Integrating Kaupapa Māori and Te Aranga urban design principles into the development of policy to inform better design processes

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Abstract

The Te Aranga principles have arisen from a widely held desire to enhance mana whenua (tribal groups with territorial rights and responsibilities over a particular area) presence, visibility and participation in the design of the physical realm. They are a set of outcome-based principles founded on Māori cultural values and formulated to provide practical guidance for enhancing outcomes in the built environment. As a tool, Te Aranga provides opportunities for local government, the development community, and construction industry to understand how they can positively engage with mana whenua in shaping the built environment. This paper discusses the Te Aranga principles, their origins, and the ways in which they might be embedded in legislation, policy, plans and procurement to improve design outcomes. Through research, policy advocacy and design, this paper recognises ways in which Māori methodologies and Mātauranga Māori (Maori knowledge) can contribute towards shaping the places people live in. It contributes to models for future sustainable development through localised solutions, founded on Indigenous worldviews and aspirations.

Introduction

The Te Aranga principles have emerged over the past decade as the pre-eminent tool for engaging with mana whenua (tribal groups with territorial rights and responsibilities over a particular area) cultural values in the design and development of built environment projects in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland). The principles have developed within the context of Treaty of Waitangi settlements across Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), and the amalgamation of one regional council and seven territorial authorities to create a new unitary authority—Auckland Council. These changes have been accompanied by an increasing acceptance of, and greater engagement with, Māori values through legislation, policy, and planning, both nationally and locally. It is, however, the view of the authors that there is a need for the principles to be further developed and integrated into national and local plans, policies and wider design strategies. This paper aims to develop a better understanding of how ‘intangible cultural heritage’ could be mandated to inform the future development of cities and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage defines that ‘intangible cultural heritage’ as:

the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage (UNESCO 2018)
In this paper, the theme of ‘intangible cultural heritage’ seeks to connect place, people, te taiao (the natural environment) and Māori cultural practices within New Zealand. This paper discusses the Te Aranga principles and explores the ways in which they could be embedded in planning and policy to inform more culturally appropriate and authentic design practices. This is driven by a kaupapa Māori (Māori-led and centred) approach as opposed to Eurocentric systems. This paper aims to communicate how kaupapa Māori methodologies and Mātauranga Māori (Maori knowledge) can shape plans and policies for future sustainable development, and to support better-localised solutions.

This study is guided by a key research question and two emerging sub-themes to support the overarching premise of intangible heritage and how this connects diverse communities across New Zealand:

1. What is intangible heritage today in New Zealand and how does it connect communities across and within the diversity of the Pacific region in terms of stories, experience, practices, needs and futures?

The two emerging themes are:

a. Connections between place, culture and community: establishing robust methodologies and exploring how these connections might be used to influence government policy.

b. Intangible heritage in education, outreach, community and governance.

Critical analysis and findings from literature contribute to urban design policies by identifying the significance of the Te Aranga principles and kaupapa Māori approaches to planning and design. This also indicates how the principles could be strengthened within the New Zealand planning system. The study intends to contribute to the body of knowledge relating to the development of the Te Aranga principles and kaupapa Māori built environment research.

Figure 1: Save Our Unique Landscape Campaign—Protect Ihumātao (photo by the author).
Methodology

This paper is part of a wider project ‘Shaping Places: Future Neighbourhoods’ a response to growing housing and urban development challenges. The National Science Challenge: Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities is a collective made up of institutional and independent researchers who partner with industry, iwi (tribes), communities and government, both local and central, to deliver robust evidence. It will identify new ways of living that reflect New Zealand’s unique identity and respond to our changing lifestyle needs and aspirations. This will improve future urban environments, as local government, developers, iwi, and the community can implement practices known to be successful, as evidenced by the research. It will also inform better planning practices and land use decision-making about the structure of successful communities (National Science Challenge: Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities 2018).

This research is driven by a kaupapa Māori (Māori-centric) approach as opposed to Eurocentric models. Graham Smith identifies that ‘the very emergence of Kaupapa Māori as an intervention strategy, critiques and re-constitutes the “Western dominant” resistance notions of conscientization, resistance and transformative praxis in different configurations’ (Smith 2003, p. 12). This view demonstrates that Māori have a responsibility to develop their own theories to counteract Eurocentric theories. It is a form of Indigenous critical theory—the term was not used in academic literature prior to 1987.

