

# Te Whakatika



## *This Issue*

**Exploring a Wairua Connection to Water as Hauora**

**The connection between Wairua and Whakapapa**

**Paradise: sharing in the spiritual through the outdoors**

**A personal opinion of some of the religious influences on OE?**

**Adventure Specialties Trust: Experiential learning in wilderness spaces**

**What's wrong with religious instruction as part of state primary school camp?**



# Education Outdoors New Zealand

*Commitment to fostering and advocating for quality outdoor learning experiences which can educate for a sustainable future*

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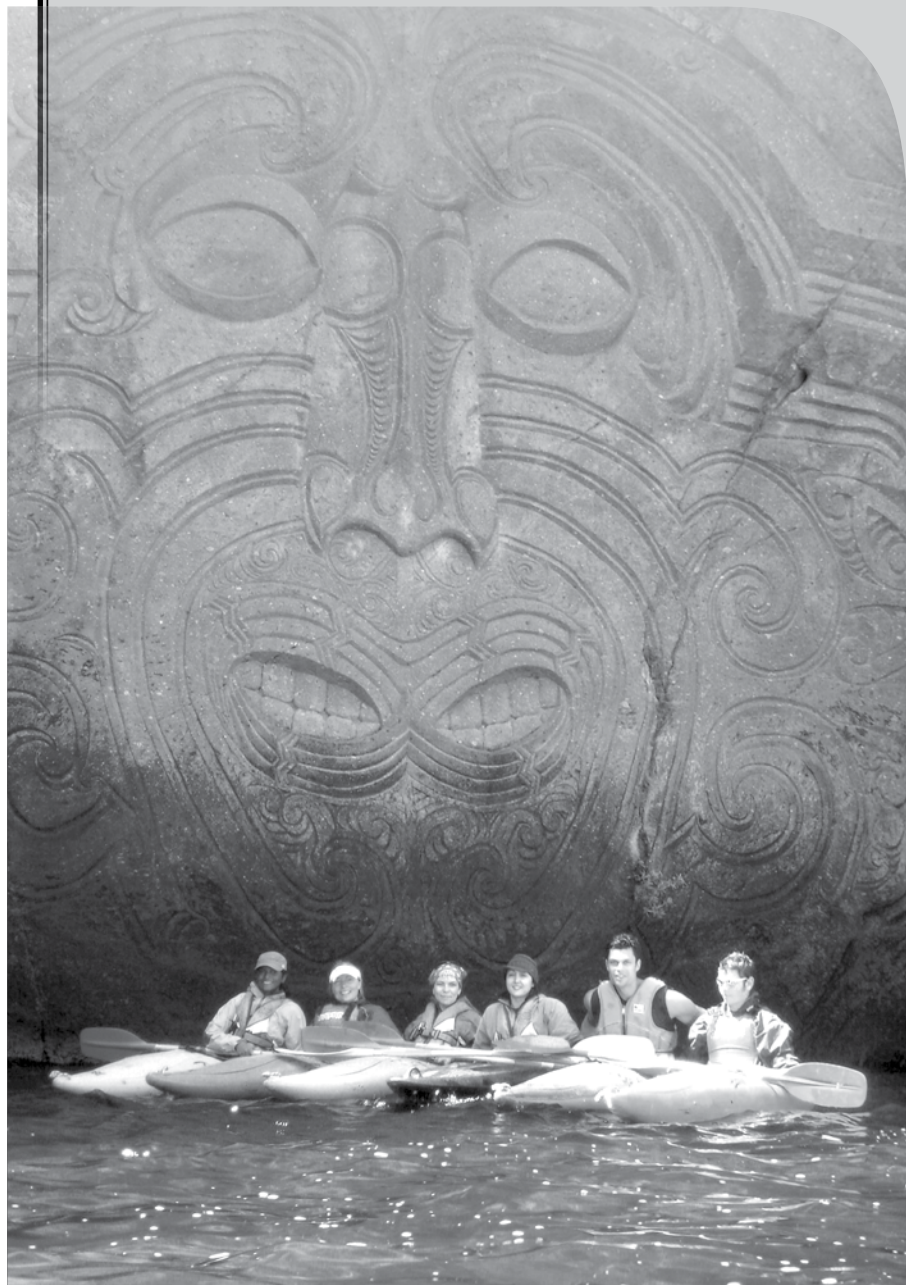
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## Te Whakatika

(formerly known as Out and About) describes the start of a journey (to set out), but also means to make correct (to amend and prepare).

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# Editorial Spring 2018

by David Irwin

Kia ora and welcome to this spring edition of *Te Whakatika*, published by Education Outdoors New Zealand (EONZ). I hope you enjoy the reading, and if this is your first encounter with EONZ, I encourage you and/or your school to become a member of our community and to contribute to discussions about



education outside the classroom in the future. As always, letters to the editor and both feature and minor articles are welcomed and can be sent to me via email.

Much has happened since the last edition, but for me the most significant and most challenging relates to new thinking on climate change. In early October, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that, based on new research, countries needed to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in order to achieve no more than 1.5C warming on pre-industrial times, the lower end of the 1.5-2C range agreed to in the Paris Climate Accord (Watts, 2018).

The new research clearly demonstrated that the current change in climate, increase in flood and fire events, and significant loss of glacial and sea ice indicates that the initial goal of 2C should now be considered unsafe.

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The IPCC noted that the 1.5C goal is achievable but that we have just 12 years to cut global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 45%. This is a much more ambitious target than the 20% reduction over the same timeframe to keep global average temperatures no more than 2C.

Twelve years seems like such a small window of time, and we all need to think about changes we can make. The EONZ executive has discussed the functions of the organisation in relation to climate change and as a result has developed a new addition to our position statement. The new policy is:

### 5. Reducing our footprint

EONZ is committed to reducing the impact it has on the planet. This commitment includes reducing the impacts of the executive board, and all outputs of the organisation including production of resources and professional development. For example, EONZ is committed to providing resources on-line to reduce the impact on forests, and increasing the provision of local opportunities for PD to reduce the need to travel.

What is the position of your school or organisation? Big changes are required and these changes can no longer be put off for our civilisation no longer has the luxury of time on its' side. To put the timeframe in perspective, those children starting school in 2019 will just be graduating from high school when the 12 years are up, and the quality of their future depends on what we do, or don't do, now.

The last edition of *Te Whakatika*

contained a thought provoking *letter to the editor* from a parent of a student soon to depart for school camp. The camp in question was for year 5 students at a state school and the camp a local Christian camp. In the letter, the parent challenged the school's non-disclosure of religious instruction for students to take place on the camp, the school's failure to provide opt-out provisions for parents' in-line with current Human Rights Commission guidelines, and the original decision by the state school to engage a Christian camp in the first place. This letter raised some intriguing questions about the place of religion and spirituality in EOTC:

- How have religion and spirituality influenced the way we think about, and do, outdoor learning?
- What are the issues for schools when including religious or spiritual content into outdoor learning?
- What do the concepts of wairua/spirituality and hauora/wellness present in the curriculum actually mean for outdoor learning?

These questions, along with the many others that could be asked, generate complex discussions. They are complex because we live in a pluralist society with multiple perspectives present on issues perceived as controversial. Understandably, perspectives about spirituality and religion are controversial because they vary widely and can involve strongly held

beliefs. However, when we present such issues to students in a way that suggests that a singular truth exists, we risk indoctrination. Snook (2003) elaborates, "Indoctrination is a mode of teaching which is aimed at, or leads to, students holding some of their beliefs in an uncritical manner." (p.133) Thus teachers have a vital role to play in how controversial issues such as religion or spirituality are presented to students, as do the schools themselves.

Snook suggests we may think of schools as impartial, but that when it comes to the implementation of policy designed to protect the rights of students, impartiality does not exist and that they have no choice but to follow policy.

On the rights of students as they relate to religion, Snook observes:

"...in an ideal education system the legitimate diversities of belief would be celebrated and made central to educational activities. Thus there would be opportunities for true religious education (as distinct from religious indoctrination), i.e. initiation into understanding the questions which mark the religious domain and some respect for the various answers which have been given, including the answers of sceptics and atheists. There would also be the opportunity for people to affirm and even practise their preferred religion, and for others to politely express dissent." (p.64)

An insightful letter to the editor from Evelyn Yeap (following this editorial) acknowledges a few of these points in her own school experiences. In an effort to



increase the clarity of expectations placed upon schools regarding religious instruction, the Ministry of Education has produced a *Draft Guidelines on religious instruction in state primary and intermediate schools* (MOE, 2018). This consultation document seeks to both engage and inform schools of the issues at stake and makes suggestions for processes that need to be employed (the link to the consultation document is included in the reference below).

This edition of *Te Whakatika* first explores spirituality, and then religion, in outdoor learning from a wide variety of perspectives and stand-points. Both Māori and Pākehā perspectives on spirituality have been included. In the first article, Chanel Phillips has written

a wonderful discussion that draws from her PhD that explores the connection of wairua (spirituality) to water as hauora (wellbeing). More specifically, she examines the *Karakia for Tangaroa* and discusses how its teachings are significant for health in the context of camps for rangitahi (youth) at Te Taitimu Trust. In the second article, Chelsea Cunningham reveals how her personal journey of connection to wairua (spirituality) is strengthened through engagement with ancestral landscapes, with her maunga, awa and marae, and through learning and researching her whakapapa to obtain a deeper understanding of why these places are important to her, her whānau, hapū and iwi. In the third article, Tom Macfarlane draws from his

honours thesis when he writes about the huge spiritual impact that attending the University of Otago's School of Physical Education Paradise camp had on him. In the fourth article, Jo Straker explores Muscular Christianity. In this insightful article, Jo investigates the Christian roots of physicality and resilience woven deeply into outdoor education to this day. In the fifth article, Jeff Lapin discusses the much-respected and very successful Christian based national outdoor education provider *Adventure Specialties Trust* that has been delivering outdoor experiences to young New Zealanders for over 30 years. Through references to work with different school groups, Lapin teases out the philosophy that has

## Outdoor Education in Aotearoa New Zealand: A New Vision for the Twenty First Century

*Edited by: Dave Irwin, Jo Straker and Allen Hill*

**Outdoor education** in a variety of guises has a rich history in Aotearoa New Zealand, dating back more than 100 years. Outdoor learning experiences have a strong and often much-loved place in our collective education memories. However, the world in which we currently live is vastly different from the one which shaped those memories. What does that mean for education, and more specifically, what does that mean for outdoor learning experiences? This book attends to these questions from a forward looking position by providing a practical, insightful, and innovative reappraisal of outdoor education theory and practice. Embracing a critical socio-ecological perspective, the contributors celebrate aspects of creative practice and chart a direction for outdoor education which aspires to educate for a sustainable and more equitable future.

