

**Te Oranga o te Iwi Maori:
A Study of Maori Economic and Social Progress**

**Te Puni Kokiri:
The Ministry of
Maori Development**

John Luxton

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About the author

Hon John Luxton is an agribusiness entrepreneur, company director and consultant and was Minister of Maori Affairs from 1993–1996.

Introduction

There is a risk in a non-Maori commenting on things Maori, but being Maori may infer a conflict that might also challenge impartiality. It is interesting in a public policy sense to review the various roles that have been given to the Maori portfolio of government over the last 160 years. Maori Affairs is one of the oldest of all government portfolios. Over time, the changing role of the portfolio has reflected the government approach to Maori issues. This paper looks at what role such a ministry might play in future.

History

The Treaty of Waitangi has moved from being a way of protecting the rights of all when first signed in 1840, through to having little meaning in an official or legal view in the late 1800s (though Maori would say otherwise), and then back into legislative recognition with a focus on protecting rights and allowing a Maori perspective to be considered, where appropriate, in government decision making.

The relationship between Maori and non-Maori in New Zealand has also changed over time, partially in accordance with their relative socio-economic positions. So, too, have policies of assimilation and the importance of the Maori language and culture.

Butterworth (1989) notes three distinct 'Departments of Maori Affairs' from 1840 to 1989. They were as a protectorate, a native department, and then as a developmental Department of Maori Affairs. Their focus has oscillated from providing communication between two cultures, through assisting in the development and settlement of farms, to providing welfare, and back to a developmental approach and the provision of a Maori perspective for government.

The Protectorate Department (1840–1846)

This was created by governor Hobson following his instructions from the British secretary of state for the colonies. Its role was "to watch over the interests of the Aborigines as their protector" and to promote the religious, intellectual and social advancement of Maori.

The protectorate was to advise the governor on all matters involving Maori, to conduct official correspondence with Maori communities and to act as interpreters for the courts, other officials and the military. It was also to be the sole purchaser of Maori land, which had been agreed to as a part of the Treaty of Waitangi in early 1840. This latter role was waived in 1844. With the arrival of governor George Grey in 1845, official policy changed towards one of integration. Grey was opposed to legal recognition of Maori custom or allowing Maori to share in the administration of justice.

The Native Department (1861–1893)

After a period in which the governor retained Maori affairs under his control with a series of native secretaries, Governor Grey initially established a system of elected runanga or Maori committees chaired by resident magistrates and commissioners, together with Maori assessors, police and mail carriers.

The Native Land Court was established in 1865. The runanga policy was scrapped in 1866 and the Native Department evolved and built its activities around the resident magistrates, commissioners, assessors, police and mail carriers. It also added a network of Maori schools and provided medical assistance.

Four Maori seats were created in parliament in 1867. The intention seems to have been to incorporate Maori into the colonial government and end the political and military independence of Maori chiefs.

The department's role was to deliver services specifically to Maori in health, education and policing while providing mediation and communication between the races, with the aim of leading towards integration. Health, education and policing were then allocated to mainstream departments at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Department of Maori Affairs (1906–1989)

Over the last century, the role of the Department of Maori Affairs changed several times. The changes were a result of the times, personalities and politics.

Sir James Carroll, as minister of native affairs (1899–1912), managed to establish Maori councils and Maori land councils in 1900 to again give Maori limited powers of self-government. With increasing pressure to develop Maori land, either for Maori or to make it available to non-Maori, the government reconstituted the Native Department. The major focus was to manage Maori land. Initially, this largely meant allowing Maori land to be sold for settlement. Some influential Maori, such as Maui Pomare, saw the need for individual ownership of land to encourage Maori away from a communal society (Durie, 2003, p 41).

