

Te weu o te kaitiaki – The roots of the guardian

(A bicultural forest monitoring and reporting system)

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Manaaki Whenua
Landcare Research

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Manaaki Whenua
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Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Vegetation plot data are archived in the National Vegetation Survey (NVS) databank (<https://nvs.landcareresearch.co.nz/>)

Why do this research – relevance for Tuawhenua?

- Knowing the state and condition of our forests and lands
 - Fundamental to the maintenance and growth of our identity, our language, our knowledge systems, our pātaka kai and our people
 - Fundamental to our economic and community development
 - Fundamental to our relationship with Tāne
- Expression and support for *mana motuhake* (self-determination and self-authorisation) in relation to our forests and lands

Why do this research – relevance for national and international management and reporting

- Evidence base to show the difference that management makes
- Evidence base to improve practice
- Evidence base for resource management decisions
- Meeting national and international obligations and opportunities:
 - Iwi Environmental Management Plans
 - Environmental Reporting Act 2015
 - Draft Threatened Species Statement 2017 – *“integrate a Te Ao Maori worldview and mātauranga in species recovery programmes by 2025”*
 - New Zealand Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020 (e.g. National Targets and Actions 17.1 and 18.9)
 - Convention on Biological Diversity – Aichi Biodiversity Targets
 - United Nations - IPBES

Research framework - Te weu o te kaitiaki

Objective 1

Develop a Tuawhenua worldview representation

Objective 2

Identify key forest values and aspirations

A bicultural monitoring and reporting system to guide forest management

Objective 3

Identify community- and scientific-based forest indicators

Objective 4

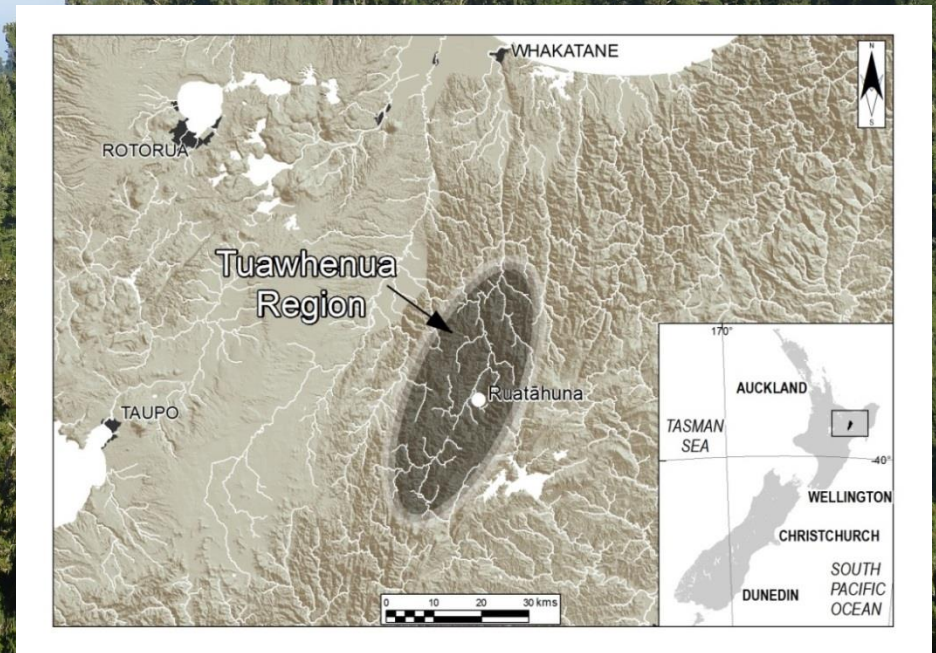
Apply a bicultural monitoring system in ecologically congruent forests



Study site – Ruatāhuna

- Ruatāhuna is located within Te Urewera and consists of approximately 300 people within 72 households clustered around 10 traditional marae
- Ruatāhuna is surrounded by approximately 20,000 hectares of Tuawhenua lands of which more than 95% is covered with mixed oceanic temperate rainforest

