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Oriini Kaipara first with moko kauae to read major news bulletin

Emily Brookes • 15:17, Nov 28 2019



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Oriini Kaipara may be the first woman with a moko kauae to present a mainstream news bulletin.

Oriini Kaipara made history when she read TVNZ 1's midday news bulletin today.

Kaipara has a moko kauae, a traditional lower chin tattoo worn by Māori women, and is the first to appear on a mainstream news bulletin to bear one.

According to TVNZ, this represented the fulfillment of a lifelong dream for Kaipara.

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Ocean Mercier, head of Victoria University's Te Kawa a Maui

In an Instagram post, the broadcaster quoted her as saying: "This is for us. All of us."

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Ocean Mercier, head of Victoria University's Te Kawa a Māui/School of Māori Studies said to see someone bearing a moko kauae on the state broadcaster was "a pretty awesome signal of how far society has come in terms of accepting expression of culture."

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While moko kauae were prominent in photos of wahine from around the time of New Zealand's colonisation, they had become less common as there was "shame attached to them that's associated with colonisation," Mercier said.

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"Today there is a revitalisation of those who are wearing them... that shame and that fear has been not stripped away, (but) people are feeling more confident and free to wear these with confidence and with pride."

Kaipara's moko kauae was "hugely significant," said Mercier.

It showed that "she has not just mana as a Māori person who's bearing the moko kauae but she's also got mana in the TV realm, in the communication of the news so you kind of have these two forms of mana coming together in a very visible way, and that visibility helps to further normalise aspects of Maori culture."

Kaipara is also a presenter on the te reo bulletin *Te Karere* and has previously worked for Māori Television and Mai FM.

Two years ago, she [made headlines](#) when DNA testing revealed that she was "100 per cent Māori." Kaipara is of Tūhoe, Ngāti Awa, Tūwharetoa and Te Arawa descent.