This notion has also transformed government approaches to policy. For example, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) have adopted a Vision Mātauranga Policy, with funded research required to engage with Vision Mātauranga policy for ‘unlocking the innovation potential of Mātauranga Māori, resources and people’ (Henry 2017). This paper draws on a review of relevant literature and policy, complemented by interviews with Māori and non-Māori practitioners.

This paper applies two research methods:

1. **Review of existing policy**
   The review of policy focuses on central and local government (Auckland Council) plans and policies, with the intention to provide a whakapapa (genealogy or historical context) to the integration of Te Aranga principles within Auckland Council policies and processes.

2. **Interviews with Māori and non-Māori practitioners**
   Experts were interviewed to provide insight into the significance of connections between place, culture and community in practice to highlight Te Aranga principles and the role they play in informing better design outcomes and engagement strategies. Interviews also discuss the challenges to the ongoing development and implementation of the Te Aranga principles.

Legislation, Plans and Policies

**Resource Management Act 1991**

The *Resource Management Act 1991* is New Zealand’s primary planning legislation. Under the Act, it is mandatory for a territorial authority to prepare a district plan for managing land use and development within its territorial boundaries. The Act provides stronger recognition for issues of importance to Māori than previous legislation, and authorities preparing district plans are required to have regard to relevant planning documents recognised by an ēhapū (tribal) authority (such as hapū [subtribe] or iwi management plans).

The *Resource Management Act* identifies several key aspects regarding intangible cultural heritage within legislation, in particular sections 6(e), 7(a) and 8. Section 6(e) recognises the spiritual connection of Māori to their whenua, waterways and other taonga [culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas or techniques], and identifies ‘6(e) the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu [sacred sites], and other taonga’ (Resource Management Act 1991) as a matter of national importance.
According to Robert Joseph in his conference paper ‘Māori Values and Tikanga [customary values and practices] Consultation under the RMA 1991 and the Local Government Bill—Possible Ways Forward’, there is a need for potential reform of the Resource Management Act:

... there is a growing judicial testing of the Māori spiritual and cultural paradigm including values and tikanga. The result has been a significant increase in the resources and time local authorities have had to apply to Māori issues. This has led in many cases to resource management outcomes quite different from those which occurred prior to the enactment of the RMA, when Māori cultural and spiritual values could be safely ignored or side-lined. However, while Māori values may now have entered the system, there is evidence that the system may not yet have the tools, or have developed a sufficiently informed approach, to dealing appropriately with those values (Joseph 2002, p. 6).

The Resource Management Act is an effects-based system, based around environmental effects rather than the activities that generate them. As such, this can at times be incongruent with a Māori worldview, which in general engages a more proactive approach to achieving and maintaining environmental health, and is more holistic, encompassing cultural, social, economic and spiritual dimensions. [originally para one sentence and too long]

A number of reforms and amendments to the Resource Management Act were initiated in 2009, 2013 and 2017. Changes of relevance to Māori include the introduction of Mana Whakahono ā Rohe: Iwi Participation Arrangements in 2017, which establishes a statutory requirement for councils to establish working relationships with iwi (Ministry for the Environment 2017).

**Urban Design Protocol 2005**

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol was produced and published in 2005 by the Ministry for the Environment. The Urban Design Protocol is a voluntary commitment by central and local government, property developers and investors, design professionals, educational institutes, and other groups to undertake specific urban design initiatives. The intention behind this collective approach is that the actions that individual signatories take will, together, make a significant difference in the quality of our towns and cities.

Consultation with Māori in the development Urban Design Protocol was noticeably absent. This is evidenced by the limited recognition of Māori cultural values within the Protocol, the lack of iwi authorities or other Māori organisations as signatories, and by the subsequent response from the Māori design community. The only recognition from the Protocol is in the mission statement: ‘our towns and cities are important expressions of New Zealand’s cultural identity including our unique Māori heritage’ (Ministry for the Environment 2005, p. 5). There is also a brief mention within the urban settlement and distinctive identity section:

Our first urban areas were Māori settlements sited strategically to take advantage of a natural food source or an easily defended position. Patterns of previous Māori settlement and the relationship of tangata whenua with the land remain important aspects of urban design ...