- Forest canopies dominated by evergreen angiosperms such as tawa, tawhero, rewarewa with emergent northern rātā and conifers (e.g., rimu, toromiro, mataī, tōtara)
- Selective logging between 1950 and 1975 removed large proportion of giant conifers (>30m height, >1m stem diameter)



Obj 1 –Tuawhenua worldview representation

Objectives

- 1) Represent a Maori worldview that can guide environmental conservation, monitoring and management
- 2) Describe core domains, concepts and mechanisms that inform a Tuawhenua worldview representation
- 3) Use cultural expressions to illustrate the function of the worldview representation in relation to a mōkai for Tuawhenua, the kererū



Timoti, P., P. O'B Lyver, R. Matamua, C. J. Jones and B. L. Tahi. (2017). A representation of a Tuawhenua worldview guides environmental conservation. *Ecology and Society* 22 (4):20. [online]
URL:<https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol22/iss4/art20/>

Worldviews

- ❖ Worldviews are coherent collections of value orientations and cognitive maps that allow people to orient and explain the world as well as making sense of the social landscape
- ❖ Worldviews are the way a population perceives assumed relationships between the human world, the natural world and the spiritual world.
- ❖ Worldviews describes the perceived role of supernatural powers, the relationship between humans and nature, and the way natural processes take place.
- ❖ Worldviews represent the ethical basis, principles and assumptions around which people and populations organise themselves to interact with nature.



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Methodology

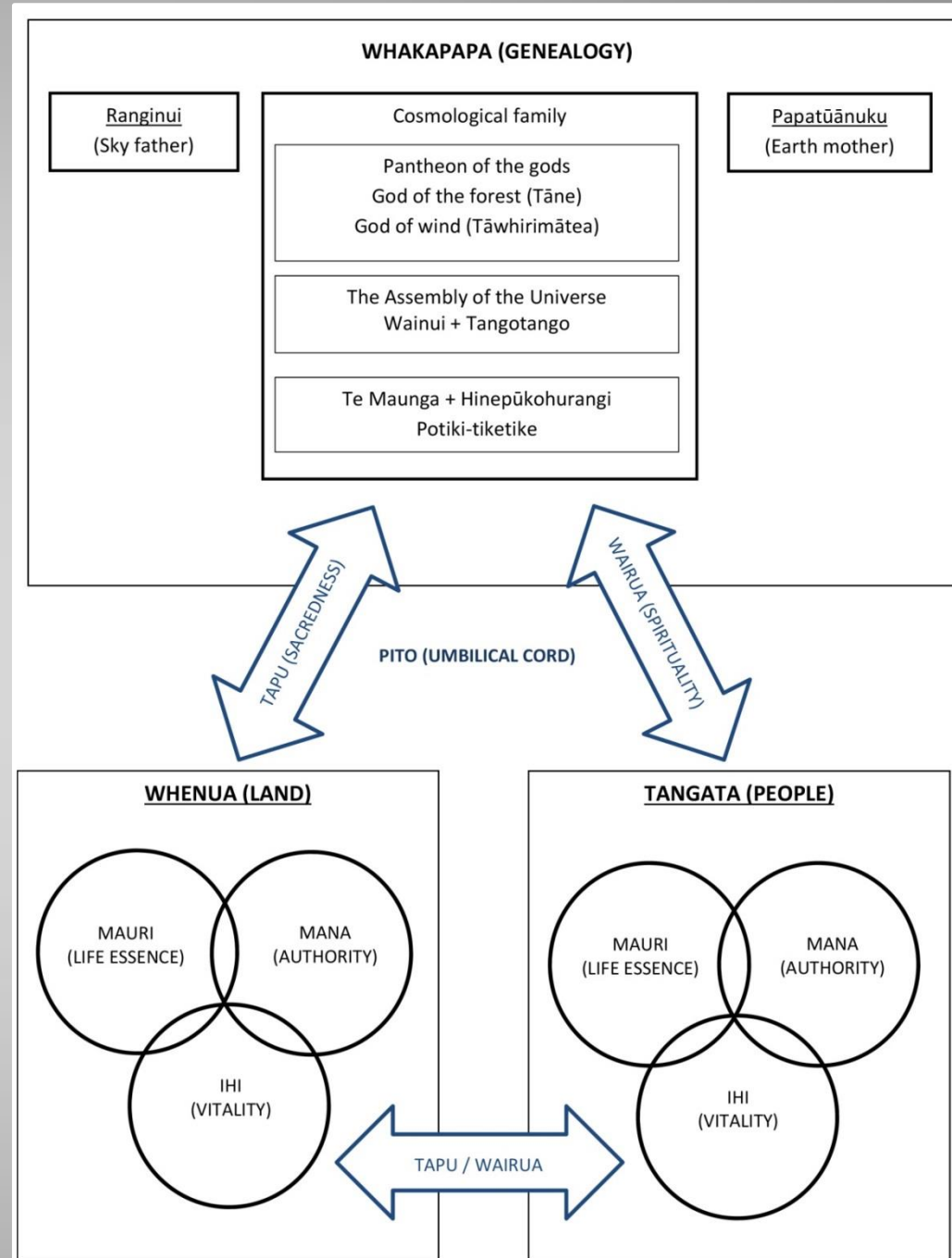
- *One-on-one meetings with kaumātua and academics from the Ruatāhuna community (n = 15 meetings) to develop ideas*
- *Wānanga with kaumātua and community forest users (n = 2 wānanga; range 11-13 participants) to review and verify concepts*
- *Three rounds of semi-directed oral history interviews relating to the kererū and forest (n = 71 participants) conducted with Tuawhenua kaumātua and forest users*