*This is essential reading for outdoor educators, teachers, guides, and students who want to expand the possibilities and practices of education, especially education which builds a deeper understanding of our relationship to the world we depend on.*



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underpinned the organisation since it was established. In the sixth and final article, Rachael Dickson investigates children's legal rights in terms of religious instruction and school activities. More specifically, she asks why (and when) can a case be made for the illegality of religious instruction on school camp?

I acknowledge that the discussions contained in this edition may be controversial for some readers, but I hope the authors and the articles they have written will generate further discussion on an important topic that deserves greater attention.

In this edition, readers will note the establishment of an Editorial Board that has not been explicit before now. This group of very talented people have been assisting me with *Te Whakatika* for many years, helping to decide on themes for each edition, assisting to locate contributing authors, and sharing in the reviewing of articles as required. These people are Dr. Margi Campbell-Price (University of Otago), Marg Cosgriff (University of Waikato), Dr. Allen Hill (Ara Institute of Canterbury), Dr. Anne-Marie Jackson (University of Otago), and Dr. Chris North (University of Canterbury). On behalf of EONZ and readers, I would like to thank the Editorial Board for their past and future contributions.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Te Whakatika*, and wish you well for the coming winter months. Please consider sharing your own reflections on the issues facing EOTC through this forum.

Noho ora mai rā, nā Dave

David Irwin, PhD

Sustainability and Outdoor Education

Ara Institute of Canterbury

### *Dear editor*

I am writing in response to a parent who was concerned about her child sitting through a compulsory Christian session conducted for their state school in an outdoor education camp and the school's lack of communication about options to opt-out.

Firstly, I want to give my personal response as someone from a very different country with very different experiences. I grew up as a Christian in Malaysia where Islam is the official religion.

Whether you are a practising Muslim or not, you have to sit through a prayer that is required to bless any event. I used to organise outdoor camps and therefore to start the day and before every meal we said a Muslim prayer. People in my country understand the ritual. Similarly, in some New Zealand schools, teachers will recite a prayer in Maori, where students pray after them, before they start their day in school or at meals.

By showing respect to others' beliefs is one way to teach students to respect each other. I believe that religion is a personal preference, but respect is an important value for everyone to have.

I believe there is much to learn from sitting through and experiencing a religious ritual and point of view. With increasingly diverse societies in this era, I think it is important to respect each other and to gain understanding of different cultures and religions.

Furthermore, New Zealand students in state schools are not likely to gain much understanding of Christianity after all despite it being one of the largest religions in the world and certainly the most common in New Zealand.

While I understand that in New Zealand, there is a separation of church and school, yet I wonder if we are missing out on something important because of this separation. I believe that cross-cultural understanding comes through humility and direct experiences of the cultural rituals of others (regardless of our beliefs).

*Kind Regards,*

*Evelyn Yeap*

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## Haramai e Te Taitimu:

### Exploring a Wairua Connection to Water as Hauora

By Chanel Phillips (Ngāti Hine, Ngāpuhi)

#### Kupu Timatanga – Introduction

The title of this article, *Haramai e Te Taitimu*, is a line taken from an original karakia (incantation, prayer), *Karakia for Tangaroa*, that is taught during Te Taitimu Trust, a whānau-led programme that teaches Māori water safety and reconnects rangatahi (youth) and tamariki (children) in the Hawkes Bay to the healing properties of

Tangaroa (deity of the ocean). The reference to 'taitimu', meaning the 'outgoing tide', is significant to the kaupapa (collective vision, goal) of Te Taitimu Trust. Te Taitimu Trust utilise the analogy of the outgoing tide to articulate the importance of 'turning the tide' on negative Māori statistics. This article will explore a wairua connection to water within a Te Taitimu Trust context, and how, through engagement with

the ocean, Māori expressions of hauora can be seen. This article will broadly introduce Māori perspectives on spirituality and the outdoors pertaining to water environs. The importance of wairua (spirit, spirituality) for conceptualising hauora (health and wellness) is also discussed. I argue that hauora in relation to wairua and water is fundamentally how Māori derive their understandings



of health and wellness. I conclude with a discussion of Te Taitimu Trust, who combine their notions of wairua and water to express hauora. Specifically, I examine the *Karakia for Tangaroa* and discuss how its teachings are significant for health in a Te Taitimu Trust context.

### **Māori Spirituality and the Outdoors**

Māori understandings of spirituality and the outdoors derives from a Māori worldview. Marsden (2003) defines worldview as “the central systemisation of conceptions of reality to which members of its culture assent and from which stems their value system. The worldview lies at the very heart of the culture, touching, interacting with and strongly influencing every aspect of the culture” (Marsden, 2003b, p. 56). Whilst there are multiple understandings of worldview based

on distinct whānau (family), hapū (sub-tribe) and iwi (tribe) beliefs and knowledge, common themes, do emerge. Creation narratives, for example, provide a foundation from which a Māori worldview can be understood.

The separation of the primordial parents Ranginui (Sky Father) and Papa-tū-ā-nuku (Earth Mother) is a significant part of the creation process, where our physical world was brought into being and their offspring becoming various elements of the natural world, such as: Tangaroa (deity of the ocean), Tāwhirimātea (deity of weather, elements), Tūmatauenga (God of war and people) and Tāne (God of forests and birds) to name a few. Tāne also is attributed to the creation of humankind, and from this viewpoint, Māori do not believe they descend from primates, rather, Māori descend from the gods. Marsden (2003) explains:

... man is perceived as a citizen of two worlds with his roots in the earth and his crown in the heavens. Man did not evolve from the primates but was born out of the seed of the god Tāne, impregnated into the dawn maid *Hineahuone* who was formed and shaped out of the red clay – *onekura* – of Mother Earth (p. 63, original italics).

This genealogical link, or whakapapa, is how Māori trace both their human descent through family lines to a common ancestor, as well as their spiritual descent back to the atua who first formed this world. Māori spirituality and the outdoors, thus, stems from a Māori worldview that explains the intricate and kinship connections that Māori have to the environment. Therefore, when we engage in the ocean, rivers, mountains or forests, we are reconnecting with the atua who reside therein; for this reason,





the utmost respect and care must be given.

### **Wairua**

Like whakapapa, wairua describes a spiritual connection between all things and is central to a Māori worldview. Wairua is defined as “spirit” and encompasses an array of meanings relating to notions of spirituality, religion and metaphysics. Marsden (2003b) describes the intricacies of wairua as “the source of existent being and life [where] mauri [life force] is the elemental essence imparted by wairua” (p. 47). While there are multiple interpretations of wairua, and numerous applications of this concept, I consider wairua in relation to water and its significance for hauora and wellness.

Wairua and water are inextricably connected. For example, wairua can also mean two waters: “wai” meaning “water” and “rua” meaning “two”. On a physical level,

wairua refers to the coupling of the male and female waters during procreation and conception; you are made up of the waters from your mother and father. On a spiritual level, wairua refers to the spiritual waters of Ranginui as the male water and Papa-tū-ā-nuku as the female water that were joined to create life; you are also made up of the spiritual waters of the primordial parents. Māori identity therefore, is irrevocably tied to water. Love (1990) concurs:

The Māori perception of water is bound in culture and spiritual beliefs. Water was central to the very existence of the Māori. Its associated resources confirmed life to the Māori, and thereby formed a basis for his/her identification, belonging and rhythm of life (p. 547, macrons added).

This point is further validated when you ask someone who they

are and where they come from. The phrase “ko wai koe – who are you” is literally asking “whose waters are you”. Similarly, the phrase “nō wai koe – where are you from” also asks “from which waters do you descend”. Water, which I have explained is intimately connected to wairua, is also a fundamental link to one’s identity or whakapapa. Wairua, water and whakapapa are key foundations for Māori health and our understandings of hauora.

### **Hauora**

In the context of the *New Zealand Health and Physical Education Curriculum*, hauora is defined as a “Māori philosophy of health unique to New Zealand” (Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 21). However, Heaton (2011) argues that hauora is much deeper than the translation of Māori health and well-being that is co-opted into mainstream education and, like Māori spirituality and the outdoors, “has





its foundations within the Māori worldview” (Jackson, Hakopa & Baxter, 2018, p. 326). Hauora can be better understood through the meaning of its two root words: “hau” and “ora”. According to the *Williams Dictionary of the Maori Language* “hau” means:

1. *Vitality of man, vital essence of land etc.*

Ora is defined in the same text as:

1. *Alive*
2. *Well, in health*
3. *Safe*
4. *Satiated, satisfied with food*
5. *Survive, escape*
6. *Recover*

Thus, hauora is associated with the vitality of man, wellness, and life. Based on our whakapapa connection to the natural environment that I described earlier, Māori health is dependent on the health of the environment. Ergo, water contributes to our understandings of health. Durie (2003) explains:

... good health will also depend


on the nature and quality of the interaction between people and the surrounding environment – a recognition of the fact that the human condition is intimately connected to the wider domains of Rangi (the sky parent) and Papa (the earth parent). The close association of Māori to their rivers, lands, wāhi tapu (sacred places), forests and seas, has a number of implications for health: a clean environment impacts positively on healthy growth and development; the availability of food resources hinges on a bountiful environment; and clean water has always been, and will continue to be, vital to good health (p. 161).