With Gordon Coates as minister, working with Sir Apirana Ngata from 1921, came a focus on Maori education and training, cultural protection and the development and farming of Maori land. Ngata's policy was one of rapprochement between Maori and non-Maori according to Walker (2002). Ngata personally oversaw the development of much Maori land and, with it, the settlement of many Maori farmers. His schemes aimed to get Maori involved in productive farming and wean them off a dependency on land rents, denigrated as 'Maori landlordism'. Butterworth (1989) described Ngata's aims as "the development of tribal leadership and the promotion of community development".

After the Depression in the early 1930s and the change of government in 1935, the emphasis of the new Labour government was to "provide economic equality to the Maori people", according to Butterworth. The expanded 'welfare state' saw

the same benefits for Maori and non-Maori. Housing and major land development investment continued and the department became the Department of Maori Affairs in 1947. Maori committees and tribal executives were put on a statutory footing after the Second World War and a welfare division became a significant part of the department.

Urban migration of Maori became common in the 1950s and 1960s, with relative economic prosperity driven by New Zealand's agricultural exports, and attention went back onto title, fragmentation and economic issues associated with Maori land. Maori were being assimilated with the rest of society. The department was a major service provider with land development, housing and welfare support. Maori were a part of the labour-intensive infrastructure that got New Zealand's exports to the market.

The last 30 years

The period 1975–2000 was “a twenty-five year period of Maori development dominated by the Treaty of Waitangi and formalised by the passage of the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975” (Durie, 2003, p 91). The 1970s saw increasing pressures on the New Zealand economy with failing protectionist industry policies and what Sullivan (2003) called a “growing assertiveness against the policy of assimilating Maori into mainstream New Zealand”. Protests about Maori rights and past injustices led to the creation of the Waitangi Tribunal (initially with limited jurisdiction) and the formation of the Maori preschool ‘kohanga reo’ movement.

Much of this was a political response to Maori being more than proportionally represented in the lower socio-economic brackets, despite – or because of – 50 years of state welfare support.

With the opening up of the New Zealand economy to the realities of world markets in the 1980s, it became obvious that the job protection previously offered to many within government and other sheltered or subsidised sectors of the economy was unsustainable. This led to increased income and opportunity differences between the uneducated and educated, rural and urban households, and Maori and non-Maori as unsustainable labour-intensive jobs began to disappear or become more efficiently provided.

Work and jobs previously maintained by increasing public debt were gradually replaced by market-driven jobs over a 15-year period from the late 1980s and into the new millennium. The resulting open economy has seen significant growth in employment with real jobs.

In 1984, Koro Wetere, minister of Maori affairs in the Labour government elected that year, organised the first national Hui Taumata. A key theme of that hui was to devolve Maori development to the local level with an emphasis on iwi development. The government's aspirations for Maori development were contained in its policy statement, *Te Urupare Rangapu*. It comprised an eight-point plan aimed at restoring and strengthening the operational base of iwi, and

improving the responsiveness of mainstream government departments. This was the forerunner to the restructuring of the old Department of Maori Affairs.

Partly in response to the Maori loans affair, the Department of Maori Affairs was subsequently replaced by two separate agencies in 1989, namely Manatu Maori (Ministry of Maori Affairs) and the Te Tira Ahu Iwi (Iwi Transition Agency). The main task of the Iwi Transition Agency was to assist iwi to develop new capacities for fuller roles within the wider society. It was the government's intention that after five years it would be phased out. Manatu Maori was to have the ongoing role of advising on policies of Maori interest and concern. It was also required to monitor and advise the government on the responsiveness of government agencies to Maori issues.

In 1991, Winston Peters, minister of Maori affairs in the National government led by prime minister Jim Bolger, commissioned the report, *Ka Awatea*. This report emphasised four key development areas – education, labour market, health, and economic resource development. All this was consistent with the directions set down by the Hui Taumata of 1984, except for its focus on iwi development. The Runanga Iwi Act was repealed, and Manatu Maori and the Iwi Transition Agency were replaced by Te Puni Kokiri with effect from 1 January 1992. Te Puni Kokiri was to focus on policy advice and monitoring roles, supported by a network of regional offices. *Ka Awatea* argued that the principal (mainstream) departments, such as education, labour and health, were better resourced and more capable of delivering programmes to Maori, particularly if supplemented by Maori-specific policy advice and monitored for their effectiveness.

