



## **Reviewing tribal social media as part of baseline communications data collection**

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This research is a collaboration between Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui and Victoria University. The author and Ngā Tāngata Tiaki wish to acknowledge the whānau whose kōrero and whaakaro inspired, shaped and informed this research.

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## 1. Introduction

This report details the findings of a small research project undertaken over the summer period 2017-2018. The project sought to investigate the following:

- (1) How is social media used by Whanganui whānau in the communication of matters relevant to the successful implementation of Ruruku Whakatupua?
- (2) What are the key themes of the communications between Whanganui whānau over two one-week periods in 2017<sup>1</sup>, and do these vary depending on the age, gender and geographic location of the social media users?
- (3) Using rubbish and fly-tipping on the Awa as a case study, what are the key themes of communication that are more likely to be 'shared' or 'liked' by whanau, and why is this likely to be the case?

The overall aim of this project was to critically analyse the social media communications amongst members of Whanganui iwi in a way that could provide the building blocks for determining the optimal use of social media for Ruruku Whakatupua, as seen and communicated through the eyes (and keyboards) of the Whanganui people.

This project was carried out over the summer period of 2017-2018. Javell Pereka acted as the iwi supervisor for Ngā Tangata Tiaki and provided cultural expertise. Dr Meegan Hall (Ngāti Ranginui) acted as the supervisor from Victoria University of Wellington and provided the researcher, Kealyn Marshall, with guidance throughout the research project. The researcher and supervisor met regularly in person between November 2017 and February 2018, and updates were provided to Ngā Tangata Tiaki via Skype and email. In addition, Kealyn Marshall shared his preliminary research findings with representatives of Ngā Tangata Tiaki and Whanganui Iwi in an oral presentation on 9 February 2018.

This project was designed to inform a larger project to develop a robust communication strategy, with a primary focus on internal communications with Whanganui Iwi people. Ngā Tangata Tiaki were interested in establishing baseline information pertaining to the communications within and amongst Whanganui iwi, hapū and pā. This report was also intended to assist in the establishment of a framework for the appropriate collation of information about the social media activities of the 'champions' of Ruruku Whakatupua<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The original proposal for this research indicated a 10 year period for data collection but, given the length of the summer research project, it was deemed more appropriate to limit the data collection to a more manageable size.

<sup>2</sup> Background information provided in "Proposal for summer internship - reviewing tribal social media as part of baseline communications data collection" document provided by Ngā Tangata Tiaki, 2 October 2017.

The methodology informing this project were the values, tikanga and kawa of Whanganui Iwi. This was reflected in the selection of the researcher, and the communications between the research team and Ngā Tangata Tiaki. In addition, the research was conducted using a number of robust research methods:

- (1) An integrative literature review was conducted to identify the existing knowledge in relation to Māori usage of social and other media. As part of that process, a synthesis matrix was developed to determine and organise the key themes from the published research.
- (2) An inductive thematic data analysis process was undertaken to identify the themes that emerged from social media comments posted between 13-19 March and 18-29 December 2017.

Ultimately, the research found that, in order to engage with Whanganui Iwi members, Ngā Tangata Tiaki would be wise to reflect tikanga Māori within all social media engagement. They should also be mindful of the potential to use social media to create and maintain relationships, educate their people about current issues, and draw on the collective wisdom of members to solve long term problems.

## **2. Project Literature Review**

One of the key questions that formed the foundation for this research project is about how social media is used by Whanganui whānau as a communication tool. This literature review captures key research themes and ideas that have been published about Māori engagement with social and other media. The key search terms used for this literature review were:

- (1) Māori & social media
- (2) Māori & Facebook.

Fifteen sources were initially found by using these terms via an online search in Google Scholar. After additional filtering for relevance to the topic, ten sources were selected for critical analysis. A synthesis matrix process was then used to analyse and organise the ideas that emerged from the literature.

This review of the literature identified four key themes in relation to Māori and social media/Facebook:

- (1) Portrayal of Māori and Māori identity
- (2) Relationship building
- (3) Tikanga Māori
- (4) Limitations of social media in relation to Māori.

Together, these themes highlight that there are a number of contributing factors that need to be considered when engaging with iwi members through social media.