Water, therefore, plays a significant role for conceptualising hauora and wellness. Te Taitimu Trust are a whānau-led kaupapa who draw on the healing properties of the ocean using an original karakia to strengthen the



connection of their young people to the ocean and the health benefits this connection to water affords.

### **Te Taitimu Trust: Operationalising a wairua connection to water as hauora**

In January each year, the tamariki attending Te Taitimu Trust’s summer camp are taught the words and actions to the *Karakia for Tangaroa* which is recited before they enter the sea. This karakia is a way of strengthening a wairua connection to water, which has multiple applications for hauora and wellness. Karakia are supplications or incantations addressed to the atua residing in the spiritual realms and recited for guidance, blessings and protection in human pursuits (Barlow, 1991). According to Rewi (2010), reciting karakia is a way of ensuring that Māori “maintain a valuable, tangible link to their forebears of traditional and mythical allusion ... [providing] the spiritual

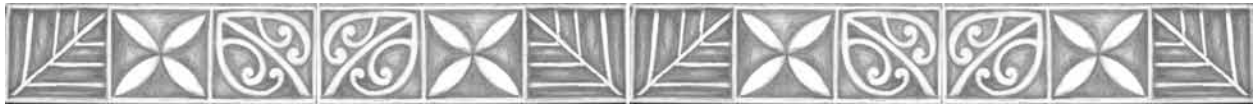


**TE TAITIMU TRUST**  
Turning the tide

**Karakia for Tangaroa**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>He huanui,<br/>he huaroa ki te ao<br/>Omāio ki tua ē<br/>Ka rongo ki te waitai ē<br/>Haramai e te Taipari, haramai e te Taitimu<br/>Nāu e Hinemoana, Nāu e Tangaroa ē</p> | <p><i>From the energies of the extensive and intensive<br/>ocean we will learn<br/>To maintain balance<br/>Reciprocation of healing is needed<br/>Celebrate the provisions of the full and low tides<br/>The sacred domain of Hinemoana and Tangaroa</i></p> |
|--|--|



connection with those ancestors” (p. 19). This karakia provides the spiritual connection to Tangaroa and Hinemoana, ancient ancestors, deities and guardians of the sea that are mentioned in the final line of this karakia.

The recitation of the *Karakia for Tangaroa* before entering the water is a key tikanga (custom, protocol) adhered to in a Te Taitimu context for two primary reasons: first, as a means of spiritual and physical protection whilst in the water and; second, as respect and acknowledgement to the atua who reside there. I describe each of these functions in turn and conclude with a brief analysis and interpretation of this karakia.

As Te Taitimu Trust are a Māori water safety programme, they explain karakia as the spiritual lifejacket we must metaphorically place upon ourselves before entering the ocean in order to provide our spiritual protection. Embedded within karakia are acknowledgements and requests for the protection of the gods. The physical protection derives from the time given to recite the karakia. For example, when we recite karakia at the shoreline of our oceans, we look out to the sea. We carefully watch the waves, the incoming swells, the turning tides or currents; we feel the strength or calmness of the wind and surf. The culmination of these tohu (signs) provide us with the knowledge of whether it is appropriate to go out into the water or not. Karakia, therefore, supports both our spiritual and physical protection in the water. To recite karakia is also to acknowledge and greet the spiritual guardians and deities of

these areas. This elicits an ethos of respect for the water and the atua whose domain you enter into.

The first two lines of the *Karakia for Tangaroa* “He huanui, he huaroa ki te ao, Omāio ki tua ē” means “From the energies of the extensive and intensive ocean we will learn, To maintain balance”. These two lines refer to the concept of kaitiakitanga (protection, guardianship), the idea of maintaining balance through a mutual and reciprocal relationship with the environment. Marsden (2003) explains:

man is an integral part of the natural order and that he has obligations not only to society but also to his environment ... To realise that he is a child of the Earth will help him in working to restore and maintain the harmony and balance which successive generations of humankind have arrogantly disturbed (p. 69).

The third line “ka rongo ki te Waitai ē” is interpreted as “reciprocation of healing is needed”. When I learnt about this karakia, it was taught to me that when we listen to the ocean (ka rongo ki te Waitai ē literally translates to “listen to the ocean”) it is telling us that a reciprocation of healing is needed. This refers to the healing properties of the ocean, and how, through kaitiakitanga and protecting this taonga (treasure), we can continue to draw on its healing properties so long as the ocean remains healthy and strong. Lawson-Te Aho (2013) explains:

... healing the land is inseparable from healing the people. Therefore, healing for Māori must include restoring

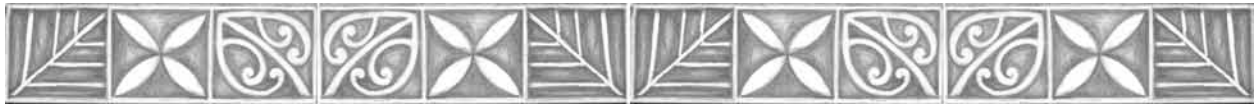
a relationship with tribal homelands/tūrangawaewae, on the land where the ancestors lived and passed away and where identity is forged and maintained ... [healing] must take place in contexts that carry spiritual and historical significance; where cultural identities can be strengthened (p. 117).

From this viewpoint, healing the ocean is similarly vital for healing the people, and something that Te Taitimu Trust draw heavily on.

The fourth line, “Haramai e te taipari, haramai e te taitimu” is interpreted as “Celebrate the provisions of the full and low tides”. This line refers to mahinga kai, the traditional food gathering practice for Māori. According to Prebble & Mules, mahinga kai is “a mechanism for acculturating the landscapes, as a Māori landscape” (Prebble & Mules, 2004, p. 53). Mahinga kai therefore is a practice that deepens and strengthens our relationship with the natural world, in this context, with the ocean from whence we gather kaimoana (seafood).

The final line, “Nāu e Hinemoana, nāu e Tangaroa ē” meaning “The sacred domain of Hinemoana and Tangaroa” is the concluding acknowledgement to those atua who preside over the ocean, Hinemoana the female element and Tangaroa the male element. This part of the karakia reminds us to give respect and acknowledgment to the atua whose domain we enter into.

Each of the lessons taken from this karakia are core aspects taught throughout the Te Taitimu summer camp. For example, kaitiakitanga



is evident through: beach clean ups; workshops on poaching, size restrictions and catch limits with officers from the Ministry for Primary Industries and; workshops on sustainability and reducing waste. In addition, the notion of healing is a primary focus for Te Taitimu Trust who aim to nurture the hearts and minds of their young people and healing the spirit through engagement with Tangaroa. Te Taitimu encourage a connection with the ocean and healing through: beach days, mahinga kai, snorkelling

and surfing, waka ama, ocean swimming and taonga tākaaro (Māori games) on the beach. The *Karakia for Tangaroa* is an important tikanga for Te Taitimu Trust and is a positive way for rangatahi and tamariki to build a connection to Tangaroa, uplifting their wairua in the process.

### **Kupu Whakamutunga – Conclusion**

Wairua is the most important aspect for our hauora and wellness. Wairua, or spiritual well-being implies “a spiritual communion

with the environment; land, lakes, mountains, reefs have a spiritual significance, quite apart from economic or agricultural considerations” (Durie, 1984, p. 483). The *Karakia for Tangaroa* is a positive way of engaging our young people with the ocean, and the impact this has on their wairua and thus health. Healing the spirit through engagement with Tangaroa is a primary focus for Te Taitimu Trust who are passionate about nurturing the hearts and minds of their young people and growing the future generation of leaders.

**“Poipoia te kākano kia puāwai  
Nurture the seed and it will blossom”.**

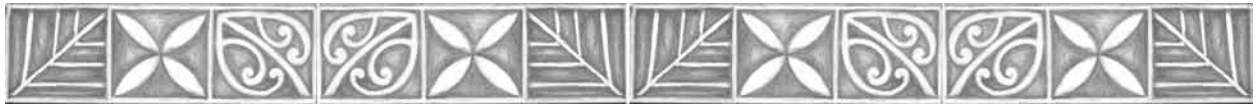
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### **About the author:**

**Chanel Phillips** (Ngāti Hine, Ngāpuhi) is a PhD student at the School of Physical Education, Sport and Exercise Sciences at the University of Otago. Her recently submitted PhD thesis explored Māori perspectives of water safety with three Māori community groups in Aotearoa. This article draws on one of her three case studies of her research: Te Taitimu Trust. Te Taitimu Trust are a whānau-led initiative in Hawkes Bay established in 2007 by Zack and Georgina Makoare and their whānau that focus on healing the spirit or wairua through engagement with Tangaroa, the ocean. A special mihi and acknowledgment to Te Taitimu Trust, Zack, Georgina, their kids and the wider whānau for supporting me and this research. Chanel can be contacted at [chanel.phillips@otago.ac.nz](mailto:chanel.phillips@otago.ac.nz)





# The connection between Wairua and Whakapapa

By Chelsea Cunningham (Ngāti Kahungunu)

*Figure 1: Personal collection (2018). View at the peak of Te Mata o Rongokako looking out towards Kahuranāki maunga*

## Introduction

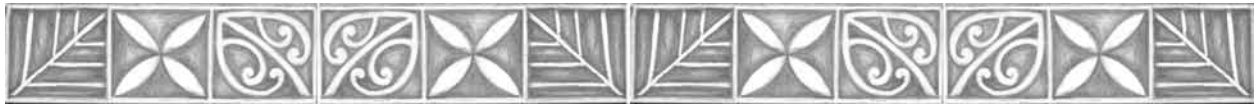
I am sitting at Te Mata o Rongokako (one of my favorite places), a local maunga (mountain) in Hastings. I look out to the South, and run my eyes along the long top of our tribal maunga, Kahuranāki. I continue turning to find the Ngaruroro river and follow it as it passes our marae, Kohupātiki, then out to the river mouth at Ahuriri. I take a breath, knowing these places identify who I am as descendant of Ngāti Kahungunu. However this time for some reason I feel just a little different. I continue turning, making a complete circle and see my cousins, aunts, uncle and nan are sitting laughing, as they refuel their body with a well-deserved drink of water and oranges. My heart is completely full. For some

it's the first time they have ever walked the maunga, and without even telling me directly I can see that they feel the same.