Successful towns and cities reflect our increasingly diverse ethnic mix, including all people who have made New Zealand their home—Indigenous Māori, Europeans, Pacific Islanders, and Asians. Recognising and promoting a town’s or city’s identity encourages diversity of cultural expression through design that recognises the distinctive use of space, form and materials.
(Ministry for the Environment 2005, p. 8, 15).

The process undertaken by the Ministry for the Environment in the development of the Protocol largely ignored Māori interests and provoked a vigorous reaction from the Māori design community.
Responding to this lack of consultation a hui of Māori professionals and supporters spanning architecture, landscape architecture, planning, engineering, design, īwi / hapū development, education, arts and local and central government, gathered with the hau kāinga at Te Aranga Marae in Flaxmere, Hawkes Bay, in 2006 to discuss and formulate a draft National Māori Cultural Landscape Strategy. The strategy has become known as the Te Aranga Māori Cultural Landscapes Strategy (Ngā Aho 2006) and is the first concerted attempt at defining and reinforcing Māori values through urban design. The strategy has provided the foundation for intangible cultural heritage and Māori values to inform policy and planning development to connect place, people, nature and cultural practices.

**Te Aranga: The Business Case**

The Te Aranga principles were developed post the *Te Aranga Strategy* (2006), by Ngā Aho practitioners and mana whenua in Tāmaki Makaurau working collaboratively on Auckland Council-led civic and infrastructure projects. In 2013, as part of this development process, Ngā Aho (the national network of Māori design professionals) worked alongside Auckland Council to develop a Te Aranga business case. The business case provided a set of strategies for embedding the Te Aranga principles within Auckland Council policy and processes. Although not ultimately adopted through the Long-term Plan process, the business case has informed a number of work programmes within Auckland Council, including the establishment of a Senior Māori Design specialist role (and subsequent appointment of Phil Wihongi) within the Auckland Design Office, formation of a mana whenua steering group for the Māori Design Hub within the Auckland Design Manual, and cultural competency training to upskill Urban Design Panel members.

**Auckland Design Manual**

The *Auckland Design Manual* is a non-statutory guidance document that sits alongside the *Auckland Unitary Plan* (the Auckland District Plan post-amalgamation). Ngā Aho members developed the Te Aranga text and graphics for the *Auckland Design Manual* and prepared a number of the case studies on the Māori design hub. Although guidance on the *Auckland Design Manual* is non-statutory, Auckland Council have adopted the use of Te Aranga as the best practice for many of their own projects. As a result, Te Aranga principles are being applied by Auckland Council collaboratively with mana whenua through a number of major capital work projects. Uptake by the private sector has been slower, but voluntary engagement with Te Aranga by private sector developers is increasing, perhaps in part because of the appointment of Ngā Aho members to the Auckland Urban Design Panel.

**The Auckland Council Procurement Strategy**

The *Auckland Council Procurement Strategy* (2018) is designed to ensure that procurement is undertaken in a way that is consistent with legislation governing local authorities and the intent and directives of the *Auckland Plan*. This procurement plan provides clear guidance and intent with regards to obligations to Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi.

Under Principle 2: Value Te Ao Māori [the Māori world], there are several statements made as to how procurement strategy aims to maximise Auckland Council’s capability to deliver Māori outcomes (Auckland Council 2018). At a governance level, this is important because it ensures a deeper understanding of how Māori values and identity can contribute to the identity of Auckland.

The strategy provides a basis for further opportunities to embed Te Aranga principles in policy, process, and design projects. It aligns with Māori values and recognises the importance of kaupapa Māori to the design process to inform better outcomes. The strategy provides an opportunity to embed the Te Aranga principles through procurement by developing a framework to translate Te Aranga principles into the design process and contracts for īwi-public-private partnerships.
Understanding View of MĀORI Values and Principles from Practitioners and Institutions

Bernadette Aperahama (nō Ngāti Kahu ki Whangaroa, Te Arawa) is a Senior Strategic Planner at Whangārei District Council. She was previously part of the Unitary Plan team responsible for drafting the Mana Whenua provisions.