## 2.1 Portrayal of Māori and Māori Identity

The way that people present and interpret what is shown in the media has changed over time and this has influenced the way that Māori people have been portrayed and perceived in New Zealand. Stuart (1996:107) notes how “the European style of reporting leans more towards presenting both sides of a story, relatively judgement-free and without telling the audience what to think about issues and events”. In relation to the mainstream media portrayal of kaupapa Māori, however, endeavours to provide a ‘balanced’ Māori story have often resulted in unbalanced and unprofessional reporting (Media Research Team 2005; Nairn et.al. 2012) and “the Pakeha controlled mainstream media distorted the message by interpreting it and filtering it through the Pakeha eyes” (Stuart 1996:51). Māori have often been portrayed in mainstream media as ‘activists’ and ‘radicals’, with their associated negative connotations (Stuart 2006:111), which served to further marginalise Māori within New Zealand society.

Waitoa et.al. (2015:48) suggest that this is changing with the use of new communication mediums and that, through social media particularly, “indigenous communities can communicate about their culture and identity, share experiences and fight injustices that would previously be unheard of outside their own territories”. Social media has become a platform “where users can comment and explore, contest and re-define Māori identity” (Waitoa et.al. 2015:49). Having this tuapapa for iwi Māori can also help “to promote positive images of Māori and to aim to provide a Māori view of events and news” (Stuart 2003:46). Sciascia (2015:5) also suggests that “the internet has become a useful medium to participate in and promote Māori culture and identity”. Overall, it would seem that social media is being used by Indigenous people around the world as a way to promote their culture and people.

In addition to the multiple influences that affect Māori identity, social media has also had a significant impact on *how* Māori people express and articulate their identity (Sciascia 2015:4). Research has found that Facebook “provides a confident space for rangatahi Māori to express their identity in ways that they would like” (Sciascia 2015:8). This, in turn, can have a positive effect on engagement levels with iwi Māori.

However, the research literature also suggests that it is important for the creators of social media material to know their audience, and for users of social media to develop their own skills and knowledge in order to use social media responsibly and effectively. Bruns & Bahnisch (2009:10) note that “a key aspect of social media is user-led content creation and development” and they conclude that “it is important that users feel in control of the content they (co-) create”. In the case of the portrayal of Māori and the development of Māori identity within the realm of social media, it is key that users are made to feel safe and accepted within an environment that allows them to be Māori and encourages their engagement with their Māori culture and language.

Finally, social media can be a strong influence on those who engage with online comments and posts, thus it has the potential to have a political influence on iwi Māori. The level and type of influence can vary greatly, however. For example, Waitoa et. al. (2015:56) note that "if engagement only takes the form of reading an article or writing a comment it is encouraging engagement with political issues". The use of social media as a tool where Māori can engage with their iwi through political movements and social media posts can be a way forward moving into the future. Iwi groups could use social media sites, such as Facebook, to engage with their iwi members in order to distribute and explain vital political information.

## **2.2 Relationship building**

Social media has been found to aid connections across ngā iwi Māori and their hapū, marae, whānau, awa, maunga and waka. This is reinforced by research by Ross et.al (2014:251), which found that social media "expands the reach of communication messages beyond individual networks and is attractive to those looking to maximise message efficiency". Bruns & Bahnisch (2009) further explain that if the creators of sites and social media posts engage Māori leaders, it can significantly strengthen the profile of those iwi. They advise that "as community structures become more evident, it is important for site operators to engage emerging and established community leaders as partners in the continued development and operation of the site" (Bruns and Bahnisch 2009:12). They also note that "many major social media sites play host not simply to one overall community, but to a network of overlapping sub-communities" (Bruns & Bahnisch 2009:26). This suggests that there is an opportunity for iwi, through careful use of social media, to leverage off the profiles of their iwi leaders to strengthen relationships with their members.

Waitoa et.al (2015) also highlight the ability of social networking sites to help connect Māori who are living overseas with their iwi and hapū, as well as maintain relationships within their whānau. Hobson and Cook (2015:1) suggest that by "maintaining and building relationships as important cultural values, social media tools can complement face-to-face communication within Māori and indigenous communities". Sciascia (2015:5) also notes that "new media and communication technologies have provided Māori with alternative tools and methods to practice and preserve culture, without necessarily having to be face-to-face". Māori have always valued interaction with other Māori through face-to-face meetings, however, Hobson and Cook (2015:2) note that "online networks are becoming increasingly popular tools to establish and maintain connections with whānau". Thus, social media has an important role to play in complementing, rather than replacing, face-to-face interactions with iwi members and other whānau, and narrowing (at least virtually) the distance between their members.