Whānau has always been my main driver for my research journey. Whatever research topic I decided on had to run parallel to my own families well-being. Reconnection to place and the way in which that place makes you feel has taken over my mind in a way that makes me think about all the ways I can use this concept in order to not only benefit the place we engage with but also our whānau who are engaging with it as well.

Reconnection to our ancestral landscapes such as maunga, awa (river), pā (fortified village) and marae (ancestral house) are a

physical connection to our whakapapa (geneology, lineage). Barlow (1991) defines whakapapa as “the genealogical descent of all living things from the gods to the present time; whakapapa is a basis for the organisation of knowledge in respect of the creation and development of all things” (p. 173). Hakopa (2011) established that whakapapa “is also the instrument whereby Māori derived their intimate connections to the land and how they articulate their sense of belonging to their sacred places, stretching back hundreds of years” (p. 4). It is through whakapapa that we are able to identify ‘who’ and



‘where’ we come from. This gives us an identity. Māori genealogical and geographical links are very significant in helping to identify who and where we come from, using pepeha as an example, like the one below we identify the maunga, the waka, the awa, the marae, the hapū (sub-tribe), and iwi (tribe) in which we descend from.

belonging. Therefore reconnection to these places is not only important for our own identity and understanding of whakapapa but also because, when you stand and present your pepeha to others it means so much knowing you have felt the very presence, the mauri (life-force) and wairua (soul, spirit) of these places. Hakopa (2016) elaborates:

Whenua has a dual meaning, it means land and also placenta. Whenua is “identified as the source of human creation, from which we were born, by which we are nurtured, and to which we return” (Roberts et al., 1995, p. 10). Marsden (1992) explains further that the two meanings provide a constant reminder “that we are of the Earth and therefore Earthly, and born out of the placenta and therefore human” (p. 17). Papatūānuku not only nourishes humankind upon her breasts but all animals, trees and plants share the nourishment provided by Papatūānuku (Marsden, 1992). Papatūānuku and Ranginui’s (Sky father) offspring are atua of the natural world such as Tāne-Mahuta (deity of the forest) and Tangaroa (deity of the ocean tides).

There are also many instances where a maunga or a awa is a personified tīpuna or ancestor of the local iwi. For example Te Mata o Rongokako, the maunga I mentioned at the start is known to be Rongokako, who is the grandfather of Kahungunu, the ancestor in which our iwi is named after. Baird (2012) also explains that ancestors, as maunga, “provide guidance to their iwi” (p. 329). Maunga representing a tipuna and also understanding our connection to ancestral landscapes, further promotes the importance to engage

|                           |                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Ko Kahuranāki te maunga   | Kahuranāki is the mountain   |
| Ko Takitimu te waka       | Takitimu is the waka         |
| Ko Ngaruroro te awa       | Ngaruroro is the river       |
| Ko Kohupātiki te marae    | Kohupātiki is the marae      |
| Ko Ngāti Hori te hapū     | Ngāti Hori is the sub-tribe  |
| Ko Ngāti Kahungunu te iwi | Ngāti Kahungunu is the tribe |

If we want to understand the land in the same manner as the ancestors then we must stand in those same places; sniff the air, feel the surroundings, visualise and listen

Your pepeha tells a story, it is an ancestral narrative. It is a timeline of locators, acknowledging the places and people who are important to your very existence today. Pepeha is a narrative that is unique to you and your ancestors and identifies the environment and people you whakapapa to. This is an example of how Māori connect to place.

### Connection to Place

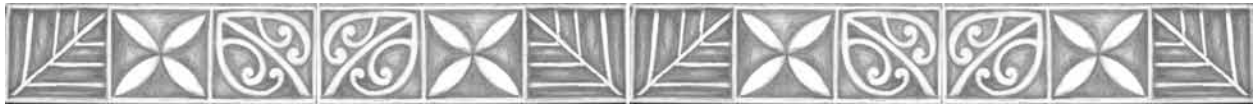
Our ancestral landscapes help define the relationship Māori have with the environment. Townsend (2014) describes ancestral landscapes as places that have been made sacred by the lives and deaths of our tīpuna (ancestors). Our connection to these places can be made genealogically, through pepeha. Establishing these connections allows you to ground yourself and can bring a sense of identity and

to the voices of the land and it’s environs with your wairua, get a sense of what occurred there and match the story up to the name(s). This is how we develop the ability to listen to the voice of the land (p.19)

For Māori “the land’s significance derives from Papatūānuku [Earth mother]” (Roberts, Norman, Minhinnick, Wihongi & Kirkwood, 1995). Māori connection to land begins with Papatūānuku at the place known as Kurawaka (Ngata & Jones, 2006). To explain further, below is a whakatauki (Māori proverb) that expresses the significance of land to Māori:

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Ko Papatūānuku tō tātou whaea        | The land is our mother                 |
| Ko ia te matua atawhai               | She is the loving parent               |
| He oranga mō tātou                   | She nourishes and sustains us          |
| I roto i te moengaroa                | When we die she enfolds us in her arms |
| Ka hoki tātou ki te kōpū o te whenua |  |

(Roberts et al., 1995, p. 7)



*Figure 2 Personal collection (2018)  
View from the peak of Te Mata o  
Rongokako looking out North East  
towards Napier*

with them. One of the compelling reasons why these ancestral places are important is because our tīpuna used them and engaged with them. If we want to replicate their strength, their guidance, their resilience, their knowledge, their feats and achievements then we have to walk in their footsteps to acquire those attributes and understandings. Kawharu (2009) adds that ‘ancestral footsteps’ refer to the pathways or seaways of our ancestors and it also highlights the importance of the experiences of our ancestors on the land and seas. Kawharu (2009) continues to write that ancestral landscapes are intimate features of our whakapapa, heritage, identity and status.

### **Connection to well-being**

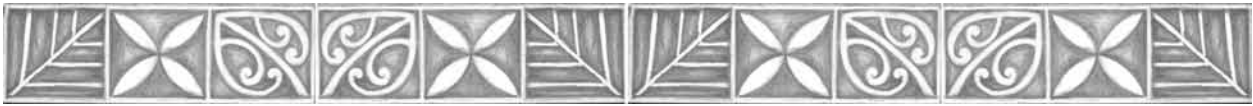
The effect that ancestral landscapes can have on well-being is a holistic perspective. There is a link

between health related issues and cultural knowledge, such as an understanding of ancestral links to ancestral landscapes as well as having te reo Māori and being able to recite this cultural knowledge in te reo Māori, such as in a pepeha. (Brougham & Harr, 2013).

Boyes (2010) explains, stating that “land nourishes our spiritual being and physical needs [and] provides identity” (p. 97). Boyes (2010) continues to explain that “reciprocation is essential” (p. 97) and if we do not reciprocate the nourishment that the land gives us then “our mana whenua [territorial rights], our status in that place and our right to be a kaitiaki [guardian], is lost or suffers” (p. 97). Our natural environment such as whenua, moana, ngāhere, awa and maunga are taonga (treasures) that our tīpuna have left us and these taonga are important for the “maintenance and reproduction of whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori” (Pihema, 2001, p. 128). The loss of this connection to ancestral landscapes could prove to be harmful for our well-being as Māori because of the disconnection. Therefore,

the assumption can be made that the well-being of these ancestral landscapes is intrinsically linked to the well-being of the people.

Going back to the start of this article, back with my whānau at Te Mata o Rongokako, it is difficult to explain how this place makes me feel without mentioning my spiritual awareness and connection. The way in which it makes you behave, breath, smell and your vision to see more than the land or the birds and the trees. I believe to understand this perspective you must understand the whakapapa of the place, the narrative of the landscape in order to truly feel the mauri of the place. Anyone can feel the physical aspect of walking up a maunga but it is the spiritual connection that defines the potential and importance of a place. This spiritual connection is difficult to understand and there are many ways to describe it, depending on the individual. As Johnson & Pihama (1995) explain, there is no one ‘correct’ way to describe Māori spirituality but “having awareness of ones tūpuna, following ancestral customs and traditions and having



*Figure 3 Personal Collection (2018) My whānau at Te Mata o Rongokako, with Kahuranāki in the distance (top left corner).*

a close relationship with the natural environment” (p. 76) are all factors central to the subjective experience of Māori spirituality.

### Conclusion

My connection to wairua or spirituality is something that I have found has been strengthened through engagement with ancestral landscapes, with my maunga, my awa and my marae. But this has been parallel to learning and

researching my whakapapa to obtain a deeper understanding of why these places are important not only to me but my whānau, hapū and iwi. Understanding this magnifies my wairua connection to another extent and you can just feel it within because it's apart of who you are, as Māori, as Ngāti Kahungunu. It is whakapapa in a physical form. This is the connection of wairua to whakapapa.

### About the author:

*Chelsea Cunningham comes from Ngāti Kahungunu. She is in her second year of her PhD at the University of Otago and her research is exploring ways to reconnect whānau to whakapapa. Chelsea can be contacted at [chelseacunningham23@gmail.com](mailto:chelseacunningham23@gmail.com)*

### Kei raro i te tarutaru ngā tuhi tīpuna

It is underneath the leaves on the ground that the footprints of the ancestors are found

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# Paradise:

## sharing in the spiritual through the outdoors

By Tom Macfarlane

The 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2018 marked the celebration of the University of Otago PhysEd School Paradise Camp (Camp) as it came to an end as we have known it. Camp opened my eyes to the spiritual in the outdoors, which changed my life. In this article, I want to share a brief story of some of that journey as a tribute to Camp and all of the places and people who have created the experience over the years. My dream is that this sort of experience is remembered and shared, and that more and more people continue to be inspired to get out and add to what it can all be in the years to come.

