

Kaitiakitanga

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ON THE EDGE of the Abel Tasman National Park in Nelson is the coastal settlement known as Mārahau. The name translates into English as 'the windy gardens'. Even on clear days the wind lashes across the fertile land and sea. For hundreds of years our ancestors lived here, cultivating gardens and fishing the warm, safe bay for rich, fat tuangi (cockles), pipi, tāmure (snapper), kahawai and pāpaka (crab).

We come together as whānau to gather and camp on our traditional customary land every summer. Each time, we are reminded of the values that shape and guide what we do in modern life: the values of manakitanga (the quality of care and generosity towards people) and kaitiakitanga (the importance of balance and the need to ensure that this balance between people and the land and sea is maintained).

It reminds us to hold steadfastly to our responsibility as advocate, protector, and voice of our whenua (land), moana (sea) and awa (waterways). To truly care for our natural resources in the knowledge that if we do, they will provide and endure. Most importantly, to ensure that our sense of the importance of people and place is nurtured and strengthened, setting us on course for another year.

THE MĀORI OWNERS of indigenous food and beverage company Kono call Mārahau — and the rest of the top of the South Island, known as

Te Tau Ihu o Te Ika a Māui — home. This is our tūrangawaewae, the place where we feel connected and empowered. Where we make sense of the world before we push out into new frontiers.

Since the first days of contact with Pākehā settlers coming to the Nelson region, our people have fed, housed and traded with them to ensure their survival and well-being. We were the original providers of the rohe (region), sourcing and providing food to the world. When the first German settlers came to Nelson in 1841, it was our ancestors who helped them break in the land at Moutere, providing them with enough food through the winters until their own crops were established. By the early 1850s, we had a global reach with five of the 17 export trading ships at the Port of Nelson registered in the names of our ancestors. We had quickly recognised the value of partnership with tauwiwi (non-Māori) and, for a short time, prospered.

That prosperity was stymied when the Crown and the New Zealand Company conspired to satisfy an insatiable hunger for land. To do this, the families of Te Tau Ihu had to be removed from the equation and from their homes.

What followed was a period of extreme disenfranchisement. Living on the margins, most of us had no control of our land and the deprivation forced us into other tribal areas. Years passed and generations of our families were born and lived their lives without knowing their tūrangawaewae. Some of us had worn other tribal names for a very long time. Connections to one another were becoming tenuous. However, whakapapa runs deep and the fire in our belly burned.

In 1977, after more than 120 years of patience, impatience, petitions, letters and court hearings, through the formation of Kono's owning entity Wakatū Incorporation we regained control of the remnants of our lands — yet it was returned in a swathe of red tape that for many years prevented us walking on the very whenua that gave us our identity.

Since that time we have reconnected, and replenished the mauri (life force) of our tūrangawaewae. We have reassumed the mantle of kaitiaki,

or guardian, of our legacy. We have diversified into industries that are the lifeblood of the economy of Te Tau Ihu.

CREATED IN 2012 from a collection of separate wine, seafood and pipfruit companies, Kono has consolidated into one company with a common purpose: to be the best indigenous food and beverage business in the world. Our rohe ranges from the clear waters of the Marlborough Sounds to the fertile plains of Motueka and Golden Bay.

Kono, which translates as 'woven basket', refers to the beautiful harakeke (flax) woven baskets traditionally used to serve the best food from our region to our visitors. We're fundamentally farmers, orchardists and fishermen. We take the products we grow, harvest and fish, and endow them with beautiful brands that celebrate our culture — among them Kiwa oysters; Kono mussels; Tohu, Aronui and Rewa wines; and Tutū cider. One of the selections of which we're most proud is our Kaumātua range, the very best of our wines that we have named after great leaders such as Mugwi McDonald, one of our first Wakatū board members. These are the sorts of unique ways we choose to honour our legacy — to make our history not only known, but current.