More broadly, social media has been shown to help indigenous people from around the world to form relationships and come together over shared concerns and interests. Waitoa et.al (2015:48) note that "a major benefit of social media for indigenous people



is its capability to connect them with each other. Regardless of the issue, indigenous groups around the world can collaborate and share experiences which strengthen their communities". In Aotearoa, issues affecting all Māori, such as language revitalisation or treaty settlement processes, can also be shared and advanced with other indigenous groups going through similar experiences through social media. Waitoa et. al.'s research suggests that such international networking can provide Māori with expert advice moving forward and they describe this kind of collaboration as "virtual whanaungatanga" (2015:48).

## **2.3 Tikanga Māori**

This review of research literature found an interesting tikanga Māori connection between Māori radio, which has been popular for many decades, and Māori use of social media. Since 1987 in Aotearoa New Zealand, an extensive network of iwi radio stations has emerged that are able to communicate a uniquely iwi- and rohe-based viewpoint with their listeners. The radio hosts and producers of these stations have been able to connect on another level with iwi māori. They understand their communities and the need for tikanga Māori to be included and honoured within their programmes, in stark contrast to mainstream radio. Hobson and Cook (2015:2) explained that the practice of Māori radio "fits well with a Māori kaupapa approach where research is driven by the needs of the Māori community, carried out by Māori and centred on appropriate cultural practices and values". Similarly, their research found that with its "emphasis on collaboration, participation, interaction, and networking, social media fits well within a Māori framework kaupapa" (Hobson and Cook 2015:1).

Kennedy (2010:10) notes that "Māori as collectives, both whakapapa networks and kaupapa networks, play a significant role in Māori networks". However, problems can arise when Māori cannot physically visit or access their tribal landmarks or knowledge holders. Sciascia (2015:10) explains that "physical dislocations from one's turangawaewae, marae or kaumatua who are experts in whakapapa made it difficult for people to access these sources of knowledge to learn their whakapapa". In these contexts, social media is a useful tool for disseminating tikanga Māori information and keeping people up-to-date with iwi matters.

Social media easily lends itself to such Māori practices as whanaungatanga, as it allows people to share whakapapa and helps connect people to the activities of their marae. Sciascia (2016) reports that even key tikanga Māori processes and principles, such as tangihanga and ahikā, are being modified and adapted for the online context. She also explains that Māori people are frequent visitors to marae and whānau social network sites, and use the platforms to express their tribal affiliations and proclaim their "iwi-tanga in celebration of one's Māori identity" (Sciascia 2015:5). Sciascia's research identified that rangatahi Māori, in particular, find online social media spaces

important for them so that they can maintain access to their marae when living at a distance.

## **2.4 Limitations of social media**

While there are many positive aspects to media coverage, as already outlined, this literature review has revealed some limitations. Waitoa et.al (2015:49) explain that "the indigenous 'other' can still be grossly misrepresented on the internet as it is removed even further from its original context and place of meaning". As iwi Māori move forward in the social media space, it is vital that their posts and engagement with social media are positive and enhancing. If this is not made a priority within Māoridom, Kennedy (2010:15) suggests that "Māori may not identify or associate themselves with their social networks, and hence not draw adequate support from them". Iwi Māori organisations are warned to avoid their social media posts and threads becoming negative.

The technological aspect of social media can also be daunting for users who have little or no skills with technology, which suggests that it may be more popular with younger Māori. While Kennedy (2010:17) noted that "social media uses highly technical language, mainly due to the mathematical nature of analysis; this could be a barrier to use for working with whānau", this will cease to be an issue as more and more Māori become familiar with social media processes and tools.

The accessibility of the internet for Māori is another concern. Not all Māori can afford or have the use of technology that can access the internet. According to a recent report from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise (2015:14), only 68% of Māori homes have internet access, compared with 86% for New Zealand Europeans<sup>3</sup>. Often it is these Māori who miss out on the benefits of technology and social media usage. Māori organisations such as Ngā Tangata Tiaki need to be cognisant of this group of Māori people and ensure that there are other avenues for them to have their say and be informed about iwi matters.