Mainstreaming

Accordingly, in the early 1990s, the department refocused as a ministry of Maori development to make a clear distinction from its previous welfare roles, many of which were incorporated into the responsibilities of mainstream government departments. This approach was aimed at moving away from welfare as a solution to low incomes to recognising that economic growth, participation in paid work and education were more effective in getting people out of poverty traps.

The mainstream departments contracted private sector organisations, many of them Maori, to deliver services to Maori. This resulted in a dramatic expansion of Maori-owned business activity. In addition, the direct negotiation of treaty settlements gave some tribal groups additional resources to invest in business and education. Maori business has become a significant contributor to the New Zealand economy, particularly in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, education, welfare, health and the media.

Mainstream government departments generally provide policy and resources to Maori and the rest of society on the basis of need rather than race, despite a brief attempt by the government in 2000 to implement a 'Closing the Gaps' policy that

was aimed at reducing disparities between Maori and non-Maori. However, some legislation does specify the need for specific Maori input.

Te Puni Kokiri (the Ministry of Maori Development) has been a policy agency advising government since 1992, and is also charged with monitoring service delivery to Maori by mainstream departments and other agencies. The transfer of much of the former department's activity has provided a clear focus on this limited policy and monitoring role.

Current role of Te Puni Kokiri (Ministry of Maori Development)

Te Puni Kokiri's broad functions, under the Ministry of Maori Development Act 1991, are to:

- promote increases in levels of achievement attained by Maori with respect to education, training and employment, health and economic resource development; and
- monitor and liaise with each department and agency that provides, or has a responsibility to provide, services to or for Maori, for the purpose of ensuring the adequacy of those services (Te Puni Kokiri, 2007b).

Te Puni Kokiri's role has progressively evolved since its establishment in its present form in 1992. In the department's own account:

The early emphasis on providing alternative views to ensure that Māori interests formed a part of Government's policy considerations, facilitating local level access to mainstream services, and monitoring state sector performance with respect to Māori was gradually extended to incorporate direct funding of, and investment in, Māori communities and organisations and an increased focus on the quality of Crown–Māori relationships.

Since 2004, Te Puni Kōkiri's strategic direction and associated efforts have been focused on 'Māori succeeding as Māori'. This desired outcome recognises the importance of Māori achieving a sustainable level of success that is underpinned by the cultural fabric that is part of being Māori. This desired outcome is supported by the Māori Potential Approach, which is the Ministry's overarching policy framework and basis for all of its operations.

In 2007, Te Puni Kōkiri (was) an integrated agency delivering high quality policy advice, strategic investments geared towards realising Māori potential, and managing relationships and information to positively influence Government's relationships with Māori (Te Puni Kokiri, 2007b, p 8).

Strategic document

According to Te Puni Kokiri's chief executive, "The ultimate aim of the Māori Potential Approach is to better position Māori to build and leverage off their collective resources, knowledge, skills and leadership capability to improve their overall quality of life" (Te Puni Kokiri, 2007b, p 15).

Te Puni Kokiri's current 'strategic outcome and driving force' is based on a 2004 publication, *Strategic Direction – Maori succeeding as Maori* (Te Puni Kokiri, 2004). This goal encompassed Maori participating in te ao Maori (the Maori world), as well as participating and succeeding as Maori in New Zealand and in the wider world in whatever pursuits they choose (Te Puni Kokiri, 2008).

The document signalled a change in strategic direction to focus on outcomes for Maori based upon equity and indigeneity.

Universal or equity outcomes include influencing and assessing opportunities for Maori to succeed in universal government outcomes provided for all New Zealanders in areas such as economic, education, environment, health and justice. This endorses the role of mainstream government departments in providing such services to all New Zealanders.