When I went on Camp in 2011, it changed my life. Growing up in rural Hawkes Bay, Aotearoa New Zealand, I had some awareness of the outdoors but was more interested in playing soccer (not that those things are at opposite ends of the scale). Surrounded by experiences of learning to surf

during university, and the theory we were learning in outdoor education classes, I felt like Camp made my head and heart explode and let nature creep in: we slept on moss, showered under icy waterfalls, traversed mountain ranges, shared games, stories and questions (in particular, I remember: “Are we visitors here or do we belong?” around the camp fire and said “thank you” to the area with haka and waiata (to share a glimpse). Returning to Dunedin city life afterwards, I noticed a contrast in

environmental appreciation and awareness and became interested in working out how to translate the consciousness and way of life I had experienced in Paradise back to everyday life in more urban environments. I was starting to research towards some sort of Honours project the next year and I began looking into sustainability.

Later that year, when I had to find a research supervisor, I went to talk to Mike Boyes still quite unsure about what to focus on. I told him something like what

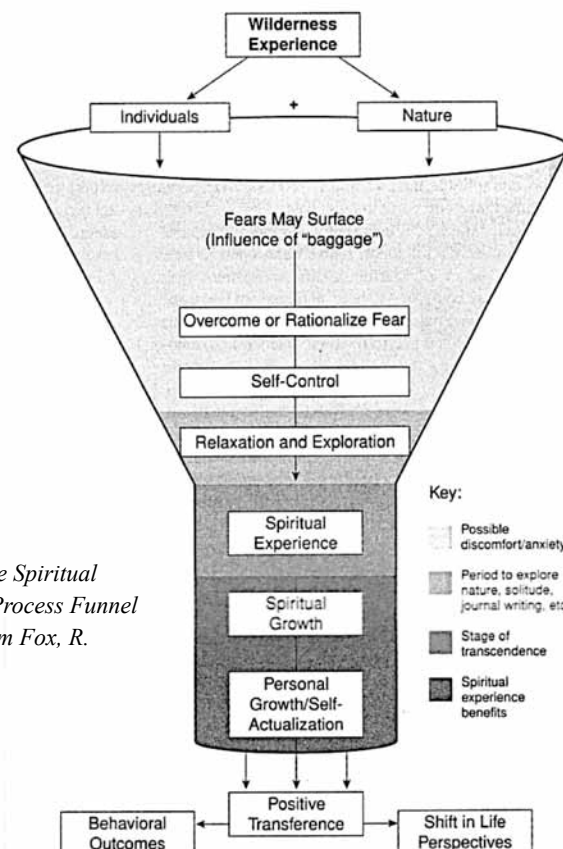


Figure 1: The Spiritual Experience Process Funnel reprinted from Fox, R. (1999)



was in the previous paragraph and he said that it sounded like what was in the literature as 'spirituality/spiritual experience in the outdoors' and that that would be worth looking into. So I did. I read some academic papers (and parts of a book or two) that I have listed in the references in case of want for further exploration.

Being a visual person, when it came time to structure a literature review, I utilized Fox's (1999) spiritual experience process funnel (SEPF). The SEPF (see *Figure 1*) separated things into

the experience itself (the funnel); influential factors to the experience (that going into the funnel); and outcomes of the experience (what flows out from the funnel). I found this very helpful because, as many people wrote, we are trying to describe the indescribable.

As well as being 'ineffable', I found spiritual experiences reported to be highly subjective. I related with a lot of what the literature used to describe the experience but many of the words were new to me: I had not used them and I had not heard my friends use them out on Camp

even though I am sure we were having similar experiences. This led me to my research: I wanted to add our student voice to the collection of subjective description about spiritual experiences so far. I figured that the more description there was the more people would be able to relate and be aware of this powerful experience and continue to explore and share in the unlimited depths and joy of it.

So, I went on Camp as an observer with another group of PhysEdders a year below me. Camp provided again and, in the following weeks,

## The National EOTC Coordinator Database *Has your School signed up?*

The National EOTC Coordinator Database initiative was implemented last year by EONZ and is supported by the Ministry of Education.

The primary function of the database is to actively support the role of the EOTC coordinator by providing a direct line of communication through:

- Notification of changes to good practice as they relate to EOTC safety management, and
- Actively building capability and competency within the EOTC coordinator role and ultimately the capability of the school to provide quality EOTC.

Talk with your EOTC coordinator and leadership team and ensure your school registers at [www.eotc.org.nz](http://www.eotc.org.nz).

The initiative is designed for the designated EOTC coordinator or person in that role in school. However, any EONZ members can request to receive the communications generated by the initiative. Email Catherine at [office@eonz.org.nz](mailto:office@eonz.org.nz) and ask for a link.

Schools face a real challenge in keeping updated with current good practice in the fast-evolving landscape of health and safety.

Since publication of the Ministry of Education **EOTC Guidelines 2016, Bringing the Curriculum Alive** updated versions have twice been released. Staff in many schools will be unaware of the changes.

The database is a mechanism that all schools should take advantage of, with registration identified as an element of good practice (EOTC Guidelines 2016, P59).



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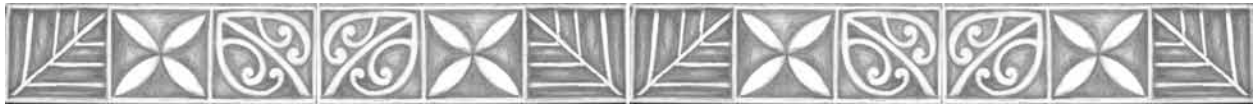
**Strengthening EOTC  
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**MAKE SURE YOUR  
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*EONZ believes unequivocally in the value and benefit of schools' engagement with the initiative and has an aspirational goal of 90% of New Zealand schools being registered with the database by the end of 2019.*



I conducted interviews with the students and their instructor about their experiences. I got better at these as we went and, with some intervention from Mike, I went from twenty minutes of material in total for three participants to an hour each for the last four. I felt it a great privilege to get to have conversation at such depth and the details that came out were awesome.

I categorized my findings into four categories that had aspects of description about the experience itself, influential factors and outcomes of experience (all three parts of Fox's SEPF). The categories were: *'Just cool'*, *personal predisposition*, *group spirituality*, and *connection to the environment*.

*'Just cool'* was about incorporating the different language of description, including it and making it legitimate to the experience. So people use it and it can be seen to mean the things that they mean when they say it. Often the students would say an experience was 'just cool' as a result of being unable to find the words to describe it. I could see, feel and hear that they meant all of the words in the literature so I thought why not include this way of description and then more people will have a way in to relate to the spiritual and more conversations will be had about it.

*Personal predisposition* was about subjectivity of experience. Different people would be having different experiences spiritually in the same moment based on their previous experiences, and so their predisposition to the spiritual (in that moment). The best example was when we were camped on

the side of a mountain and one student reported waking up to a beautiful sunrise, trying to wake his friend up to share in it and his friend rolling over and going back to sleep.

Group spirituality, on the other hand, was about the ability of the group to be having the same spiritual experience in the same moment. This was a comparatively unmentioned aspect in the literature I reviewed. One of the students implied the idea that group and personal experience acted like a seesaw: personal experience on one end and group experience on the other. An example being as we pushed up a mountain as a team, personal spiritual experiences may be at a low but the team spiritual experience and support might be what gets us up. Then, upon reaching the top and having time to rest again, personal experience may kick in once more. I think there is more work to be done on this relationship.

*Connection to the environment* was the last theme and the one that I wrote the most about. Considering the setting of the experiences we are talking about is the outdoors, it seems that connection to the environment is a no-brainer as an influence, outcome and aspect of the experience itself. The environment's effects on us humans are unending. The team I went with reported that different environments affected them differently: for example, the expansiveness of a mountaintop view to the raw, close up power of a waterfall. These connections were ingrained as memories but I think that more needs to be done in terms of translating their meaning

into action in real-life.

Such connection with the environment, as well as some amazing friends, has been my gateway as a Pākehā into Te Ao Māori over the last few years. It is a world that I feel grateful to get the chance to walk in and hope that many others do. I didn't write about Te Ao Māori in my original research apart from a note saying that if I did it may warrant another thesis or four, which may not be mine to write. Te Ao Māori has been one of the most definite sanctuaries helping me to translate and live spiritually in everyday city life. I hope to look more into how I can share the experiences/koha that I have been given in a good way to help get more people of different backgrounds into it as well or at least aware. I think that when we think about these sorts of things we are all speaking the language of the Earth in some way and we are all indigenous/native to it somewhere in our own way. I want to work to reconnect to that, share it and act accordingly as best as possible.

One of the clearest opportunities for this that has come to me so far has been to do with rubbish. Upon coming back from Paradise Camp, litter was the most obvious symbol of disconnection with the environment in my eyes. It also struck me that litter or potential litter (rubbish) is something that we all have something to do with and can do something about in our everyday lives. Picking up rubbish and finding ways to reduce our contact with it in the first instance can both result in spiritual experiences in the outdoors: i.e. walking on the beach and doing 'Take Three for the Sea' (look it up!),



Figure 2: Setting off into Paradise, always now! (Source personal collection)



hunting/gathering/regenerating natural foods/medicines/materials or starting a (community) garden. Giving something back while out there has definitely helped me feel a deeper connection with the outdoors – like it is looking after me too.

Such a feeling of belonging as a human on the Earth has got to be a part of what we're really out to achieve here. If it's 'just cool' or 'the spiritual', I want to re-emphasize my gratitude to Camp and all of the people and places involved then and since for allowing me to share in this way of life. Although

one chapter closed with a bang on November the 26<sup>th</sup>, I believe in the whakatauaiki 'E kore e hekeheke he kākano rangatira – a noble heritage will never perish': the book is still well open, a good example set and experienced by far too many. I am excited for what is to come!

#### About the author:

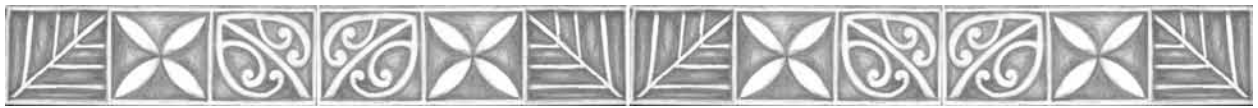
**Tom Macfarlane** is an honours graduate of the School of Physical Education at the University of Otago.

