

## A New Year's Message

E nga Mana e nga Reo, e nga Karangatanga maha, me te Iwi whanui hoki o Tuwharetoa, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena ano tatou katoa.

Christmas has come and gone and another year has drawn to a close. I would like to take a few moments to share with you the reflections I have had over the past year and give some thought for 2009. Much has happened over the 2008 year which has involved us in some key economic and social decisions being taken that will no doubt impact on us all as a tribe, a community and a nation. However it is not just about the present and future aspirations of Tuwharetoa, but more about what our mokopuna and rangatahi might inherit from these decisions we make today.

A few weeks ago prior to the meeting at Pukawa when I contemplated on the changing world in which we are now living in, the essence of that korero was about building meaningful relationships as a foundation for a cohesive way forward from which all can benefit.

The recent Pukawa visit by the new Prime Minister and his senior officials, in my opinion, achieved this by providing the motu with an opportunity to build a strong relationship between Maori and the Crown. The symbolic act of the Crown and the motu tying a flax *taura* from the Marae pou to the base replicated the *Kotahitanga* (unity) commitment from the tribes that attended Pukawa in 1856. Today this visit was about ensuring the foundation of respectful partnership was in place before we engaged together on the critical issues that face us both in striving to build the kind of nation our

children of the future deserve. This will not be without its challenges, but at the end of the day, it is about what we do as a people, that will add value and meaning to our lives, our environment and our country.

We have witnessed many challenges and changes over the last year, politically economically, locally, nationally and across the global spectrum. I want to again reflect on two examples of positive relationship building that we can learn from and take advantage of in the social and economic development of our people.

Firstly, the conference hosted by the World Heritage Organisation held in Christchurch, Aotearoa in 2007. People from all over the world met to discuss issues concerning Natural and Cultural World Heritage Sites. Whilst there was a diverse range of political, cultural and spiritual representation at the conference, it did not impede our discussions. If anything, it enriched the dialogue and exchange of ideas and helped bind common thoughts and aspirations marginalising the differences that may well have slowed progress. By acknowledging and respecting difference it actually strengthened our common purpose - that of the protection and sustainability of the world's natural environment and cultural heritage. It was indeed a pleasure to witness the collective will and effort for common good that transcended across differences of language, customs, spiritual and political beliefs. In terms of international relationships if the will for common interest, rather than the emphasis on difference alone is taken into account, nothing is insurmountable.

The second example I refer to is the CNI Forestry Treaty settlement processes. There is no doubt, in my mind that there were occasions leading to consensus for a collective agreement to the settlement proposals, which were indeed problematic. As I have said before, many of the challenges we faced tended to be on difference of interpretation of the settlement arrangements, rather than the desire to actually settle the claim. The point of advancement was achieved when we looked for common purpose relevant to our collective relationships. Moreover, it was when we started to engage in a dialogue that was focussed on our relationships with each other as the important issue, rather than just the resource that we were charged with administering, that helped make sense for a positive and cohesive way forward.

It was a turning point in the negotiating process from which we never looked back. Growing the trees and our forestry industry is undoubtedly important. However, growing people in a manner that will give them a quality of life that is meaningful should be the real objective. There will be further challenges but I have every confidence that so long as we keep our focus on strengthening and maintaining our people relationships, a positive outcome will be achieved for all.

In terms of what this all means for us here at home, it will always be about who we are as a tribe, reflected by our links to the mountains, the lakes and our whenua. We as Tuwharetoa have the responsibility of guardianship entrusted in us by our tupuna. It is also a responsibility that will require each of us to work collectively to maintain. It is the goal of every tribal group to develop a strong economic and social base for its people using whatever resources it

has. But there is also an added responsibility often overlooked and that is the development of our rangatahi. Society in my mind is creating a climate of social devastation for our young people. We as a tribe need to commit our efforts to ensure our rangatahi are better able to meet their own personal challenges as well as contribute to resolving those we are grappling with at the tribal level. Their achievement will come about through strong leadership from us all.

I believe that the kind of leadership required begins within our own whanau. This year I would like to see us build more lasting and meaningful relationships that reaches out to families, hapu and the tribe.

What transcends across these three important entities is the *whakapapa* relationship that is integral to who we are. It is our whakapapa links that bind us as Ngati Tuwharetoa, and is probably the single most important factor that will help us in our decision-making to achieve a positive collective outcome. Already whanau-based *Wananga Whakapapa* are being held on our marae to not only strengthen the links between whanau but also to better understand the cultural knowledge that links them to us as Ngati Tuwharetoa. *Whakapapa* is our connection to our past and to our mokopuna of the future.

There is still much to consider if we are to take advantage of the good work that has been accomplished in 2008. Underpinning our efforts in 2009 will still be the matter of consolidating relationships with those whom we do tribal and Crown businesses with, but more importantly it is how we as a tribe come to terms with ourselves. If we are to move ahead together as Tuwharetoa then it must be with

a collective focus where our future is already determined by who we are and how we interrelate with each other.

if we can build on our commonalities as cornerstones for strengthening positive and collective ways forward, rather than seeing them as impediments for achieving singular profits or advancements; if we can focus on doing the right things and put aside self interest by just trying to make things right for personal gain; if we can for one moment in time give due consideration and diligence to achieving these principles then we will have provided an environment of succession leadership for our mokopuna, rangatahi, whanau and hapu that will contribute to the prosperity of our people.

No reira e te Iwi, thank you for allowing me to share some of my thoughts. Let us together face the year ahead with confidence in whatever we do

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