Maori-specific or indigeneity outcomes include leading and supporting both generic and focused cultural, intellectual and physical resources that are specific to Maori as individuals and groups.

The following table gives an indication of how Government is budgeting to meet those outcomes. It gives no indication of success or failure in meeting those objectives.

Departmental output expenses – 2008

The outputs in the budget for the 2008/2009 year are as follows.

	\$ million
Policy and Monitoring – Social and Cultural	6,869
Policy and Monitoring – Economic and Enterprise	13,584
Policy – Crown–Maori Relationships	7,432
Relationships and Information	8,838
Operations Management	18,187
Services to the Maori Trustee	9,602
Total Output Expenses Te Puni Kokiri	64,512

Some 43 percent of the budget is targeted to policy and monitoring activities associated with services provided by mainstream government departments and agencies. Around 14 percent is aimed at relationships and information, and the remaining 43 percent represents the management costs of Te Puni Kokiri and the Office of the Maori Trustee. Bureaucracy appears to remain a problem, taking the largest slice of the departmental budget.

Maori development and the government's role

Durie (2003) defines Maori development as including self-sufficiency, social equity and cultural affirmation.

With the opening up of the New Zealand economy and recognition of the need for New Zealand to live within its means, major changes took place in the public service from 1980. Maori, by being over-represented in the lower socio-economic deciles, were disproportionately affected as the previous large state employers were restructured.

The outcome has been an increased focus on education, culture, economic development, and private and community Maori enterprise. The same has occurred for other New Zealanders who, 50 years ago, would have been considered working class and supported by the welfare state. Social equity has become more an issue of incentives and opportunities rather than income redistribution in today's world.

If there is to be a role for a specific Maori ministry one needs to decide what might be uniquely Maori rather than purely a socio-economic claim for income redistribution.

Cook and Mako (1996) proposed three areas that distinguish Maori:

- *culture and values* (land, language, environment and nature, ancestry and whakapapa, adaptability, reciprocity and spirituality);
- *inheritance* (culture, land, sea, Treaty rights access and education base);
- *constitutional* (electoral representation, Treaty settlements, participation in government processes, recognition of Maori institutions, national use of Maori language, application of Maori law and institutions, ability to meet obligations of autonomy and Maori participation in statutory processes that decide for Maori).

Durie *et al* (2002), in a survey of Maori aspiration, identified seven outcomes that they considered to be a part of the government's role for Maori. These were: *Maori wellbeing, whanau or household wellbeing, culture and cultural identity, the Maori language, the Maori asset base, tino rangatiratanga* (or self-determination), *kotahitanga* (or recognising the importance of collective effort) and the *completion of Treaty of Waitangi settlements*.

One could argue that *individual, whanau or household wellbeing* are equally aspired to by most members of society and not just Maori. The state already supports this aspiration through mainstream departments such as education, health and welfare but does not propose specific family values as such to the rest of society.

Mainstream departments have increasingly contracted Maori, voluntary, private and commercial groups to deliver services in education, health and welfare. While there have been cases of improper control and audit, by and large one would suggest that inefficiencies in delivery are less likely as a competitive delivery model of publicly funded services develops than under the bureaucratic public service monopoly provision of the past.

Likewise, the *Maori asset base* and *tino rangatiratanga* are basically aligned to property rights and facilitate the exercise of control over property and social arrangements. Non-Maori also want to protect their asset base and make their own decisions within their family, business or societal groups.

Part of the difficulty with the Maori asset base is the *cultural* premise that some Maori-owned land is different and must be inalienable from a particular collective group of owners. It therefore passes down to an increasing number of descendents. This issue of the primary collective interest over the individual interest in Maori assets is difficult, but probably little different from the way many New Zealanders see communal property elsewhere.

However, most commercial property assets in a modern society need to be able to be tradable to allow borrowing for development and growth. Some of the larger Maori property businesses already acknowledge this and have evolved tradable ownership structures away from the strictures of traditional Maori land ownership. Trade in ownership can still be restricted to particular groups, both within Maori and non-Maori society.

