

Māori Communities

Feedback has been collated from community-led reports and previous publicly available community engagement activity across government and NZ Police. We have pulled the feedback into one place to identify themes that have helped inform the Standing Together Against Hate series and greater NZ Police work.

The community feedback has been grouped into the following themes: Identity, Engagement, Government, Law and Protection, Support, Data, and Communications and Media.



Te Raranga
Standing together
against hate



What we heard from Māori communities about **‘Identity’**

“Colonisation insidiously undermines, and remains there, softly, all the time - and before you know it, you’re no longer happy to be Māori”

For us it is not having to choose between Māori and other communities. For example, not needing to choose between being Christian and Takatāpuhi, or Māori and queer.

“The collective level can be overwhelming, how can we think of hapū / iwi healing when your own whānau is still suffering”

“We need to think about never leaving anyone behind. There’s whānau that have no reo, just trying to put bread and butter on the table. Remember we need to bring all our hapori together as well”

Key themes

Importance of whenua and whānau structures on connection to identity and culture, disconnection and intergenerational trauma continues to lead to poor outcomes for communities and individuals.

Public spaces not safe for Māori to express their cultural identity without facing discrimination.

Colonisation introduced ‘western’ concepts and replaced te ao Māori.

Recognition for Māori as the first people of Aotearoa, and the diversity within the community

Opportunity to shift the thinking from ‘what has been’ to recognising things don’t need to be the same going forward.

“Grandparents were punished for speaking reo at school and punished by their own parents who encouraged them to embrace the Pākehā world. As a result, 1 of 21 grandkids can speak te reo, [the rest] don’t know tikanga or the reo”

“we want people to...shift from the mindset that the way that things used to be in the past will be the way they will be in the future”

“Seeing a surge of people signing up to te reo Māori courses. The courses are full and while it’s awesome to see non-Māori want to learn our reo it’s also crowding out space for Māori. And Māori who are learning the reo are carrying a lot of mamae. We have a right to our language”

Where there is racism, you either learn to confront it, or you learn to work around it

‘Engagement’

**“recognise the difference
between bi-culturalism and
multi-culturalism”**

**“clearly acknowledge and
recognise Māori as tangata
whenua (and understand the
diversities within tangata whenua
by generation, by location and by
te reo and tikanga Māori
knowledge and experience”**

Key themes

**Understand who you are engaging with to
understand how to engage with them.**

**Tangata whaikaha voices often forgotten or
grouped with non-Māori voices.**

**Genuine engagement and recognition of Māori is
fundamental to developing government strategy
and policy.**

**Acknowledge the burden on the community,
those who are always expected to engage, and
the need to constantly advocate and justify
themselves.**

**“Mana whenua to be given a
discretion with when and how
to engage with council and
government, to enable wānanga
with whānau, iwi and hapū”**

Takatāpui shared that their identities are either fractured or homogenised by policy and, therefore, policy makers. As one said, **‘Don’t box me.’**

When we talk about Māori success, it is mostly about Māori succeeding in te ao Pākehā. This is assimilation. When we talk about tino rangatiratanga, it needs to be in te ao Māori”

Key themes

Rebalancing of resources needed, financial and in terms of access to information. The nature of Māori participation in decision making needs to be one of true partnership to affect the changes needed.

Better support for Māori is needed to enable the communities to thrive in a Māori way and that gives mana back to communities.

Education for everyone, across schooling and workplaces, for the impacts of colonisation in Aotearoa to be understood and to enable meaningful discussion.

“A few years ago, the word colonisation was never used, now it’s used freely. We’ve moved away from “unconscious bias” to now calling it what it is – racism”

Takatāpui shared that they feel they belong when they are connected, when everyone’s mana is protected and when all of us are upheld. Connections are the things that bind us together, respectful of everyone’s differences at the same time.
(Takatāpui)

‘Government’

continued

“That the authority to define what Te Tiriti o Waitangi means and therefore what rangatiratanga means was captured solely by the Crown and in turn the Crown also defined unilaterally its own responsibilities in relation to rangatiratanga.”

“They are looking at basic needs – kai, education, before they can determine for themselves and their whānau what tino rangatiratanga is”

Key themes

Note underlying persistent racism across the public sector, there is still a way to go to acknowledge past traumas and address the problems.

Government is seen to have put in place the biggest barriers to rangatiratanga, greater accountability is needed from those in government making decisions on behalf of communities.

Use tikanga and te tiriti based frameworks, establish measures across government to monitor the changes needed for outcomes.