## **2.5 Concluding comments based on the literature review**

The purpose of this review was to identify the key themes in the current research literature about how Māori people have used social media, including Facebook, as a communication tool. The review showcased how social media has played a role in shifting the perception of Māori, and helped promote Māori identity for those living far away from their turangawaewae or feeling disconnected from their iwi. In addition, social media like Facebook helps Māori form and maintain relationships, through sharing and liking posts from other iwi members and Indigenous people around the world, and by forming online groups. In this way, Māori use of social media can be an

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<sup>3</sup> The MBIE report refers to 'Europeans' rather than 'Pākehā'.



extension of whanaungatanga, and a means for learning about and practicing other tikanga Māori. Overall, iwi leaders can use social media to form and maintain positive relationships with their iwi members, although they are advised to consider issues such as access to technology that may limit their Māori reach.

### 3. Thematic Data Analysis

The second and third research questions that formed the foundation for this research project are about the actual social media posts made by Whanganui whānau in relation to rubbish dumping in the Awa. In order to respond to these questions, the following section summarises the results of a thematic data analysis process.

The thematic data analysis aimed to capture dialogue that was communicated between Whanganui iwi members through the use of social media, mainly Facebook. The data was collected over two periods with the first period being from 13-19 March 2017 and the second period being from 18-29 December 2017. These two time periods were selected to ensure that a fair and appropriate representation of responses was collected to be analysed. Period one focused on seeking data from around the signing of the Te Awa Tupua Bill which drew significant social media attention across Aotearoa and the world. The second period focused on using fly-tipping on the Awa which, interestingly enough, provided an insight into how significant this activity was. In total, there were 28 comments identified and analysed. The comments were captured for this project in screenshots, some of which are reproduced in this report. Each screenshot has been given a code (for example, IMG1009) to allow for data verification. The names and images for each comment 'poster' have also been obscured to protect their privacy.

The following table shows the demographics of the participants who posted the comments on Facebook that are included in this research project. Posters appear to have been evenly split between Māori and non-Māori, and males and females. The ages of the posters ranged from circa 25 years to 46 years, although the most prolific users were aged 35-44 years old. Posts on social media also tended to be made during peak online traffic times, usually in the evening.

**Table 1: People who made relevant comments during project time periods**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
	13	15	28
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Māori</b>	<b>Non-Māori</b>	
	14	14	28

Age	>25	25-34	35-44	45+	
	0	7	16	5	28

An inductive approach was used to complete the data analysis, which allowed the themes to emerge from the reading of the Facebook posts, rather than looking for specific, predetermined themes. The researcher read through each of the social media posts, several times, and found common ideas, approaches and language use. From this analysis, the researcher identified six themes that emerged across the two time periods of the data sets and that have relevance to the overall research questions. They are:

- Environmental impact
- Security and solutions
- Legal matters
- River management
- Indigenous change
- Tikanga

The remainder of this section focuses on each of those themes in turn.

### 3.1 Environmental impact

The environment acts as a life source for tātou te iwi Māori. It is extremely important that it is cared for and looked after so that generations to come can benefit from it. Māori have strong cultural connections to the environment through Ranginui and Papatuanuku. The data shows that members of the Whanganui iwi are concerned about the impact the dumping of rubbish is having on the state of Te Awa Tupua. The following extracts are examples of what iwi members have posted on social media posts through facebook. It must also be noted that these comments were all posted by females of Māori descent with an age range from 25-45+.

*I went to dump our rubbish in our Koriniti community bins. The whenua has been trashed with rubbish again - IMG1001; Far out how disgusting □ our poor whenua □ man some people need a f@\*\* hiding grrr - IMG1002.*

*I was standing up @ Marshalls bluff looked down and people had thrown their furniture over the bank. Grrrr - IMG 1003.*

Descriptive language used in both of these posts note the location of dumping and its impact. The first excerpt also uses te reo Māori, which indicates a comfortableness with and connection to te ao Māori. The phrase, “The whenua has been trashed” denotes the impact of the dumping and also highlights the connection Māori have with

the land. The 'Grrrr' in the second excerpt expresses the anger and frustration that the commenter feels.

IMG1001 29/12/17



**Image 1:** Example of Facebook comments about rubbish dumping in Te Awa Tupua.

Although there are a number of people expressing their personal concerns about the Awa, there seems to be little change in addressing the issue. Another extract supports this by explaining that the problem has been long term.

*Ae bloody sad to see, this has been problematic for ages, if there is somewhere else we could relocate the bins to it might help to combat this. Any ideas whānau?? - IMG1003.*

“Problematic for ages” indicates an ongoing issue (and relationship) with the whenua and the Awa.

