

Aotearoa NZ Centre for Indigenous Peoples and the Law

DESPITE THE CIRCUMSTANCES, 2020 has been a busy year for the Centre.

Impact of COVID-19 on Māori and Indigenous peoples

Centre members have participated in numerous online fora to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on Māori and Indigenous peoples, including: Victoria University's Māori Law Review's Indigenous Peoples and COVID-19: *Issues of Law and Justice* series; Auckland Law School's *Law and COVID-19* webinar series; and ICON-S AUS-NZ's *Trans-Tasman Reflections on COVID-19 and Public Law* webinar.

Dr Claire Charters acted as co-Chair of the Human Rights Commission's Kaiwhakatara Accountability Advisory Group advising on the impact of COVID-19 on human rights and Te Tiriti and provided public comment on the relevance of Te Tiriti in responses to COVID-19.

Tikanga Māori and state law

The Centre hosted a panel discussion on tikanga Māori and state law with a focus on the Supreme Court's recent decision on the Peter Ellis appeal.

In collaboration with the Law Commission and the Institute of Judicial Studies, the Centre will convene a wānanga with tikanga Māori experts to analyse and develop guidance on the intersection of tikanga Māori and state law.

Advocating for the rights of Māori and Indigenous peoples

The Centre convened two online hui to support relevant Māori organisations and advocates prepare aboriginal title cases to freshwater and will continue to provide support into the future.

Dr Claire Charters provided public comment on proposals to reform the Māori media sector.

Jayden Houghton will give a public lecture on a new model to enable Māori to exercise the full spectrum of tino rangatiratanga rights and responsibilities with respect to mātauranga Māori and taonga.

Tracey Whare will present at the International Indigenous Research Conference 2020 on 'Making the case for Indigenous peoples' ownership of bioactive research'.

Targeted research on Māori and Indigenous peoples' rights

Jayden Houghton is exploring the impact of the Mataatua Declaration on the recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights to knowledge and culture in Aotearoa and internationally.

Tracey Whare will undertake research on tino rangatiratanga as a legal precept in tikanga Māori.

Dr Fleur Te Aho and Tracey Whare will develop chapters on Indigenous rights under international law for inclusion in *International Law in Aotearoa New Zealand* edited by Anna Hood and An Hertogen.

Dr Fleur Te Aho is also developing a book on the role of the UN Human Rights Council's special procedures in influencing state behaviour towards Indigenous peoples.

Claire Mason is currently researching the intersection of Indigenous and tamariki Māori rights and is also leading on the development of advocacy products that emerge from the Indigenous Impact Programme.

Speakers' series 2020

The Centre hosted panel discussions in late 2020 focussing on two topical issues — tikanga Māori and the Peter Ellis case and the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

The Centre was honoured to have Annette Sykes deliver this year's Nin Tomas Memorial Lecture as part of Te Rākau Ture's (Māori Law Students' Association) 30th anniversary celebration.

Key appointments

- **Amokura Kawharu** as President of the New Zealand Law Commission
- **Maia Wikaira** as member of the New Zealand Council of Legal Education
- **Maureen Malcom** as Lecturer
- **Jeremy Hema** as Kaiārahi
- **Claire Mason** as the Centre's Research Fellow.

Supporting taura Māori

Kahukiwi Piripi was awarded the Centre's Indigenous Scholarship for 2020 to attend Columbia's Indigenous Studies Summer Program on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Policy, which will now be taught online in 2021.

John Kingi and Isabel Ward were awarded Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga internships to support the Centre's development of a shadow report

on the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which New Zealand will report on in late 2021.

Indigenous Impact Programme

The Centre's Indigenous Impact Programme is going from strength to strength with the continued support of the Borrin Foundation. Using a design thinking approach, clinic students worked with Māori practitioners to identify key challenges for Māori in the criminal and family law systems and potential solutions. This work will inform the Centre's development of advocacy products to influence policy and law reform issues that impact on Māori.

Indigenous-related law curricula

With support from Chapman Tripp, Judge Layne Harvey, Whāia Legal and Meredith Connell, Auckland Law School continues to offer a wide-array of Māori and Indigenous related courses including in Māori land law, justice in sentencing, te Tiriti contemporary issues, international law and Indigenous peoples, iwi governance, comparative constitutional law and Indigenous peoples, and mātauranga Māori. We also have te Tiriti and tikanga curricula in a number of compulsory courses.

Centre members have contributed to the 'Indigenising the LLB' work led by Jacinta Ruru at the University of Otago and Tracey Whare and Maureen Malcolm have received funding to explore how Auckland Law School can enhance and improve the content and delivery of tikanga Māori within the LLB degree.

Looking ahead to 2021: Major conference on constitutional transformation

With significant support from the Borrin Foundation, the Centre will convene a three-day international conference in late 2021 to explore legal options for constitutional transformation in Aotearoa New Zealand grounded in Indigenous peoples' rights and the models proposed by Matike Mai Aotearoa.

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