Tino rangatiratanga in its broadest sense is about governance, decision making and democratic processes of a particular societal grouping, be it central or local government, a tribal grouping, school board, marae committee or any other body that is self-governing. The Waitangi Tribunal originally defined it to be “tribal self management similar to what we understand by local government” in its report on the Muriwhenua fishing claim (Waitangi Tribunal, 1988).

Tino rangatiratanga has been seen by many as something stronger and has evolved within the Waitangi Tribunal to mean “[Maori] rights to manage their own policy, resources and affairs within minimum parameters necessary for the operation of the State” (see the Taranaki and Waipareira reports (Waitangi Tribunal, 1996 and 1998)).

It could also be suggested that the arguments about *kotahitanga*, or recognising the importance of collective effort, are equally about the politics of society’s groups and the process of income redistribution. However, most organisations in society depend upon the collective efforts of groups as well as the contribution of

individuals within those groups, as does society as a whole. One might suggest cooperative corporate culture in many sectors of our society is a similar approach.

The *completion of Treaty of Waitangi settlements* has been seen as an intergenerational attempt by recent governments to put Maori grievances from the past to bed by researching claims and providing a level of reparation, allowing claimant groups to rebuild and develop an asset base for their future benefit. Kenneth Minogue (1998) notes that cultural differences in New Zealand can be invoked as a negotiating lever, and observes that while “grievance has given Maori the high moral ground” in these negotiations, the more that it is “exploited, the more powerful will become the resentment that will sweep it away” (p 50).

Maori language and Maori culture are distinct to New Zealand but also closely allied to other Polynesian languages and cultures. There is a reasonable argument that because Maori are unique to New Zealand there is a role for government to support both. Likewise, New Zealand society increasingly has members who speak languages other than English and Maori and try to retain aspects of their own culture within New Zealand. The government channels considerable resources into the Maori Language Commission and Maori Television and supports Maori culture and language in other ways. This is now generally accepted as a part of what makes New Zealand unique and encourages a pride in culture and country – a part of nationhood.

Such cultural diversity is an asset to a society – providing there is still sufficient commonality within the society to maintain social cohesion. The resurgence of Maori language and culture has been important to many Maori. The tourism, media and education sectors also provide increasing opportunities to keep these relevant and commercially in demand.

Is there a future role for a ministry of Maori affairs?

Options for a future role for a ministry of Maori affairs range across the political spectrum from those who would like to see a return to a large service-delivery ministry focused on providing services to Maori, to those who see a separate ministry for Maori as unnecessary and rather paternalistic.

Durie (2003, p 101) suggests that the “[s]tate should continue to play a major role in developing Maori policy, but that role might be stronger when it comes to the participation of Maori as citizens of New Zealand”. He suggests a role for the state in matters such as strengthening Maori society, culture and knowledge with the “lead role being assumed by Maori”.

There is an argument that much of the activity in the Maori policy area in recent times has been focused upon gaining an increased share of the assets and income of the state, rightly or wrongly. The same, however, could be said of most of the

lobbying that goes on at central government level in the social area and by other protected sectors of the economy.

Durie (2003) also notes that Maori “development must add value to Maori lives, society and knowledge” and points to the lack of any Maori structure (aside from government agencies) able to develop policy at a national level. Past attempts by Maori for such a national approach have failed to gain widespread support unless they have been established or supported, or both, by the government.

However, one could suggest that Maori groups such as the kohanga reo movement and Maori Fisheries Commission (Te Ohu Kaimoana) are perceived as bringing a collective view in their specific areas, albeit tortuous at times. These outcomes, as in any democracy, will not meet the wishes of all.

Such organisations allow governance by Maori of Maori organisations that provide policy and direction to and for specific Maori groups. These are not seen by the New Zealand public as breaching the principles of a democracy with one person one vote and the sanctity of property rights for all.