**"...Mother Earth is everywhere. I believe it helps to kind of peel back the pavement and rip down the boards..."** – participant from Stringer and McAvoy's (1995) study (p.71).

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# A personal opinion of some of the religious influences on OE?

*By Jo Straker*

As a non-believer in religious doctrines, I am cynical about the positive benefits that supposedly arise from following them. To be told that I have no moral compass because I am not a Christian is abhorrent to me, especially as some Christian based church organisations have adopted morally corrupt practices for years. So, when Dave asked me to write a short article on the religious foundations within outdoor education I was sceptical about adding anything of significance.

Over the course of history, there have often been worries that youth and urban dwellers would succumb to moral decline unless subjected to rigorous physical activity. This idea may have arisen from as long ago as Plato, who promoted the idea that 'men' learn virtue from participating in risky activities such as war. This connection between morals and physical activity has survived over the centuries.

During the industrial revolution in Great Britain, there were rising concerns about a lack of moral fortitude and the urban lifestyle. At the same time, many churches were becoming concerned that their

congregations were predominately female. In order to counteract this trend, Muscular Christianity evolved as philosophical movement to slow down moral decay by incorporating Christian principles with self-sacrifice, patriotic duty, manliness, moral and physical fitness, teamwork, discipline, and the expulsion of all that is effeminate, or excessively intellectual. In practice, organisations following Muscular Christianity promoted personal fitness, ran boxing clubs, and organised summer camps where boys could leave behind the temptations of cities, experience hardship, and develop a sense of camaraderie through the challenges of living outdoors. Many of these camps were probably fun and provided a healthy break from the city.

Muscular Christianity also promoted reverence for wilderness and the idea that mountains, waterfalls, and forests are sanctuaries that help to build a closer connection to God and our spiritual selves. Much of the current tourism boom in Aotearoa relies on promoting reverence for wilderness. However, on a

recent trip to Milford Sound, the huge influx of tourists has resulted in mass commercialisation that certainly diminished my ability to feel connected to the area in any meaningful way and I wondered whether such places can still promote spiritual awareness. There have been times though, when certain outdoor experiences have raised my awareness of a connection to the wider world and observing students when they have similar experiences has always been a highlight of my instructional career.

Muscular Christianity was intended to produce the strong moral leaders who would be fit enough to take the lead in times of war. To achieve this, Muscular Christianity merged with the eugenics movement to produce natural leaders through genetic inheritance as well as hard work and self-discipline. I rather liked the observation that while patriarchal, the Muscular Christianity/eugenics movement did not entirely ignore the role of women, placing responsibility on them for breeding new leaders with roots in the dominant, educated



classes of northern European stock.

In effect after WW1 the religious elements of the movement began to fade as notions of Christian chivalry were lost in the trenches. There was less need for men to prove themselves and less talk about the moral and physical decline of men. The influence of fitness and physical endeavour continued however, even though

some of the stauncher faith-based principles were dropped. The YMCA for example which was a fervent religious and patriarchal institution originally founded on Muscular Christianity principles dropped its requirement that members belong to a church and shifted to promoting wellness and good character informed by Christian principles. Likewise

the Boy Scout movement, Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and Outward Bound, were all influenced by fitness and outdoor challenges building character and preparing 'men' to become more resilient in times of war. All these organisations remain involved in the outdoor sector delivering a range of programmes. The salient point is that the early development

of outdoor education introduced values appropriate to the time and while they have been modified, the underlying principles have not always fully addressed. For example, when I was training to be a physical education teacher at an all-female college in England, the motto was '*Mens sana in corpore sano*' or a 'healthy mind in a healthy body'. At the time, I had no idea it was derived from the Muscular Christianity ethos promoting competition against others, pitting ones-self against nature, and breeding leaders, in order to reassert masculine dominance within society.

Solos, personal development, challenge activities and a belief in the importance of direct contact and experience with the natural world, potentially derive from Muscular Christianity and the values it promoted. The notion of outdoor education assisting in the development of desirable behaviours is intuitively appealing to educators as it provides an alluring rationale. In research by Zink and Boyes (2006), and Hill (2010),



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outdoor educators identified social and personal development as the most important learning outcomes for their programmes.

While some research supports these claims, Brookes (2003a, 2003b) argues that a pervasive attribution error renders much of the research as invalid. Changes in behaviour, he contends, are falsely attributed to the person and their disposition, not to changes in the situation. He meticulously builds a case as to why changes noted in one situation are not transferable to other situations. Thus, taking people into the outdoors to improve confidence, teamwork, or leadership, may result in some noticeable changes, but these would not necessarily be sustained when the person returns home. While many programmes continue to advance the idea that, 'physical activity builds character' most now accept that physical challenge activities draw out relevant responses which can be highlighted and further enhanced, rather than form a new character.

In similar ways the notions of wilderness as a remote area which have few indications of human influence and which allow for spiritual renewal, escape from society, and contemplation are problematic for outdoor education. In promoting wilderness as untouched by humans, problems are created for students to feel part of nature and this in turn can lead to a lack of environmental understandings about our connection to the world.

There are however still church groups and religious movements running a range of camps that advocate that strenuous physical

endeavours contribute to the development of moral character. Religious camps are designed to intentionally develop religious faith and encourage a personal connection to God. At faith-based camps, the inspiration of outdoor experiences has a practical utility in attracting and potentially converting people. The outdoor activities can also mask the religious intent, for example on one Salvation Army programme I assisted with, the instructor had no hesitation in attributing the success of a safe abseil to a belief in God looking after that apprehensive abseiling student.

Studies suggest that religious people hold certain beliefs in the face of evidence because those beliefs have emotional resonance. In general, they privilege the unseen over the seen and the unknown over the known. When this masks unexplored assumptions such as why Aotearoa is selling wilderness, it can be problematic, but when a belief system undermines science and asserts ideas which discourage understandings on how living things evolved, then it becomes disingenuous.

The capacity to overlay the outdoors with personal and religious values requires ongoing vigilance. There are neither absolute truths nor a singular right way to educate, so deciding what could and should be taught outdoors is something to be continually and openly discussed. It is not something that should be left to chance. Consequently, there is a need to keep exploring the multiplicity of historical foundations to unpack some of the values imposed on the outdoors. Thus, rather than

allowing the outdoors as a place for learning to remain in the background and subsumed by discourses of adventure, personal development, wilderness and challenge, more focus and attention could, and should be, given to the many ways the outdoors supports learning, especially critical thinking and explorations of the interconnectivity of all life. If religious ideas promote respect for all life then they continue to have a place, but if they mask understanding about the intricacies and complexity of life then they impoverish what outdoor education has to offer.

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## About the Author:

*Jo has retired from a career as an outdoor educator and now spends her time cycling preferably uphill. Her PhD looked at the way different meanings attributed to the outdoors shapes outdoor education practices. Jo can be contacted at [strakerstaite@gmail.com](mailto:strakerstaite@gmail.com)*



# Adventure Specialties Trust:

## Experiential learning in wilderness spaces

*By Jeff Lappin*

Adventure Specialties Trust is run by a team of passionate adventurers who share a love for the wilderness spaces of Aotearoa and know the intrinsic value of being in these spaces.

They operate in the knowledge that stepping away from the confines of urban life and day-to-day business creates opportunities for people to reconnect with their true selves, connect with others, and with the natural world. The time spent in such environments is often 'life-giving' in the full sense of hauora; we leave feeling physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually refreshed.

The Trust delivers three main types of programmes – Outdoor Education, Youth and Social Development, and Adventure Therapy. With bases

in Auckland and Christchurch, their programmes are tailored to meet the specific needs of each client and designed to unearth and maximise the individual and group's potential.

### **Christian founding values**

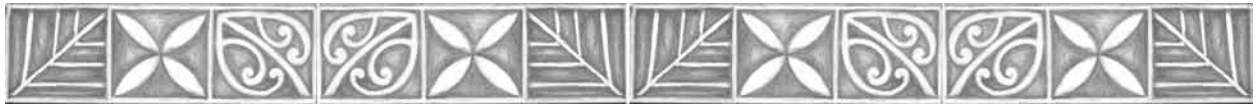
Part of Adventure Specialties' uniqueness is that at its core, they are a Christian faith-based organisation. Faith is a central value. It informs how they experience and see the world, the people they journey with and the creation they partner with.

Lyndsay and Glenda Simpkin, both who are dedicated Christians with a passion for the outdoors and with hearts focused on helping out those who are disadvantaged in some way, founded the Trust more than 34 years ago. Their intent

was to get people out enjoying the outdoors with the hope it would bring wholeness to their lives.

For Adventure Specialties Trust, spirituality is the essence of being human and the connectedness that people have though all things. For the Trust, this is seen through the lens of their Christian heritage and when the natural environment is included the Celtic Christian tradition reflects much of Adventure Specialties' philosophy. This tradition explores what it means to stand on top of a high point and be awestruck by an incredible vista; be mesmerized by the ocean crashing onto the beach; stare into a campfire on a star-lit night; or be deeply impacted by a stunning sunset. These experiences are what the early Celtic Christians referred to as 'thin-spaces' - places





where they believed the spiritual and physical parts of being human are so intertwined it is impossible not to think beyond ourselves, and explore who we are in the vastness of humanity and all of creation.

Today the team at Adventure Specialties Trust are all dedicated staff who align with the Christian worldview as the Simpkins did. They have a belief that the outdoors is an obvious and ideal space where people can connect with the environment and have an understanding of their own spirituality and place on earth.

### **Investing in people's lives**

A strong part of Adventure Specialties' work is the building of temporary community. This happens through exploring, adventuring, cooking, eating, sharing sleeping spaces, going through mud, rain and bush together. Togetherness is key and through shared experiences that build community and allow space, those relationships grow. The laughter and tears that come from sharing such adventures often lead to a deeper level of conversation.

At times, it is the culture of a group that provides opportunities for staff members to discuss faith. For example, a South Auckland school with a high Pasifika population, will very readily talk about God, sing hymns and pray in which staff are often invited to join in and share their own journey of faith. For other groups that are not so influenced by a Church tradition, spiritual

conversations may not come up at all. However, those who work at the Trust believe that creation speaks for itself, and in some way, all participants gain a sense of spiritual connection.