Tools like the Te Aranga principles, they come at a conceptual stage. Well, I believe they should be at the conceptual stage of a development. I often see projects that I work on have almost three arms to them—this is before they’re lodged, through Council, for any kind of formal assessment. There is the regulatory component. Then there is more of an environmental focus... And then the third component of it is the māhi toi [creative arts] component, where I see that mana whenua are asked to share their kōrero [discussion or statement] about their place, about their landscape... But through the design component, you’re better able to articulate what your connection is to a place, and also use that to leverage off better environmental outcomes as well. (Kake 2018c).

Whilst the Resource Management Act is largely focused on protection of cultural heritage, engagement with cultural sites (identified through scheduling) in the development process offers immense design potential. This points to some of the limitations of the current ‘effects-based’ planning system and provides insights applicable to the development of new planning legislation and future national policy statements.

Rachel de Lambert, landscape architect and Director at Boffa Miskell recognises how the Te Aranga principles have helped to broaden the conversation, and to assist non-Māori practitioners to better understand Māori cultural values, including those which are less tangible:

Manaakitanga [hospitality] is the key concept in a way that manuhiri [visitors / guests] are made to feel welcomed because it is that cultural way of thinking. Western people think land to water, but Māori think water to land. That’s how you arrive and it’s not the other way around. There’s a whole lot of discussion that we are having around some of those things that find these projects that ground them in terms of good principles.

Rau Hoskins (nō Ngāti Hau) is an architect based in Tāmaki Makaurau, and the co-author of the Te Aranga principles. Rau shared his whakaaro (thoughts) on the application of the principles, and the central importance the development of robust working relationships with mana whenua as a precursor to engaging the principles:

Well I think one of the key things is that mana whenua themselves are requesting that the Te Aranga principles be used as the basis of their engagement. So, I think that’s probably a critical success factor for the development of the Te Aranga principles, is that they are not only owned by mana whenua, but they are promoted by mana whenua...
There is no application of the Te Aranga principles until a working relationship with mana whenua has been established to the satisfaction of mana whenua. And when and if they are satisfied with the working relationship, then you can start to progress an investigation into the other principles, or the opportunities that the other principles signal. (Kake 2018a).

The principles are non-statutory design guidance, which means developers are not legally required to engage with the principles. Phil Wihongi (nō Ngāti Hine) is a landscape architect and planner, and the Māori Design Lead at Auckland Council. He shared his thoughts on the ways Council can model best practice through their own capital works projects:

Through Council projects, we are in a position, and I would argue that we have a responsibility, to Māori communities and mana whenua that we do incorporate the principles within our project works. They key to that, or the important thing with that, is that Council is able to demonstrate very clearly what the outcomes are, what the processes, which in a way demystifies the processes for private development... I think the more visibility in Council projects, then it will be taken up by private development. (Kake 2018a).
Henry Crothers, Urban Designer and Director at LandLAB provides insight into working with the Te Aranga principles and how LandLAB has been able to transform their own processes and practices by engaging with mana whenua:

I thought the Te Aranga design principles were generic. It’s interesting, because it is a good method. I think the idea that they get adapted to different places and different people is great. I hope they become more understood as a way of working in other places.

Crothers also identifies the fundamental importance for both parties to understand that at the foundation of Te Aranga is a partnership relationship not a stakeholder relationship, and that mana whenua timeframes may not neatly align with development time frames—’at a governance level there needs to be more of an understanding of the process and the time frame of how it works because they’re the ones making the decisions.’

Lucy Tukua (nō Ngāti Paoa) is a mana whenua regenerative practitioner based in Tāmaki Makaurau and was a pivotal figure in the development of the principles. She shares her thoughts on the adoption of the principles elsewhere, and the need to appropriately contextualise this work:

I was at a water sensitive cities workshop in Wellington, and people were talking about the Te Aranga strategy and the principles, but they didn’t really know what it was. And they were like, you know, Auckland are using it, and it’s really cool, but you know we don’t really know what it is. But it’s so simple. It’s a process that I feel is easily transferrable. But I’m always anxious about people just defaulting to the principles, because what really underpins them are the values, and we always need to be cognisant of, the values are the ones that actually underpin and hold that space for those principles. (Kake 2018b).