The mixed member proportional (MMP) voting system also changes the importance of monitoring specific Maori views because there is now a large Maori caucus within parliament, including a Maori party.

The legislative standing of the Treaty of Waitangi is also a key to the future role of any Maori ministry. If references to the Treaty were removed from legislation, as has been suggested, the role of a ministry would be rather different than if legislative references to the Treaty and specific Maori rights were made explicit, as might be the focus of the Maori Party.

One senses that such treaty references are perceived by many to give preference or additional rights to Maori over and above other New Zealanders. Such preferences or additional rights can produce resentment in society and provide Maori with perverse incentives to exploit such rights instead of behaving as ordinary citizens within society. The partnership principle of the Crown and Maori could be seen as glancing backward rather than forward, particularly because Maori are represented on both sides of the partnership.

New Zealanders will continue to be proud of what makes New Zealand different from the rest of the world. Maori culture is a key part of that. There is wide support for services to those in genuine need within society. There is also the necessity for government to ensure social cohesion.

The purchase from community and private organisations of mainstream services previously supplied by government departments has seen Maori and other New Zealand business sectors grow significantly. Providing such contracting of government services is seen as fair and auditable, there appears to be support from the public for such activity to continue to grow. It has done much to enhance Maori development over the last 20 years. It has also made relevant the need to acquire knowledge of and the means to revive Maori culture, language and mana.

Over the last decade or so there has also been significant growth in mainstream Maori business in New Zealand's two largest export sectors, the primary and tourism sectors. This has also contributed to the growth of an emergent Maori middle class.

All of these changes enhance Maori and New Zealand development, despite the difficulties of moving from the previous culture of welfarism that was long fostered in New Zealand society. One might even suggest that the process of encouraging Maori business is today's version of Sir Apirana Ngata's land development schemes of the early 1900s.

Te Puni Kokiri

With over 40 percent of Te Puni Kokiri's budget being spent on Maori policy and monitoring, a case could be made that most policy under the headings of social, economic and enterprise is now a mainstream issue. Mainstream departments are required to be responsive to Maori. They are also required to monitor and report on performance on an ethnic basis. There seems little need for monitoring of the monitors.

The monitoring role gives the impression that some policy is centred on a 'spoils system' and that Maori effort should focus upon what it can get out of governments in one way or another. It is better to encourage self-sufficiency and this is how many Maori businesses now operate.

In addition, while such ethnic monitoring may show success in areas such as education and employment, it too often denigrates Maori in the political sphere by highlighting negative statistics, such as health, income and crime. Frequently, Maori are collectively blamed for such negative statistics, which does little to enhance race relations or pride in things Maori.

The 'Closing the Gaps' strategy referred to earlier was a response to the fact that the social and economic performance of Maori was materially worse than that for non-Maori across a broad range of social and economic performance measures. It aimed to improve and better coordinate mainstream activities, increase the focus on Maori community involvement including a community capacity-building dimension, and boost Te Puni Kokiri's monitoring role.

The government abandoned the 'Closing the Gaps' focus, however, in the face of public support for a speech by National Party leader Don Brash in January 2004, in which he positioned the government as creating a racially divided New Zealand:

... the topic I will focus on today, is the dangerous drift towards racial separatism in New Zealand, and the development of the now entrenched Treaty grievance industry. We are one country with many peoples, not simply a society of Pakeha and Maori where the minority has a birthright to the upper hand, as the Labour government seems to believe.

This speech boosted National's poll ratings and 'Closing the Gaps' became a political football that Labour was keen to kick to touch.

Te Puni Kokiri has defended dropping the 'gaps' concept on the grounds that it focused on the negative and assumed relative measures are the same as optimal measures (that is, that non-Maori benchmarks should be the norm for Maori). The gaps initiative has been seen as creating an activity rather than outcomes emphasis, and one that inspired a programmatic and compliance focus in relation to monitoring mainstream departments. As noted, the focus today for Te Puni Kokiri has moved to 'Maori succeeding as Maori', underpinned by a recognition that New Zealand success is dependent on Maori success and vice versa.

