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COVID-19 – An opportunity to redesign a better future

Imagining a new and improved Aotearoa was the starting point for [*Kia Puta Ki Rangiātea*](#), a series of potential future scenarios post COVID-19, developed by Ngāi Tahu led Māori Futures Collective – Tokona Te Raki.

The scenarios are intended to encourage critical thinking about whether as a country we go back to how things were pre COVID or whether we raise the gaze towards an equitable, Treaty-based future where all New Zealanders can live the life of their dreams.

“No-one can predict the future but right now we have an unprecedented opportunity to re set and re imagine the kind of future we want to create together. The history of pandemics shows they are transformational, and society never emerges the same again. This is a once in a lifetime chance to welcome a new and stronger future,” says Dr Eruera Tarena, Executive Director, Tokona Te Raki

“Our starting point in developing the various scenarios was acknowledging that inequalities facing Māori were already an existing crisis and that the COVID-19 pandemic has simply brought these and other issues to a head.”

The four scenarios tell the story of how Aotearoa might approach the challenge of economic and social recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic, and how these approaches will affect whānau, hapū, and iwi. They are based on the experience of Rangi, a 16 year-old Māori boy currently studying for his NCEA Level 2, his father Poutama who works in an engineering company, and his mother Tracey who had a career in tourism before the crisis.

Each narrative also explores what each scenario means for the decision-makers from iwi and hapū, local education and employment as well as the role of government.

“The scenarios blend insights with imagination to present different visions to help us clarify the future we want, and work backwards from there to map the key decisions we need to make to reach our ideal destination,” says Dr Tarena.

“COVID-19 has the potential to magnify current inequalities for Māori, but with new thinking we can work together to transform our education and economic systems, so they work better for whānau. We can buck historic trends by bringing an equity lens to the current crisis to ensure we all emerge better, stronger and more united than before.”

Statistics show the Māori population is growing fast and the prediction is that within a few decades, we can expect that 30 percent of staff in the average workplace will be Māori.

Dr Tarena says, “What we do know is that not only is our growing rangatahi population the workforce of the future, they are also the generation most impacted by the fallout from the pandemic.

“The choices we make now will impact them more than any other sector of our society and will determine where we eventually emerge. Like any journey, the first step is knowing where you want to go and being clear about what to leave behind in your wake to get there.

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