Julia Wick, specialist Landscape Architect at Auckland Council, shares her understanding and experiences engaging and implementing the Te Aranga within Auckland Council’s Design Office:

I learnt more about the embodiment of Te Aranga design principles when I started talking to people like Phil Wihongi and so it’s people with that knowledge who then you end up working with somehow and then you realise it’s not actually a tick list of things I’m trying to achieve, it is actually the fundamental philosophy of how you do things.

The interviews have provided a deeper understanding of the Te Aranga as a strategy within practice, and an approach to design thinking to address the processes of economic, social, environmental and spatial development changes. Te Aranga not only provide practical guidance for enhancing outcomes for the design environment, but also build the capability of thinking within practitioners to better understand how they can positively engage with mana whenua.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Te Aranga design principles have been developed from a Māori worldview, and as a tool for engagement with and expression of cultural heritage. This has happened within, and perhaps in spite of, the context of a broader planning system that has failed to adequately engage with Te Ao Māori, and where engagement with Māori concepts are tokenistic at best. The New Zealand planning system is changing, slowly, and largely as a result of the same Treaty settlement context that allowed the principles to gain traction in the first place, and to subsequently be widely implemented.

Whilst policies may provide a framework for practice, it is evident that there needs to be a heavier weighting of intangible heritage—specifically Māori values and kaupapa Māori approaches within policies at all levels. These need to be fundamentally integrated within practices and governance structures.
Aotearoa New Zealand has the opportunity to be the catalyst to support our Pacific neighbours and other nations to deconstruct the institutional and western ways of doing and thinking. If we take both a top-down and bottom-up approach, we can continue to develop connections across a range of platforms to ensure methodologies such as the Te Aranga are being adopted and adapted across New Zealand (and potentially the globe) to transform education, community and governance, to influence better outcomes.

**Glossary of TE REO MĀORI terms**

This glossary has been prepared using the online version of *Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Māori Term</th>
<th>English Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hapū</strong></td>
<td>(noun) kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe—section of a large kinship group and the primary political unit in traditional Māori society. It consisted of a number of whānau sharing descent from a common ancestor, usually being named after the ancestor, but sometimes from an important event in the group’s history.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Iwi</strong></td>
<td>(noun) extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, nationality, race—often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct territory.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kaupapa Māori</strong></td>
<td>Māori approach, Māori topic, Māori customary practice, Māori institution, Māori agenda, Māori principles, Māori ideology—a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kōrero</strong></td>
<td>(verb) (-hia,-ngaia,-tia) to tell, say, speak, read, talk, address. (noun) speech, narrative, story, news, account, discussion, conversation, discourse, statement, information.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mahi toi</strong></td>
<td>(noun) creative arts, creative endeavour.</td>
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<td><strong>Mana whenua</strong></td>
<td>(noun) territorial rights, power from the land, authority over land or territory, jurisdiction over land or territory—power associated with possession and occupation of tribal land.</td>
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<td><strong>Manaakitanga</strong></td>
<td>(noun) hospitality, kindness, generosity, support—the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others.</td>
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<td><strong>Manuhiri</strong></td>
<td>(noun) visitor, guest.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mātauranga Māori</strong></td>
<td>(noun) Māori knowledge—the body of knowledge originating from Māori ancestors, including the Māori world view and perspectives, Māori creativity and cultural practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Taonga</strong></td>
<td>(noun) treasure, anything prized—applied to anything considered to be of value including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and techniques.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Te Ao Māori</strong></td>
<td>(noun) the Māori world.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tikanga</strong></td>
<td>(noun) correct procedure, custom, habit, lore, method, manner, rule, way, code, meaning, plan, practice, convention, protocol—the customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wāhi Tapu</strong></td>
<td>(noun) sacred place, sacred site—a place subject to long-term ritual restrictions on access or use, e.g. a burial ground, a battle site or a place where tapu objects were placed.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Whakaaro</strong></td>
<td>(noun) thought, opinion, plan, understanding, idea, intention, gift, conscience.</td>
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References