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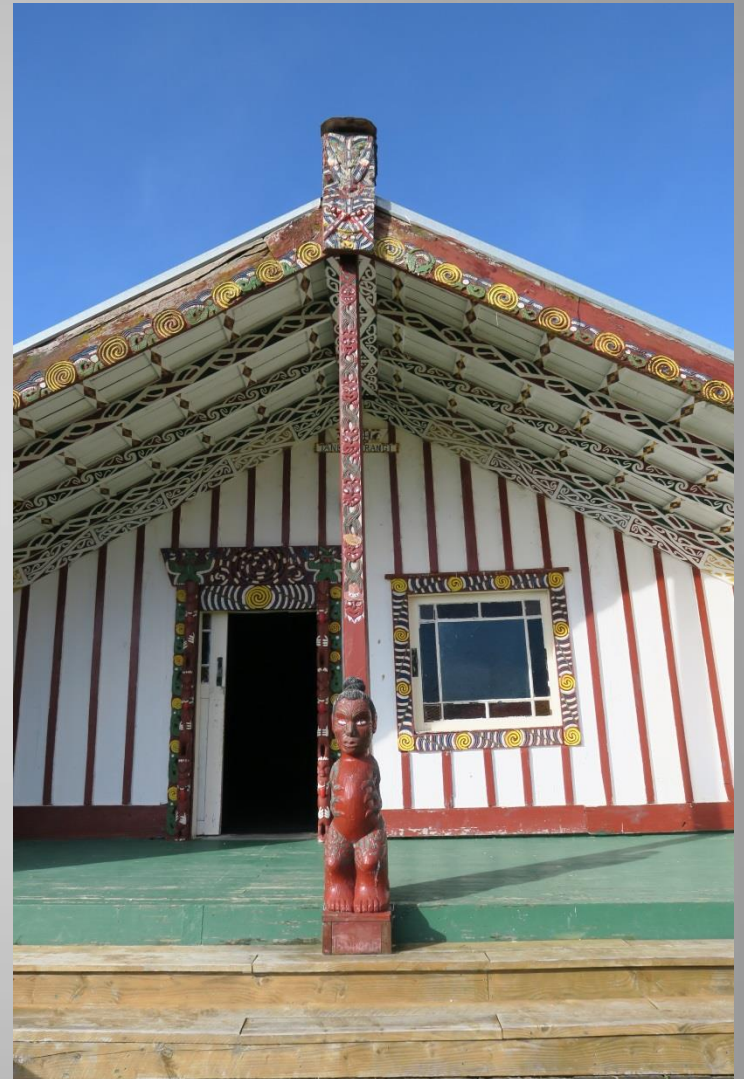
Tuawhenua worldview representation

