

GUIDING KAUPAPA OF TE WĀNANGA-O-RAUKAWA

*Kia rangatira te tū a Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa
hei whare ako, whakatupu hoki i te mātauranga¹*

He Kupu Whakataki

Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa was established in April 1981 as a Centre of Higher Learning for the Confederation of Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Toarangatira, as part of the tribal development programme of the Raukawa Trustees, called Whakatupuranga Rua Mano. It was unique in the tertiary landscape of New Zealand, in that it was established by iwi, for iwi and of the iwi.

Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa has always described itself as a reformulation of the ancient whare-wānanga². As such it has also described itself as a tikanga Māori institution, another unique and fundamental characteristic. Such lofty descriptions however are of little value if, on a day to day basis, the Wānanga is operating like any other tertiary institution. The tikanga Māori nature of this place is an essential part of the justification for the existence of Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa.

The effort to develop and strengthen the tikanga Māori basis of our institution over the years has been considerable. We have regularly called on the Purutanga Mauri (itself a tikanga Māori concept) for guidance. The four principles of Whakatupuranga Rua Mano have been regularly invoked. The Theory and Understanding of Wānanga is a more recent innovation to give substance to the tikanga Māori institution description.

Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa for most of its existence has operated without a substantial policy base. Tikanga Māori has been the base. Recently however there has been a desire amongst management to develop a policy base for the Wānanga to guide its decision-making. This is a bold step, as the potential to move away from tikanga Māori and take on board other philosophies and ideas is great.

This paper argues that mātauranga Māori informs and guides Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa in its policy development and decision-making. The paper does not only relate to personnel policies and practices, but rather the whole *modus operandi* of the institution.

Mātauranga Māori is the foundation for our contemplations, developments and future directions. Some of us may need to reconsider our training and / or thinking that leads us to doubt our own knowledge base as being informative. For some, moving out of our comfort zone will be difficult, especially where that zone is founded on Pākehā methodology and principles. For far too long, mātauranga Māori has been consigned to the marae and we may be accused of having perpetuated the idea that it serves no purpose and has no relevance outside the marae environs.

¹ Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa Vision Statement

² Maramataka 2001, pg 15