Staff often find it appropriate to say a prayer or karakia at the start of a trip, which can deepen the experience for participants. After one particular trip, a client reflected on the transformational impact that a prayer at the start of a tramp in the Whirinaki forest had had for them; "[The prayer] transformed our walk through the misty podocarp giants into an amazing spiritual experience for me and my group, and opened my eyes to the power of spiritual dimensions in the outdoors."

### **Activities as vehicles for learning**

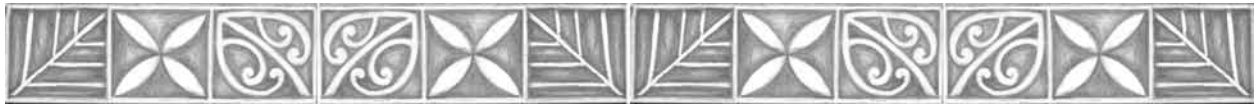
Adventure Specialties Trust is more than simply an activity provider, and strives to deliver its programmes on a relational level, utilising each activity as a vehicle for growth. They have learned that

the activities are good mediums for participants to attach to the natural world in a spiritual context. Staff are on hand to help motivate, cultivate character and extend the horizons of each participant through a relational, down-to-earth approach and through a connection on a spiritual level.

For example, participants often see the underground world of caving as a scary and foreign environment. However, once participants see the wonders of the depths, they are usually awestruck and feel a different connection to each other, and the environment that they otherwise would not feel on the surface. This in turn creates space for discussions on subjects such as fear, trust and vulnerability. At times individuals may have what they claim to be a "spiritual experience" as they ponder how all things fit together while spending some time sitting alone with lights off in a secluded part of a cave.

Vulnerability is often a key topic of discussion, and staff are encouraged to share their own





experiences of feeling vulnerable or uncertain. Adventure Specialties Trust's staff say that the outdoor environment and the activities they run prompt people to being open and creates a safe space for young people to feel like it's ok to be vulnerable too.

Metaphors and stories are used extensively on the different programmes. The late Lyndsay Simpkin once wrote; "Adventure involves risk and the presence of risk creates uncertainty. As Christian outdoor instructors, drawing metaphors from adventures reminds people that the essence of the 'adventure of life' is finding the solution that provides the hope of resolving the uncertainty". He then goes on to say that "The instructor endeavours to find opportunities where they can share the truths and principles of God, and His love that can make a difference."

### **The right stuff on the inside**

As the analogy says, good people are like mighty trees, and a tree's

fruit is a great indication of the tree's health and what it's really like.

Referring to this, Lyndsay has said: "When people get the right stuff on the inside, the attributes that will be evidenced in their lives will be love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...These things won't get you into trouble. Our experience, and the reason our staff are committed to the mission of Adventure Specialties, is that outdoor education programmes are a great place for these attributes to surface, to be acknowledged and to be encouraged. Imagine the impact of a community or a whole society where these attributes were prevalent. Like becoming an Olympic athlete, we want to encourage every student and every family we work with to aim for gold. We want them to know what it takes to be people of emotional depth, able to handle the 'mountain-top blues'. We want them to find the right stuff on the inside."

Adventure Specialties Trust's

goal is to see people develop the "right stuff" and for them the right stuff is, in part, understanding how powerful the natural environment is in drawing people closer to themselves and their own spirituality. This is why Adventure Specialties Trust do what they do; not only for the desire of getting others interacting with the natural world but also hoping that they will, in their own time, in their own way, interact with a Creator who is interested in people and wants complete wholeness for them.

### **About the author:**

*Jeff is the Operations Manager for the Auckland branch of Adventure Specialties Trust. He trained as an instructor with them over ten years ago and after doing a few other things he ended up teaching at an Auckland intermediate school. When the opportunity to become a part of Adventure Specialties Trust became available again, he knew it was where he wanted to be. Jeff can be contacted at [jeff@adventurespecialties.co.nz](mailto:jeff@adventurespecialties.co.nz)*





# What's wrong with religious instruction as part of state primary school camp?

By Rachael Dixon

## Introduction

What are children's legal rights in terms of religious instruction<sup>1</sup> and school activities? Why and when can a case be made for the illegality of religious instruction on school camp? In this article I question the practice of religious instruction as part of school camp for state primary<sup>2</sup> schools. I will use extracts from The Human Rights Commission's guidance to religious education in New Zealand schools (HRC, 2009) - which draws upon the 1964 Education Act and the human rights policies to which NZ is a signatory - to argue that children from state primary schools should not be exposed to religious instruction as part of school activities, with a particular focus on school camp.

But first, a caveat. Everyone is entitled to his or her own beliefs (Human Rights Commission, n.d). I realise, therefore, that what is

considered "right" by one person or group will not be considered "right" by everyone in our pluralistic, diverse and dynamic 21<sup>st</sup> century world. I am open to, and tolerant of, others' views and arguments on the issue - and as such, I am receptive to having my views challenged. In conducting research for this article, I was impressed by some of the aims and activities of the camps that I read about, and I do have respect for many aspects of their kaupapa. However this article is my personal perspective on the legality of religious instruction at camp for students in state primary schools, foregrounded by my interpretation of the law as related to the issue.

## Some context for the issue

The most recently available census data (from the 2013 census) identifies that affiliation with religious groups has decreased in New Zealand over the past 15 years. Over 40% of people reported no religious affiliation; this being most marked in younger people. At the same time, those who identify with Hinduism, and the Islam and Sikh religions have increased (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). This reflects, naturally, the changing ethnic make-up of Aotearoa. In itself, the fact that fewer people than in the past are affiliated with a religion, and more of our population now identifies

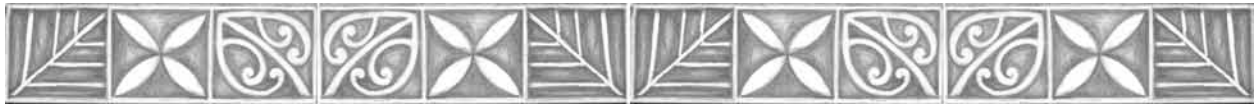
with non-Christian religions than they did in the past, brings into question the place of religious instruction and involvement of religious groups (predominantly Christian) in state school-run activities, such as camp.

While researching for this article, I searched for posts discussing 'school camp' on the Secular Education Network's Facebook page. The sheer number of posts and experiences recounted by parents in relation to religious instruction or content at school camp did not surprise me as such, but I was frustrated to read about 'values sessions' being sprung on children, and sometimes coming as a surprise to parents and teachers attending camp. This raises questions around due diligence such as:

- What research do schools undertake prior to booking a camp venue?
- What conditions of hire do they sign up for?
- How do schools communicate to parents their right to opt their children out of religious content at camp?
- How well does the camp's ethos align with the school's charter, vision, values and beliefs, and what the parent community invests in?
- Is it ethical to financially support religious groups by using their

<sup>1</sup> Religious instruction is defined as "teaching aspects of a faith in its own right... (carrying) an implicit or explicit endorsement of a particular faith and/or encourages students to engage with and make decisions about accepting it on a personal level" (HRC, 2009, p. 4). This is distinct from religious observance and religious education.

<sup>2</sup> The law is different for primary schools and secondary schools, and for state schools, private and integrated schools (HRC, 2009). This article focuses on primary state schools.



facilities?

- With which other religious organisations do these camps affiliate?

In answer to the latter, a small amount of digging uncovered links between at least one camp used by schools and the Child Evangelism Fellowship, whose purpose is to “evangelize boys and girls with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ” (CEF, 2015), which for me rings alarm bells.

There are 70 camps in New Zealand who are members of Christian Camping New Zealand (Christian Camping NZ, n.d). The camps are owned by religious groups (including inter-denominational), charitable trusts with religious affiliations, or are privately owned. It appears that Christianity has invested heavily in camps across Aotearoa over time. Within the 70 camps, some have explicitly religious content on their websites, and others do not. Some camps cater for school groups, and some do not. Five camps that cater for school groups explicitly state (on their websites) that the conditions of hire/use of the facility will involve students taking part in religious instruction as part of the camp experience. The wording used by these camps includes: “...a compulsory ‘Camp Gospel Program’... a brief Bible discovery time during breakfast and dinner each day... a minimum of 15 minutes Bible-related input per day ... OR Provision be made for the Camp Manager to arrange Bible-related input for your group... a “Ranch Talk” debriefing the day which includes a Bible-based story or Christian ethics.” The question, then, becomes (how & when) is

this legal?

### What does the law say?

To gain insight into the legalities of the situation, I turn my attention to “*Religion in New Zealand Schools. Questions and Concerns*” (HRC, 2009). This document provides sound guidance for school leaders and teachers around the issues involved in religion and schools, with a specific focus on primary state schools<sup>3</sup>. Firstly, the document acknowledges, as I did above, the changing demographics of the NZ population since the 1960s, the era from which the law regarding religion in schools dates (HRC, 2009). This means that the place of religion in state schools needs to be considered within a 21<sup>st</sup> century NZ society and educational context, which includes the importance of schools to actively consult with their parent and whānau communities.

Provisions under the Education Act 1964 allow schools to provide religious instruction under certain conditions and the decision is up to the Board of Trustees. First, students must be given the opportunity to opt out freely, be supervised appropriately while not taking part in the instruction, and not be or feel discriminated against (HRC, 2009). In order for students (or their parents) to do so, I believe it is critical that schools communicate clearly to parents the nature of the

instruction that is to take place, as well as stating it is their right to opt out, and communicating that they will be supervised in a way in which is safe physically, socially and emotionally. Second, teaching must be secular during the times that schools are open for instruction (HRC, 2009). This raises the question of whether, during school camp (where the religious content often occurs in the evening), school is considered to be open or closed. The Human Rights Commission document answers this question for us when they state that “a school is open for instruction when some kind of educational activity is taking place...such as... school camp.” (HRC, 2009, p. 12). This revelation in itself calls into question the legality of religious instruction occurring as part of school camp activities. Third, those offering the religious instruction should be volunteers and not be paid for this. It is unclear who in practice offers the religious instruction as part of school camp. It may be provided by paid employees of the camp, or volunteers, the latter as required by law. It is definitely not considered good practice for teachers or any school employee to provide the religious instruction, as this implies that the school supports and encourages the beliefs espoused therein (HRC, 2009).