- 1) Understanding the domains and concepts fundamental Tuawhenua's relationship with their forest and lands;
- 2) Provide the basis for cross-cultural ways of knowing



Domain of Whakapapa

- Whakapapa is the sequential system that portrays the tangible and intangible genealogical connections within and between the living world and the cosmological domain
- *Whakapapa* connects you to your tipuna and defines your obligations to the environment – plants and animals are siblings; kaitiaki)
- Whakapapa defines your relationship with the environment – humans part of nature not separate to it
- Whakapapa can also define access to the environment – where you hunt



Domains of Whenua and Tangata



Concept of Mauri

Mauri is linked intrinsically to *whakapapa* and describes the representativeness and condition of the relationships and responsibilities between elements of *whakapapa*.

Mauri denotes the interconnectedness and appropriate sequential order of elements within *whakapapa*.

People have a critical role to protect the *mauri* of the environment.

Everything has a *mauri* and that at times it can be invoked or instilled into someone or something to maintain the set of obligations within the *whakapapa*.

“I remember the reverence the elders had for the forest, the responsibilities that comes with being a leader, the source of life (mauri) for the families, especially in terms of food produced by Tāne.” (Tawi Te Kurapa 2006)

Concept of Mana

- *Mana* emerges from *whakapapa* and the relationships that exist through this sequential order
- *Mana* is drawn from the relationships individuals or communities have with their environment and/or with other people
- The notion of *mana* can be inherited and provides a person with an unbroken link to their past, as well as connecting them to their future
- *Mana* can also be earned and acquired by an individual or grouping of people (e.g. hapū)

“The kererū gives us mana. With that mana comes responsibility, some practices are spiritual, but they are all akin.”

(Tahae Doherty 2015)

Concept of Ihi (wehi and wana)

- **Ihi** is the vitality or energy that emanates from places, items, people and significant events
- **Wehi** is a response to ihi and means to be 'in awe' or overcome with admiration, reverence or fear. It is also an emotional reaction to the acknowledgement of ihi
- **Wana** is the inspirational force. It is a heightened emotional state that unites a range of emotions and connects people to place, objects, landmarks, and to other people

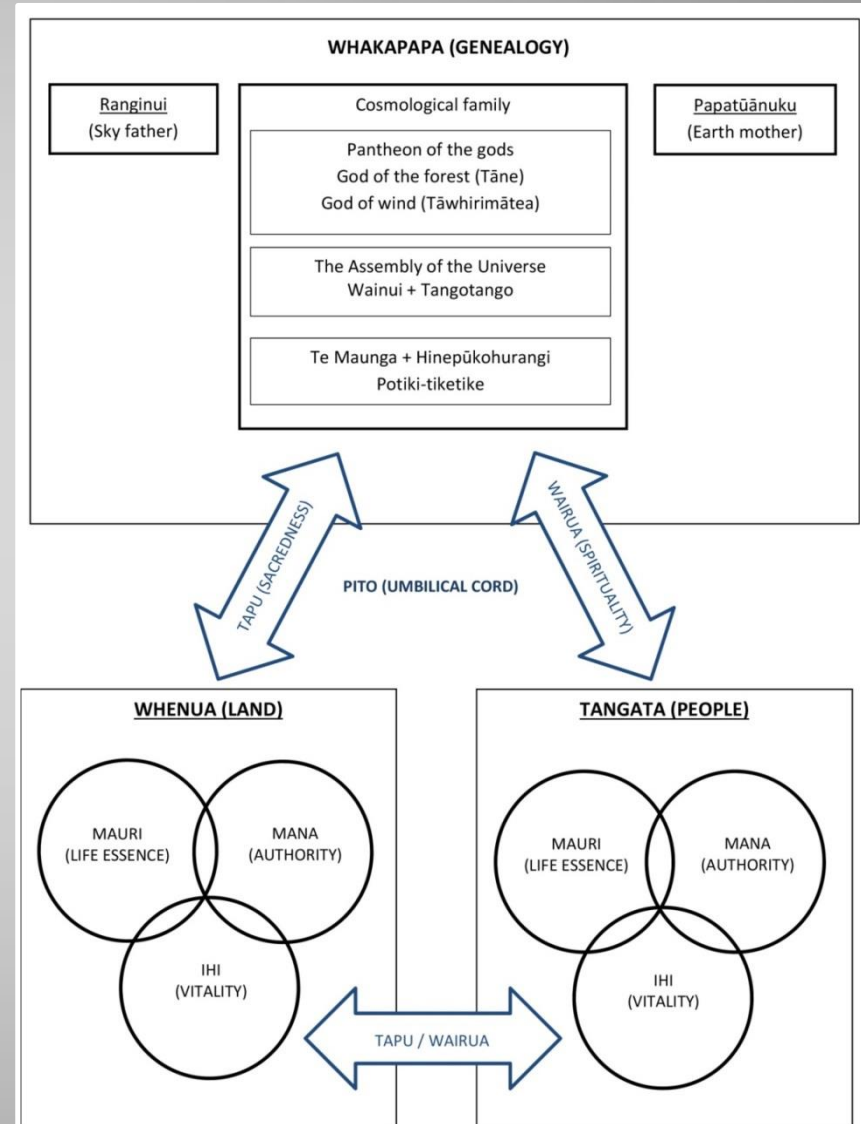
“Te ihi, te wehi, te wana. Those are your emotions. Those are your indicators in a Māori worldview to assess the vitality of the mauri and the mana. When you travel in different areas you feel the essential energy”