With up to 450 staff at any one time, there's as much a job to do in sharing these stories internally as there is through the 40-odd countries to which we export. Some of our team are owners, and that adds to the tapestry of the business. Wakatū has made a very concerted effort to focus on succession planning over the past 15 years, with a robust programme of scholarships, skills training, cultural induction and governance experience, which are offered to all, from seven-year-olds through to our kaumātua (elders). Those programmes are paying dividends, with a number of those who have been through the programme now working within the business at every level.

Kono does not, of course, exist in its own cultural context. It exists in a much larger domestic and global framework of law, policy, politics and

commerce. This larger context has the power to impede or support its ambitions to be the best. Within Kono, as its governors and managers, we have a dual responsibility to be cognisant of the cultural imperatives and obligations that drive us, as well as the social and political forces that affect our destiny. All of this impacts on what it means to be the best indigenous food and beverage business in the world.

Our aspiration to be the best is by its very nature a subjective assessment. While there may be statistical measures that help define us as we undertake this journey (revenue, market share, brand recognition), what will matter most are the measures we are creating now to define what is 'best' for us. What is 'tika' — correct, true, right and fair. What we do know is that Kono can satisfy so much of what consumers are seeking the world round. Safety, authenticity, heritage, story, and the real promise of care for people and place. We're a demonstrably whānau-oriented business, and increasingly this matters. The challenge is how to package our story of intergenerational values, legacy and responsibility, and share that with our partners and consumers.

IN 2011, KONO adopted Te Pae Tawhiti, its 500-year intergenerational strategic plan. This ambitious plan governs everything we do. It sets out the core intergenerational outcomes that Kono must achieve in order to advance.

A key objective is financial growth and security — we must ensure that our assets continue to improve in value and that we are building an organisation that creates wealth in our community. The other core objectives relate to our relationship to our environment, which is conceived as one whole — this is because our water and land is indivisible.

In this respect, our environment must be well and healthy, full of life and vitality. This is not only because our whenua deserves to be healthy in its own right, but also because the wellness of our people is

intrinsicly linked to the well-being of our environment. When the land and water are sick, so are its people.

We see immense strength in working with other iwi and other Māori organisations. The Māori economy is valued in the vicinity of \$40 billion; that said, we do not 'control' the vast majority of our assets — and that's not lost on the participants in this space. The pieces are coming together quickly as we develop our capabilities in all areas of the economy. The changes that take place in the next 10 years will be like light-speed compared to the past 10 years, and that's because the past 10 to 20 years have been spent settling grievances. We're now in a strong place regarding digital connectivity, settlement and asset ownership. But Māori are over-represented in low educational attainment, obesity, incarceration, suicide and unemployment statistics. A concerted effort is under way to take all of the positives in the Māori economy and turn them towards those areas of systemic challenge that will make a long-term difference for Māori.

We are committed to being wealth creators for our owners, but also job creators. And this extends beyond employing people — we want to teach our rangatahi (young people) how to create wealth and be job creators. We're a commercial organisation, but we are underpinned by social and cultural imperatives. For Kono and Wakatū to be well, so too must its people.

MANY NEW ZEALAND companies are exploring the concept of sustainability. We use the word, and the Māori word that is beginning to be used more and more in its place, kaitiakitanga, in an attempt to describe our unique place in the world and the love that we have for our place and product. We want our customers to trust that the products we provide are safe and healthy, and that the land and water that has produced them is pristine. When we go into the world with our products, this is our message and our core value proposition as New Zealanders.

But what does sustainability mean, and how do we know if we are achieving it? The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines sustainability as 'the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level' and 'avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance'. Kaitiakitanga is more difficult to define, especially in English. Derived from the term 'kaitiaki', meaning a person who exercises care or guardianship over a living natural thing (including humans and the environment), the addition of 'tanga' infuses the word with action, responsiveness and responsibility. The term is unavoidably connected with notions of power, control and ownership of land and water. This is often missed when we talk about kaitiakitanga in the modern context. We simply cannot be kaitiaki of our land and sea if we have lost ownership or control of it — a point worth bearing in mind as one-third of New Zealand's coastline has passed into private and foreign ownership.

