

Te Reo Maori

Proposed use of the Maori Language

The state of the health of the Maori language is still very poor, and for the past twenty or so years, many initiatives have been launched as an attempt to halt the decline of the language and revitalise the te reo Maori as a spoken language - a language of communication and relevance. In recent years tribes have begun to work hard to revitalise their own unique dialects and vocabularies. It is within these unique dialects that the intimate relationships with unique lands, waterways, natural environments, climates and creatures are evident. In order for people to survive and develop within an environment, they must learn to live with it, they must learn the inter-connectedness between species, including themselves, the importance of seasons, climates and so on. All of these observations over hundreds of years required the development of a language and vocabulary specific to each and every area in Aotearoa. Therefore the some consideration should be given by the Zoo to promote the use and revitalisation of the Maori language and in particular vocabulary relating to the names and descriptions of all native plant and animal species.

At present the Auckland Zoo does not have a Maori language policy nor some consistent guidelines on the use and application of te reo Maori. In the absence of such tools the following conventions are proposed for use within the Te Wao Nui precinct in the first instance and it is strongly recommended that these are further developed and formally adopted into Auckland Zoo policy and practice in the near future.

There are some dialectal differences in the Maori language but on the whole, these are minor variations and they are not usually significant enough to interfere with communication. The greatest variations are in the way some words are pronounced and there are often different words and names for the same things in different areas. Variations in grammar are relatively minor. There is a prime opportunity here for the Zoo to look at potential partnerships to develop special projects to research and develop research around native species of flora and fauna and other wildlife. There are some resources that go some way to doing which is a great start, but Te Wao Nui could look to leading some of this type of work which will further enhance the Maori dimension in the Zoo and certainly at Te Wao Nui.

For the Te Wao Nui project there is no requirement (at this early stage at least) for the full translation of large pieces of text into te reo Maori, however, there are a number of native animals, creatures and plants that do and will have their Maori names displayed and promoted. The question of which regions names for animals, creatures and plants are used by the Zoo must be addressed for the sake of consistency and as a demonstration

DRAFT

of understanding and care for te reo Maori. I make the following recommendation for further discussion and consideration by the interpretation review team and key Zoo staff:

Recommendation:

Auckland Zoo is located within the tribal area of Ngati Whatua therefore out of courtesy and based on the concept and practice of tangata whenua/manuhiri - hosts/visitors relationships, the Zoo endeavor to use the Ngati Whatua dialect and vocabulary wherever possible. Where it is not possible to clearly find necessary words/names/descriptions of Ngati Whatua origin the Zoo will consult the resources (listed below) which have been carefully identified for this purpose.

Writing Conventions

To maintain a consistency when using te reo Maori the Auckland Zoo needs some clear and consistent guidelines. The Maori Language Commission (Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Maori) have developed the Maori Orthographic Conventions for these purposes. This provides some clear guidance on issues such as use of the macron, use of hyphens, correct and consistent spelling of place names and personal names.

Recommendation:

When using te reo Maori the Auckland Zoo will refer to and apply the Māori Orthographic Conventions developed by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Maori <http://www.taurawhiri.govt.nz/english/public/conventions2.shtml>

DRAFT

Prepared by Hinerangi Himoana for Auckland Zoo