Not only is the river a life source but many whānau, iwi and hapū are based in and around the Awa. It is used for recreation purposes such as waka ama. The concerns about health and the environment are related in that without the Awa the people would not be able to survive. The extract below clearly demonstrates the severity of how iwi members are feeling about their personal health and safety when swimming in the river.

*Far too many pollutants are entering the river to the degree that areas of the river are reported as too dangerous to swim in - IMG1009.*

Overall, this theme connects to the ideas in the literature review around the use of social media to express tikanga Māori and Māori identity.

### 3.2 Security and solutions

Another theme to emerge from the data is that there are security issues around where the bins are located along the river road. The following extracts were posted by Māori males over 35 years of age. They are all examples of how 'posters' provided a solution or suggestion that could perhaps be used as a way to remedy some of the issues identified.

*Secure them inside gates with a lock that only locals can use - IMG1002.*

*Yeah i've had this thought for awhile my aunt looking at the one in atene which is nicely secured was just an idea hoping in the near future it happens - IMG1002.*

These extracts share a possible solution to the issue of dumping rubbish and highlight that a collective responsibility to look after the awa and whenua could be ensured by only allowing locals to use the rubbish bins. Another iwi member suggested using surveillance technology to identify rubbish dumpers:

*Does anyone have any surveillance cameras anywhere along the road? Might be able to identify the silver car or its driver - IMG1003.*

Where iwi members are suggesting solutions to these problems it is obvious that not only do they care for the Awa but they are also willing to support change, as clearly portrayed in this thread:



**Image 2:** Example of Facebook comments about security solutions.

Similar to the impact on the environment, it is clear that Whanganui Iwi really care about the security issues that are exacerbating the rubbish dumping problem. It is also apparent that much of the discussion is solutions focused. If Iwi leaders were to facilitate an online discussion on social media around these issues, many of the issues may be resolved.

### 3.3 Legal matters

A third theme that emerged from the data analysis was the prominence of comments that related to illegal behaviour and other legal matters. In the following excerpt the illegal activity relates to graffiti:

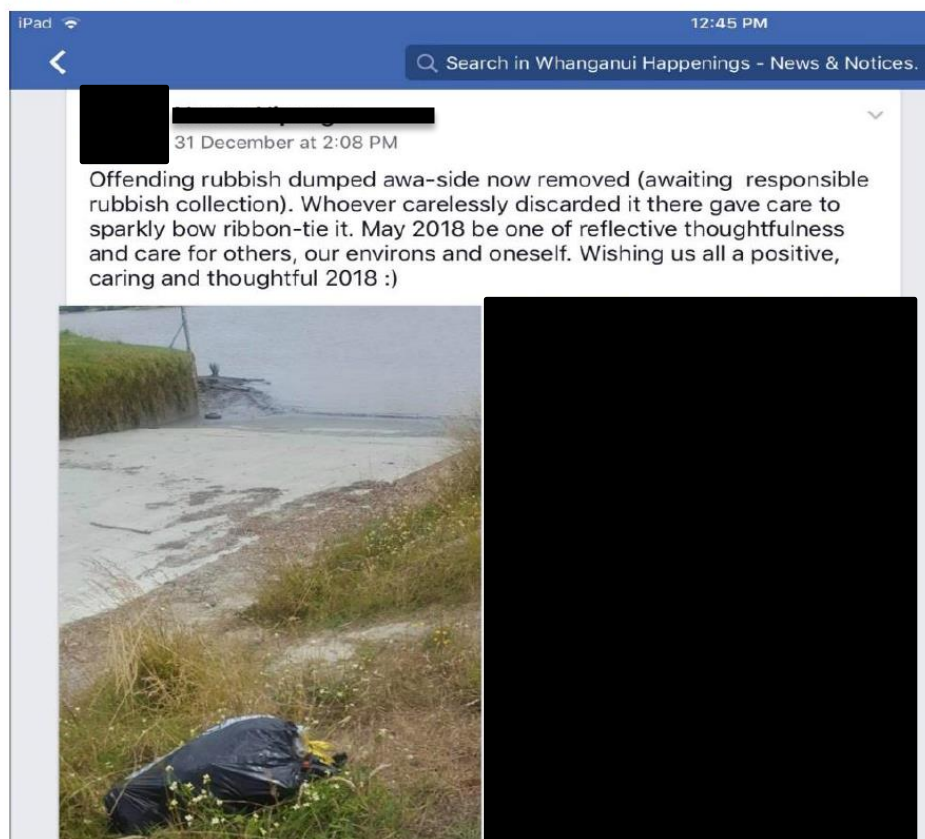
*Added to this, our beautiful lookout at the top of Aromoana has been tagged over the past few days - IMG1004.*