When I can complain about discrimination and mistreatment without fearing repercussions. When we don't have the threat of cuts to our benefits when we speak out.

“We are trying to build capacity just to catch up and we are on the back foot when it comes to our resource base.”

“The ability to realise and exercise tino rangatiratanga was restricted because of non-Māori decision-makers and state institutions.”

‘Law & Protection’

“The wording of the reforms and legislation, including the Act, need to reflect Māori / tāngata whenua as a Treaty partner and recognise the partnership with Māori / Iwi in legislation. A paragraph/preamble which mentions it is no longer acceptable and should be changed.”

“Having to seek equity [is frustrating] when we know our tīpuna signed up to protection of our resources and rights. We have a long way to get to equality”

Key themes

Still having to fight for the rights set out in Te Tiriti.

The Westminster system doesn't reflect the tikanga Māori approach that Māori seek in the justice sector.

Content regulation needs to cater to tikanga Māori. Current laws don't protect communities from daily discrimination, the thresholds are often too high. Need to find a balance between 'reconciliation' and 'punitive' measures.

Being able to talk about racism is the first step to addressing racism; everyone needs to know what it is, different forms or racism, and have safe spaces to talk about it.

“There may be more Māori judges, but we are still working under that Western model”

“they generally felt safe when amongst Māori gatherings/ community but felt exposed and unsafe in the wider community due to racism, discrimination and hatred.”

Someone who works at McDonalds for example doesn't have their life threatened every day like we do. (Takatāpui)

A discussion on racism cannot be had until the population is clear about the different levels of racism. This discussion is particularly difficult to have with Pākehā who can often feel personally attacked when racism is mentioned.

‘Support Services’

Māori services (and communities) have been under-resourced and subjected to unrealistic monitoring and performance expectations. This includes the contracting models which make it even more difficult to support whānau Māori to thrive.

“Despite these challenges and barriers, tangata whenua and Māori service providers have persisted and remain determined to contribute to whānau, hapū and iwi wellbeing. This is because providers and communities are driven by te ao Māori values, principles and approaches.”

Key themes

Māori led providers and initiatives are most appropriate for supporting Māori communities, delivering the support needed, often beyond what is contracted for, and within a system that puts challenges in their way.

Whenua and whānau provide cultural support structures that sustain individual and collective wellbeing for Māori.

‘The system’ doesn’t always recognise Māori or cultural identity, rather it forces people to fit into other boxes first depending on the interaction (i.e. by their disability or illness first).

“Government needs to know that there are times when they need to step back, they should not have a leadership role in the development of mātauranga policy”

Many participants welcomed the positive developments that have occurred in recent years, citing Māori led initiatives such as kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori, Kotahi Mano Kāika and others, as well as increased use of te reo in the media and ‘mainstream’ society.

Reporting, complaints processes and systems are most often not accessible or supportive of disabled people’s needs.

“Participants emphasised the need to collect good quality data to measure the nature of the problem and to measure progress in eliminating it: We need data around racism.”

Key themes

Existing data shows that Māori are disproportionately disadvantaged across a number of areas.

More data is needed to strengthen visibility of the communities' experiences.

There is a need to not only capture data about the community, but to use that data to inform and monitor change that needs to happen.

Consideration should be given Māori data sovereignty.

Participants wanted hapū and iwi to have a role in monitoring to be responsive to local needs and aspirations and opportunities to incorporate positive data for Māori.

“The Crown had existing data sets to measure inequalities for Māori across education, health and justice.”

‘Communications & Media’

“It was recommended that journalists, reporters, and producers across the mainstream media industry should be required to undergo cultural competency training with a focus on better understanding tikanga Māori.”

“Anti-Māori undertones are continually present in mainstream news reporting...This has a particularly harmful impact on tamariki and rangatahi, and their relationship with their Māori identity.”

Key themes

Mainstream reporting and media perpetuates anti-Māori narratives.

Accessibility to information isn’t always considered across all communities.

Social media contains a lot of harmful content at odds with tikanga Māori, but it also has the potential to be a positive and affirming space for Māori.

Māori media is often ‘in a narrative war’ with mainstream media and works hard to produce content that re-balances the scales and narratives of mainstream media outlets.

“Rangatahi are often exposed to content that conflicts with tikanga Māori. A significant amount of content online is filled with sexist, racist and misogynistic language that conflicts with tikanga Māori. This is also seen in movies, television and video games that normalise violence against wāhine.”

“Social media has potential to be a positive and affirming space for Māori. This can be done by promoting Māori content, creators and influencers who produce content that is focused on mātauranga Māori.”