Project Sponsor comes from my role as a Guardian of Secondary Futures which, for those of you unfamiliar with its work, was set up in 2003 to explore with New Zealanders a long-term vision for secondary schooling.

The idea behind Secondary Futures was not to produce a policy blueprint but to develop a consensus around the direction for change to guide policy-making. The FutureMakers project is also about charting possible futures but, running over five months rather than five years, is intended to provide no more than a toe in the water in identifying the questions we should be asking ourselves and starting the debate about how we equip ourselves to answer them.

As we share some of those questions today, we hope the ongoing discussion will involve many of you in this room and many beyond this room, and take us towards the possibility of some useful answers.

Unlike Secondary Futures, FutureMakers has no direct funding but is instead being resourced by the participating organisations from within their existing budgets and around their other work commitments.

The FutureMakers team, Bob Frame, from Landcare Research, Derek Gill Institute of Policy Studies and Stephanie Pride from Secondary Futures have done what they can within these limitations and are grateful to the many people who have willingly contributed their time and expertise to the project. But please do not expect finished scholarship. That was never going to be possible. All we hope to do at this stage is to create a starting point for ongoing discussion.

KIWI PRAGMATICS

Like other nations that have not been totally encumbered with the weight of Northern Hemisphere traditions of class and structure, New Zealand has evolved with a healthy dose of pragmatism. We have done things in our own way knowing that in the scheme of things we were never going to shape the rest of the world or pay a major role in global economics.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

New Zealand is not alone in having a highly uncertain future, as is obvious from the global financial crisis. And in many ways we are not able to assert a firm hand on the tiller – we are constantly aware of the fragility of our current existence. However, if we choose we can increase our resilience to change, consolidate our reputation for sound stewardship of our resources and be visionary in setting our course for the future.

One way we might do this is to ensure we educate young people in a way that equips them to look ahead and imagine rigorously as a matter of course. As Secondary Futures has talked to New Zealanders about their vision for the future of education, they have said that all students need the capacity to participate in a future society and that teachers, as a matter of course, need to be heralds of change to meet this need. The introduction of future focus as a principle in the new New Zealand Curriculum is a step towards a system that will do this.

Transforming the education system to match New Zealanders' vision will give us a next generation of leaders who anticipate change and take it in their stride, but of course we can't sit back and wait a generation for them to come through.

What we do know is that, in a country of just over four million, we cannot afford to carry on thinking forward in separate pockets, either within sectors, business, government, academia, communities, or within individual agencies. We need to bring together our data, our knowledge, our diverse perspectives and our imaginative capacities to have any chance of really imagining the range of possibilities we face and understanding how we might want to respond to them.

We need to have well-informed debate among unlike minds. It is only when the debate is widened and more voices are encouraged to contribute will the capacity and capability to create truly innovative and rigorous futures be realised.

We need to ensure we have the institutional arrangements that make this possible, where we can have wide and searching debate about what is happening and could happen next.

We invite you to do two things:

Firstly, to carry on this conversation: use the FutureMakers' "thought starter" cards to engage with the stories and questions, devise your own questions, visit the web site to explore some of the experts' conversations and the trend data collected in the project, add to it, challenge it, explore possibilities.

Secondly, we invite you to engage with us on how we might put our resources together to ensure we increase our capacity to be Futuremakers, what it might look like and who could help.