The connection that iwi members have to the land is highlighted in their description of “our beautiful lookout”. This shows an appreciation for the awa and the whenua. Another comment alludes to the illegality of dumping rubbish beside the Awa:

*Offending rubbish dumped awa-side now removed (awaiting responsible rubbish collection) - IMG1005.*

The full excerpt is reproduced below.

IMG1005 31/12/17



**Image 3:** Example of Facebook comments about rubbish removal.



The connection that these extracts have with the literature review is that they highlight tikanga Māori practices and the concept of kaitiakitanga. As values that are represented within Te Ruruku and Te Awa Tupua, it is important that through social media these connections remain strong in order for the iwi members of Whanganui to protect and nurture the awa.

The signing of the Te Awa Tupua bill had many people asking a number of questions around the finer details of the bill. The tone of the extracts shows that people were concerned about the implications of what it means for a river to be a 'legal person'.

*It has all the rights of a legal person - but will it have to pay taxes like the rest of us, and can it be prosecuted? Can we get river status? - IMG1013.*

*So if a child goes swimming in the river and drowns is it murder or manslaughter? - IMG1016.*

*So now we're calling rivers "people"? What the hell does that even mean? - IMG1018.*

The language used in these posts describes the many questions that people had and shows their attitudes towards the issue. The attitude taken in these three extracts is significantly different to the remainder of the data as they focused on the negative aspects rather than celebrating the successes.

The data analysis also found positive examples of posters happy about the Awa Tupua gaining legal status.

*Congratulations NZ, very civilised of you - IMG 1012.*

*Happy crying a little bit. Now we just need this for the many other major waterways in NZ and around the world - IMG1016.*

*About time. All of them should have such status. Our government needs to wake up - IMG1016.*

While these extracts are positive, the earlier negative comments do highlight how often social media posts are ill informed. They demonstrate how when people lack details knowledge of a topic, they may struggle to fully understand the message. When engaging with iwi members through social media, it is important that the correct message is given with all the relevant supporting information. This may eliminate any assumptions and misleading messages by iwi members and create a positive relationship based on tikanga Māori values and practices.



### 3.4 River management

The data analysis also found that iwi members were concerned that the government was not reaching the standard that they expected and often politicised the issue of dumping rubbish.

*People of Whanganui are calling on the government to keep their promise of cleaning up New Zealand's rivers - IMG1007.*

*We believe the organizations that set themselves up as Guardians and Conservationists of our spiritual and physical entity known to the world as the Whanganui River are falling short of their stated goals and values - IMG1009.*

Others highlighted that the preservation of the awa is that of the iwi collective.

*I agree the government should support the movement of cleaning up whanganui but also as a Maori I feel we as the people of the land have a responsibility to clear it up as well - IMG1008.*

*We the people of the Whanganui River command the management of our resources raise themselves out of the mediocre to a standard of Excellence for we will not accept mediocrity - IMG1010.*

These comments reflect the values and tikanga that are embedded in us as Māori. They also focus on relationships through tikanga Māori by indicating a sense of collectivity and whanaungatanga.

IMG1008 18/12/17



**Image 4:** Example of Facebook comments about river management.

### 3.5 Indigenous change

Aotearoa is highly regarded when it comes to issues facing Māori and indigenous rights. This was demonstrated in a Facebook comment from a male living in Australia:

*Good to see New Zealand's treatment of indigenous rivers being better than Australia's treatment of indigenous people - IMG1012.*

Other similar comments were found on Facebook, particularly from people living overseas who were positive about the change in the legal status of the Awa.