(Te Mahururangi Te Kaawa 2015)

Function of the worldview in relation to the kererū

Whakapapa

- *Tāne-mataahi* was personified as the father of most birds, like the *kererū*, *kōkō* and *kōparapara*
- “*Rehua ki te Rangi, Tāne ki te whenua; Tāne ki te Rangi, Rehua ki te whenua.*” Rehua (personified by the star, Antares) is the brother of Tāne. The proverb indicates that when Antares appears on the horizon of the winter sky that is the time to harvest *kererū*



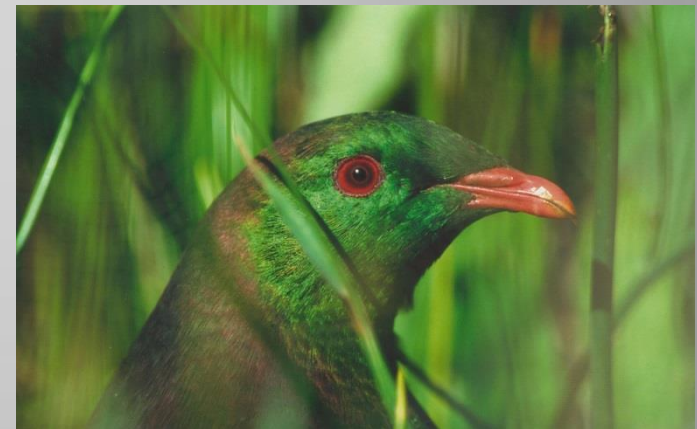
Whenua – Mauri

- The thundering sound heard in the forest during the day from the flocks of kererū represents the presence of mauri
- Decline in kererū abundance has been attributed to mauri of the kererū being returned to a higher power because humans no longer need them
- Leaving evidence of the kill lying around in the forest violates the mauri of the kererū which other kererū can sense so make themselves unavailable
- Kererū have a critical role maintaining the *mauri* of the forest – an abundance of *taumatua* (perches) in the forest signifies abundance of kererū and vitality of the forest and bird