### Conclusion

Whether or not religious instruction as part of the camp experience has in the past been a topic for debate in your school community, the legal issues raised in this article bear thinking about for future planning of school camps.

3 Note that the publication of Ministry of Education guidelines for state primary schools on religious instruction are currently being considered. See: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/103677430/religious-classes-in-primary-schools-set-to-have-published-guidelines>





I chose to focus solely on the legal aspects of religious instruction in state primary schools, because to explore wider human rights and educational policy such as the Education Council's code and standards and the NZC (amongst other documents) would open the proverbial can of worms. This is not to diminish the importance of human rights considerations, and the teacher professional responsibilities outlined by the Education Council; not to mention the concept of social justice, one of the key attitudes and values underpinning the Health and Physical Education Learning Area in the NZC – but these are all much more open to interpretation and

subjectivity within and across the diverse values and beliefs held by people in Aotearoa. In some ways, I hope that this article raises for you more questions than answers, and is a worthwhile contribution to the conversation in school communities about the place of religious instruction at a state primary school camp.

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### About the author:

**Rachael Dixon** is a PhD student at the University of Otago, Christchurch. She is also the co-chairperson of NZHEA, and a mother to two children being raised in an agnostic household. Rachael can be contacted at [rachael@rachaeldixon.com](mailto:rachael@rachaeldixon.com)

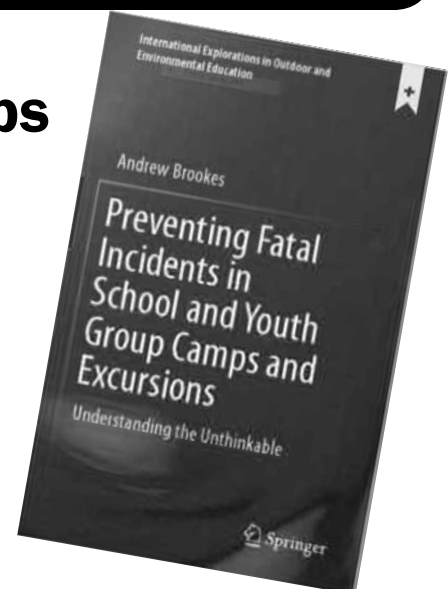
## Book review

# Preventing Fatal Incidents in School and Youth Group Camps and Excursions: Understanding the Unthinkable

Author: Brookes, Andrew

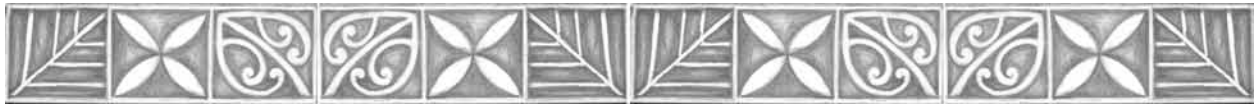
By Chris North

This book is an extension of Andrew Brookes' work to ensure that lessons from past fatal incidents are learnt and result in safer outdoor trips. In the past, Brookes has published a range of articles documenting fatalities between 1960 and 2000 in Australia, and the Mangatepopo Gorge tragedy here in New Zealand. In this book he extends this database to include fatalities since 1900 and including reports internationally (limited to reports published in English). The extensive list of incidents tells a powerful tale and highlights his argument that fatal incidents involve new actors but old scripts; essentially we are repeating mistakes from the past.



The structure of the book is set out to build a theoretical understanding of how we can learn from past incidents. In the past there have been a number of ways of analysing incidents including some which are either blame-based or blame-avoiding, both of which Brookes discredits. Brookes argues that if we accept responsibility for the care of others, then we must also be prepared to accept responsibility for a failure to provide that care. Chapter 2 and 3 provide





a solid base for developing these ideas and while they are the most challenging academically, readers are rewarded by a deeper understanding of what we can and cannot learn from studying these cases. In brief, expertise, fatality study and fatality aversion are critical to enhancing safety.

Chapters four, five and six analyse multiple fatalities in water-based activities, multiple fatalities in land-based activities and single fatalities. In each of these chapters, I found the tables which listed the events chronologically with brief summaries very useful as a reference point. Brookes ties together themes that are common across the cases and this builds on the theoretical framework developed in chapters two and three. Noteworthy is that the majority of the incidents do not happen in 'high risk' pursuits-type activities, many happen as local swimming holes or walking trips. While the danger of remote and pursuits-based activities is something that place-responsive literature sometimes critiques, there is little evidence to support the idea that more local outings are safer. That said, Brookes also shows how programmes based on challenging young people through risk are problematic for safety. In particular, such programmes can equate higher danger with greater challenge, and therefore see increasingly risky undertakings as a natural progression. Brookes' important point is that greater challenge does not require higher risk.

Chapter seven applies Brookes' principles to organisations as a whole. He argues compellingly that experienced and trained people are needed because 'OE safety remains ontologically bound to placing youth in the care of safe hands' (p.206). Experienced staff cannot be replaced by systems thinking or industrial standards. A key warning sign is an organisation which has not cancelled/postponed or adapted programmes in the recent past. This suggests that the organisational expectations of 'following the plan' are dominating decision-making.

In the final chapter (eight) Brookes brings together

the key messages from the book:

'Questions for individuals directly responsible for the care of youth in the outdoors are:

- (1) How sound is my understanding of past fatal incidents in the kinds of OE program I am contemplating or involved with?
- (2) How sound is my understanding of the entire program (not just the headline activity), location, and environmental conditions from the perspective of fatality prevention?
- (3) Do I consistently take all reasonable precautions to prevent any death, as determined by (1) and (2)?' (p. 233)

The following are some of my questions that arose for me from reading the book and should not detract from the importance and influence of the book. Is 'fatality aversion' really that different to 'acceptable risk'? Brookes does a great job of critiquing 'acceptable risk', because those who are directly affected by a tragedy will not find the fatality 'acceptable'. Yet while Brookes argues that 'fatality aversion' is a better approach, he shows that fatalities can occur in falls from as little as 1.5m, therefore it may be impossible to provide complete 'fatality aversion'. Which brings us back to judgement of experts, underpinned by careful consideration of the risks to find the conditions where there would be a low likelihood of a fatality. To me this sounds like a more nuanced version of acceptable risk.

That said, the book provides an impressive and coherent argument for fatality prevention. As stated in the foreword of the book, no previous work has attempted this task. I found the details of the cases vivid and engrossing reading. I could see myself in the situations and this is the purpose of the cases- to give others as close to the experience of those in the incidents as possible. I highly recommend this book to anyone involved in outdoor education or taking young people on excursions, from the local, to the remote. This book will change the way you look at risk management.

### **Preventing Fatal Incidents in School and Youth Group Camps and Excursions: Understanding the Unthinkable**

Author: Brookes, Andrew | Publisher: Springer | 241 Pages

Series: International Explorations in Outdoor and Environmental Education

Series Editors: Gough, Annette, Gough, Noel

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## THE EONZ POSITION STATEMENT ON EOTC

### **1. Purpose (What we do)**

**1.** EONZ maintains that the primary purpose of EOTC is to engage with the New Zealand curriculum outside the classroom in order to enrich the learning of students in early childhood centres, and primary and secondary schools.

EONZ embraces all the principles of *Te Whāriki He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna O Aotearoa / Early Childhood Curriculum* (1996); *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* (2008); and *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007); including a commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and cultural diversity, inclusive communities, coherence in learning across the curriculum, and future focussed issues such as sustainability, citizenship, enterprise and globalisation.

EONZ supports the values outlined in the above documents including excellence, innovation, diversity, equity, community, cultural and ecological sustainability, integrity, and respect.

### **2. Why we do it (benefits for individuals, communities, environments)**

**2.** EONZ is cognisant of research (for example see TKI website <http://eotc.tki.org.nz/eotc-home>) that supports well-structured EOTC experiences. Studies have shown that educationally sound EOTC experiences can enrich student learning across the curriculum. The establishment of positive relationships with teachers and peers in places of significance can foster a sense of belonging to communities and environments that is essential to on-going learning.

### **3. How we do it (Pedagogy/practice/partnerships)**

**3.** EOTC programme design should be informed by sound pedagogical principles as highlighted in the New Zealand Curriculum. EONZ maintains that EOTC should at all times occur within the framework of the EOTC Guidelines: *Bringing the Curriculum Alive* (2009).

EONZ actively supports partnerships with and between teachers, schools and the community. EONZ seeks to work collaboratively with other sector organisations with the goal to improve EOTC in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **4. Where we do it (Place)**

**4.** EONZ supports place based and responsive approaches to EOTC that seek to: strengthen the understanding that students have of their local communities and environments (as well as those further afield), and engender a sense of obligation to care for those communities and environments. To achieve these goals, EONZ encourages action oriented experiential education that explores individual and collective relationships to places to foster vibrant communities and healthy environments.

### **5. Reducing our footprint**

**5.** EONZ is committed to reducing the impact it has on the planet. This commitment includes reducing the impacts of the executive board, and all outputs of the organisation including production of resources and professional development. For example, EONZ is committed to providing resources on-line to reduce the impact on forests, and increasing the provision of local opportunities for PD to reduce the need to travel.



# MEMBERSHIP FORM

*Membership is current for ONE year and runs from  
1 January to 31 December*

For further information contact the EONZ Executive Officer:

Phone: 03 423 3141

Email: office@eonz.org.nz

If you wish to become a member please complete the form below and return with payment to:

Catherine Kappelle  
Executive Officer  
Education Outdoors New Zealand Inc.  
354 Tram Road  
R D 2 Kaiapoi 7692

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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### EONZ Resources

Refer to EONZ Executive Officer – see above

**www.eonz.org.nz**