IMG1012 17/03/17



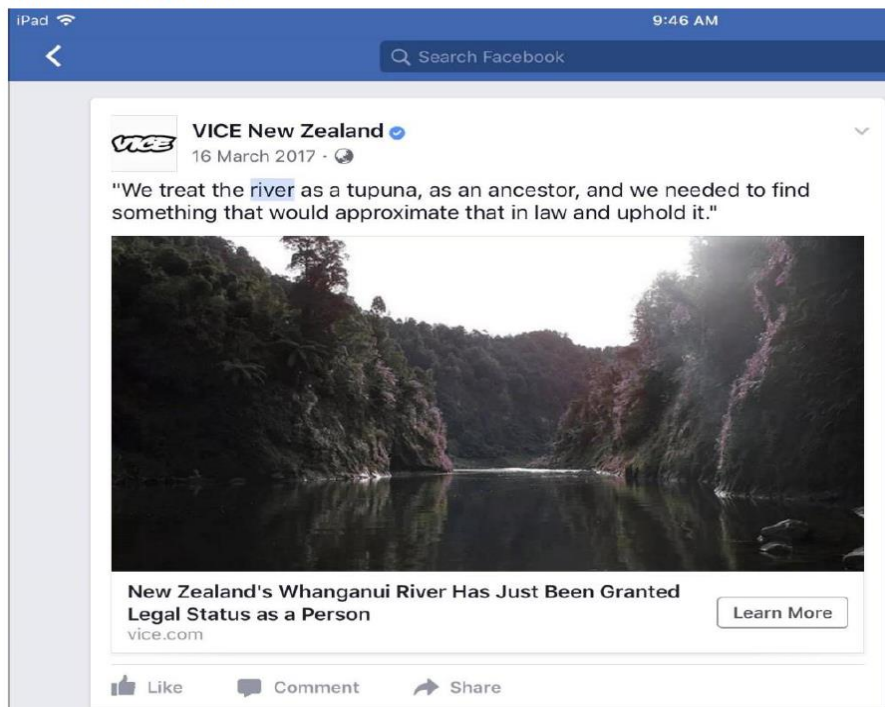
**Image 5:** Example of Facebook comments about Indigenous matters worldwide.

### 3.6 Tikanga Māori

A final theme that emerged from the data analysis was the incidence of tikanga Māori being referred to in online comments.

*We treat the river as a tupuna, as an ancestor, and we needed to find something that would approximate that in law and uphold it - IMG1015.*

This extract explains the significance that Te Awa Tupua, as a tribal ancestor, has on the Whanganui iwi and indicates the level of protection to be given to the awa. There are clear links to tikanga Māori through the mention of a 'tupuna, as an ancestor' and the excerpt also emphasises the importance of relationships and connections with the river.



**Image 6:** Example of Facebook comments about tikanga Māori in relation to Te Awa Tupua.

### 3.7 Concluding comments regarding data analysis

The thematic data analysis highlighted six themes. The inductive approach allowed these themes to emerge from within the data so that iwi leaders can now understand the communication methods that iwi members are using and ascertain what they consider to be important.

The time periods in which the data was collected gave an insight to the kinds of significant events and actions that provoke Whanganui iwi members to go online and share their thoughts. The demographics of the people posting on Facebook indicate a range of ages and even gender split. Also, the kinds of comments being made about the awa, and particularly rubbish dumping in the awa, predominantly related to tikanga Māori, legalities and solutions to the problem.

## 4. Conclusion

The information gathered as part of this project will provide Ngā Tangata Tiaki with assistance in the development of their communications strategic plan. Many of the themes that emerged in the literature review were also reiterated in the data analysis process. Interestingly, themes from within Te Ruruku Whakatupua were also mirrored in the research findings, such as tikanga Māori values, the importance of relationships and Māori identity. Iwi leaders can use the findings from this research to enhance their

communications of the matters of relevance to them within the framework of Te Ruruku Whakatupua implementation.

By using this research to inform a communications plan, Ngā Tangata Tiaki can ensure they are meeting the needs and expectations of their iwi members. Although this research honed in on Facebook postings, because of its popularity with iwi members, there are many areas in which the findings of this research can be applied. For example, involving iwi leaders in the use of Facebook will contribute to the success of engagement.

Despite the robustness of the research processes followed, there were a few limitations identified in this project. One is that the research was conducted over a three month period. This is a relatively short period to conduct data collection and analysis so the parameters of the project were set accordingly. Future projects of this type, with more time allocated, could collect data over a wider range of periods and across a broader range of social media platforms. Other dimensions of this project that could warrant further research include:

- Analysing the geographic location of posters
- Completing the historical research including the 10 year timeframe that was initially signalled in the original research questions
- Expanding the kinds of comments collected beyond references to the Awa.

It is important that this research continues in order to further understand how social media interaction is used to support the implementation of Te Ruruku Whakatupua.

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