The concept of sustainability has its origins in international environmental law movements concerned with the human impact on our environment over time. The 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was ground-breaking in its attempt to bring together nations to face the issue of sustainability together. But from an indigenous and Māori perspective, the Declaration falls well short of what we expect from people in order to overcome the environmental damage of the past and present. Principle 1 of the Rio Declaration, for example, places the entitlement of human beings rather than the intrinsic value of the environment firmly in centre place, declaring: 'Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.'

Principle 2 follows on with: 'States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause

damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.'

In comparison, consider the Kari-Oca Declaration, drafted by indigenous peoples globally in response to very limited state and international environmental laws, which continue to focus on the rights of people and profits over land and sea. The Declaration, which was signed by indigenous peoples in Brazil in May 1992, states:

We, the Indigenous Peoples, walk to the future in the footprints of our ancestors.

From the smallest to the largest living being, from the four directions, from the air, the land and the mountains. The creator has placed us, the Indigenous peoples, upon our Mother the earth.

The footprints of our ancestors are permanently etched upon the lands of our peoples.

We, the Indigenous peoples, maintain our inherent rights to self-determination. We have always had the right to decide our own forms of government, to use our own laws, to raise and educate our children, to our own cultural identity without interference.

We continue to maintain our rights as peoples despite centuries of deprivation, assimilation and genocide.

We maintain our inalienable rights to our lands and territories, to all our resources — above and below — and to our waters. We assert our ongoing responsibility to pass these onto the future generations.

We cannot be removed from our lands. We, the Indigenous peoples, are connected by the circle of life to our lands and environments.

We, the Indigenous peoples, walk to the future in the footprints of our ancestors.

Our phosphorus footprint

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So, before we can answer the question 'Can New Zealand feed the world sustainably?' we must embark on the kind of conversation started at Rio and Kari-Oca in 1992. As New Zealanders, we must determine for ourselves what sustainability means, for us as individual New Zealand food and beverage companies and collectively on the world stage. We have to approach the question individually and collectively because, whether we acknowledge it or not, as New Zealand producers we are bound to one another in known and unforeseen ways. When one of us fails, there is a risk we all fail. Where one of us succeeds, there are endless opportunities for others to follow.

At Kono, we have embarked on a journey of deep introspection to determine what being a good kaitiaki means to us. We know it will mean something nuanced and different from what it may mean for others, particularly other Māori companies. We don't know yet how it will impact on what we do, but we know it will because this is an inevitable and welcome part of our growth and improvement.

We know our people — which includes our owners, employees and customers around the world — will be at the heart of our approach to kaitiakitanga, as will our whenua and moana. Because, quite simply, we cannot survive without each other.

Toitū te marae a Tane, toitū te marae a Tangaroa, toitū te Iwi.

When the realm of Tane and the domain of Tangaroa are sustained, so too is the future of humanity.

PHOSPHORUS IS A fundamental and non-substitutable element of all living creatures. Since the mid-20th century we have increased the environmental flow of phosphorus fourfold, with global phosphate rock production now exceeding 0.2 gigatonnes (Gt) annually. This has been driven by a growing global population and an increase in dietary phosphorus footprint, further propelled by an increase in the consumption of animal-based foods. Yet some countries remain low phosphorus users, namely parts of Africa and Asia, widening the gap in phosphorus use between wealthier and poorer nations.

The industrial agriculture brought by the Green Revolution has increased the capacity for food production from a given land area, but also our dependency on phosphate rock, which is non-renewable. In order to produce food at current global yields and continue to fulfil human requirements, it is necessary to have a steady supply of phosphorus to agricultural soils. For this, phosphate rock is mined in a limited number of regions from where it is concentrated, then transported globally before being widely applied onto agricultural soils, creating a one-way flow of phosphorus from rocks to farms. Harvested crops are then transported all over the world for food processing and consumption, ending in waste streams. All this causes a geographical imbalance in the distribution of phosphorus in the environment compared to that in natural ecosystems and has modified the phosphorus cycle, with low