Nevertheless, the gap in the social and economic performance of the two populations is not something that should be swept under the carpet. Most New Zealanders would prefer these gaps did not exist, assuming like-for-like comparisons. Research suggests that most of the negative statistics are as much a reflection of socio-economic or educational status as of race. If the policy prescriptions that enable Maori to succeed as Maori are the same prescriptions as those that will best close these gaps, 'Maori succeeding as Maori' is arguably a better paradigm.

As regards Maori culture and language, they are supported through Vote Education and other votes. Specific agencies such as the Maori Language Commission (Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Maori) also provide support in this area. Kapa haka and Maori cultural traditions are supported from a variety of sources. They are important and Maori are taking responsibility in these areas for preserving and enhancing things specifically Maori.

Te Puni Kokiri has a significant operations budget, which could be markedly reduced by resolving issues around the role of the Office of the Maori Trustee and by moving out of specific policy roles that are currently also the responsibility of mainstream departments.

Te Puni Kokiri has not always been able to attract top policy analysts and could be seen as a contributor to, rather than a driver of, government policies that are responsive to Maori. It does have the potential to promote policies that are good for the whole community. Generally, policies that encourage education, competition, less government provision, innovation and economic growth help Maori and the community at large.

The growth of kohanga reo (Maori early childhood centres), kura kaupapa (Maori language schools) and wananga (Maori tertiary institutions) have all encouraged a devolution of education funding from the state controlled and operated sector to the private and community sectors. Likewise health and welfare services that were previously the monopoly of government. These examples of devolution merit consideration by mainstream government agencies responsible for education, health and welfare.

Conclusions

Significant progress has been made over the last 25 years in Maori development. Maori business is an important contributor to the economy and as a provider of services. This change has come about largely because of the opening up of the New Zealand economy, which has affected all New Zealanders, rather than because of specific Maori policy decisions of governments.

Mainstream government agencies are now required to focus on Maori development and Maori issues. The government does need access to the various views of Maori groups, as it does for those of other groups, and the regional office network of Te Puni Kokiri has been useful in maintaining contact with Maori perspectives on issues of the day. Much of that regional input has been contracted out to local iwi groups.

The government needs to maintain good links to both traditional and new structures within Maori society. There is often a need to provide information and feedback between Maori as a group and government.

In future a small ministry could focus on providing a conduit between the regions and Wellington and on trying to give a viewpoint of Maori on issues that will promote a competitive economy. This could be difficult, however, because Maori voters increasingly occupy positions right across the political spectrum.

Such a ministry could also have a small but high-powered policy unit able to promote policies that encourage economic growth across the economy by showing how they assist Maori. Maori have been particularly successful in bringing a realisation that private and community organisations are often better providers of services to the public than government monopolies.

The process of settling grievances of the past seems to have been successful in making some Maori key drivers of the New Zealand economy and, consequently, aligning Maori interests with other parts of the competitive economy. Te Puni Kokiri has been an important agent in that process.

Policy for Maori needs to look forward, not backward, to succeed and protect an evolving culture and a uniqueness shared by all New Zealanders. The current focus of policy on universal or equity issues and on specific Maori and indigeneity issues should become less necessary over time.

With time there may be no need for a specific ministry for Maori development such as Te Puni Kokiri because other agencies could meet public commitments in the few areas, such as language and culture, that are specific to Maori. This occurs already to some extent. One could say the same about the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which seems of lesser merit than a ministry of Maori development.

Maori are an important part of an evolving New Zealand uniqueness which encompasses an increasing acceptance by most New Zealanders that there is a need for Maori input in policy. This can only lead to an improved understanding of community within this country, where differences between groups of citizens are valued and nourished along with an increasing commonality and pride in what makes us all New Zealanders.

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