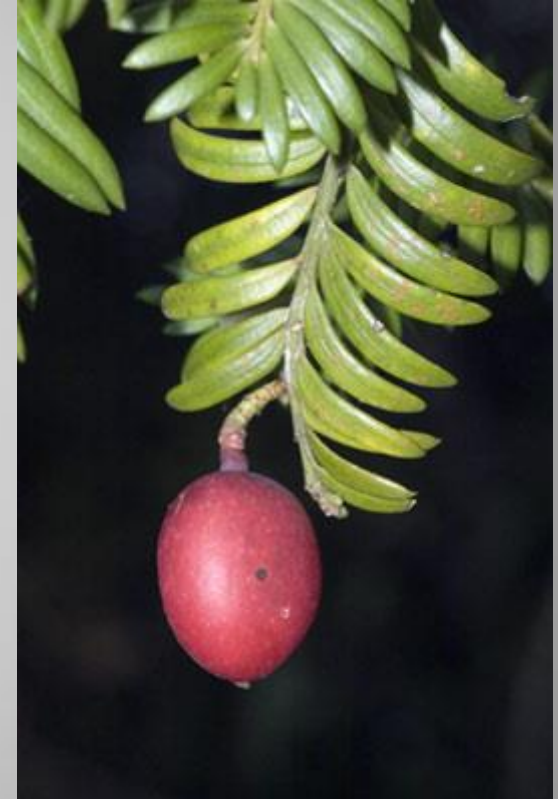
Whenua – Mana

- Kererū is a *mōkai* (highly significant species) for Tuawhenua. It is considered to be *Te kura huna o Tāne* (The hidden treasure of Tāne) because of its sometimes cryptic behaviour
- The kererū is considered to be a *manu rangatira* (chiefly bird) species because of its important role in feeding and clothing women, esteemed guests, and high ranking individuals in the tribe
- The eating of kererū is reserved for special occasions such as the opening of wharenuī (ancestral house). Kererū is not a common everyday food like chicken
- High ranking women that wear the *kererū korowai* (feather cloak) do not eat the kererū. Wearing of the cloak around the body makes the person tapu (sacred) while eating of the kererū makes them *noa* (common)



Whenua – Ihi

- The sound of a large kererū flock (300+ birds) arriving was akin to a passenger jet flying into the valley. The experience would chill you and raise the hairs on your neck;
- The alighting of a large kererū flock settling into the trees was like snow across the canopy left you in awe;
- The constantly ‘rustling’ of the forest canopy caused by kererū moving around would be unnerving;
- Encountering a kererū nest in the forest by chance or to hear a kererū calling at night was a form of *pūhore* (bad omen)



Tangata – Mauri

- Tohunga or person of influence responsible for maintaining the mauri of the kererū, or if the bird was scarce invoking it's mauri through karakia
- Hunters needed to be *matakite* (right frame of mind and single-minded) about their purpose while harvesting kererū
- Community members cared for and prepared *kererū* as if it was their own heart. When *kererū* was distributed to chiefs it was given as if it was a person's own heart. This sealed the end of an individual's responsibilities for nurturing the bird



Tangata – Mana

- Revered kaumātua or tohunga are tasked with holding the mana and mauri of the kererū
- Provision of kererū as food demonstrates your skills and capacity as kaitiaki to care for the current and future prosperity of the environment
- The elevated importance of rangatira and women within Māori society means they are given the best parts of the bird (breast, thighs and posterior of the bird) to eat. Men are given the bones, claws, and soup
- Eating of the kererū by chiefs, women and esteemed visitors is an expression of the link to Tāne. The kererū was considered the best of the foods so the practice gives mana to these individuals. No other food that could do that



Tangata – Ihi

- Prior to serving *huahua* (preserved kererū) at a significant occasion the *puha-haka hari kai* would be performed to acknowledge the abundance of Tāne
- This tribute to the kererū was largely conducted by women and could be highly charged and suggestive as it linked the fertility of the land and people
- The *puha-haka hari kai* process safe-guarded against visitors uplifting the mana and mauri of the kererū when they departed after the feast

“This and the next generation can’t comprehend the true meaning of what it means to perform a puha haka hari kai because there is nothing tangible. We don’t physically do that haka anymore because our relationship with the kererū has waned”

(Tangiora Tawhara pers. comm. 2014, Ruatāhuna)

Parting thoughts

Theme 1 – Tuawhenua worldview representation

- Māori worldview representations offer important ways of valuing and relating to biodiversity and the natural environment
- Biocultural integrity is important – biological and cultural diversity vital for conservation and environmental management
- Metaphor within cultural expressions reinforce the relationship between people, biodiversity and the land
- Policy and legislation needs to support the expression of worldview representation
- Care in the way worldview representations are engaged within current structures critical to avoid institutionalisation



Thank you! - Patai?