## Māori and Business as Usual

*In her kōrero Dr Rangimārie Turuki Rose Pere spoke of the answers being within the forest itself. With regard to pest animal species (like possums) she noted that they had been taken from their own homes and placed in Aotearoa, so it is not their fault they are deemed 'pests'.*

Te Pūtara

*Māori and 1080* is the title of a 2006 Landcare Research paper by Chrys Horn and Margaret Kilvington that investigates how to gain iwi "agreement" to use 1080. What do they discover? It is all about "building trust," they write as "research is, by itself, not sufficient to allay community and iwi concerns. Horn and Kilvington conclude, "non-expert iwi and community groups need to **feel** that their concerns are being addressed."

Iwi concerns are substantial. They include loss of native birds, poisoning of deer and dogs, the potential effect on water supplies and human health, and how poison disturbs spiritual principles.

The authors focus on mind control. They don't call it mind control. They use the term "perceived control," and it is this underlying psychological construct that must be communicated to "help" Māori communities adapt to change and adversity. The prevailing question is how to get agreement on the use of toxin 1080, so rather than trying to convince communities of the merits of 1080, they change tactics to "convincing them of the merits of pest control" or the merits of "eradicating Tb".

"Dismissing a community's views as irrational, or imposing unpopular measures on them, is not supportive and undermines trust," they write. But here is their paternalistic clanger... "Interestingly, it appears that it is the element of choice that is important rather than the quality of the options."

The paper looks at what "communication processes had been used where local iwi had agreed to the use of 1080...without major public outcry."[97] So there we have it—a piece of taxpayer-financed research designed specifically to glean tips on how to sell poison to Māori communities.





Horn and Kilvington repeat myths and unscientific falsehoods, going so far as to affirm there "is" an antidote to 1080 poisoning. There is no antidote. The statement is patently untrue.

The authors state, "It would be fair to say that, as a whole, Māori prefer not to use poisons as a matter of principle." They concede the struggle for community acceptance of poison 1080 takes effort and time. They claim at least a year of groundwork is necessary for agencies driving the use of poison 1080 to succeed.

The cost of this yearlong strategy is not factored into any financial analysis of poison drops. "At a time when communities are increasingly negative about the use of 1080, time and resources must be allowed for consultation processes." The authors are concerned that DOC staff do not "recognise the difference between information and consultation."

The critical role of Urewera Māori within DOC is disclosed. DOC tried to give "all the community groups involved a high level of *perceived* control over the possibility of aerial drops in the area." So DOC transported Māori into the Uruwera bush to show "damage caused by possums" and their effect on "birdlife". DOC's "take a Māori into the bush" strategy did not work on Moehau in 2013. DOC-sponsored helicopter tours and catered lunches failed to quell Māori opposition. DOC dropped toxin 1080 anyway.

Horn and Kilvington write, "Another way of improving the relationship between an agency and a Māori community is through involving them in monitoring the effects of 1080." They cite the successful example of Ngāi Tahu, who were recipients of AHB's "capacity-building process" leading to improved trust and "smoothing the way for a more constructive campaign against bovine Tb over much of the South Island."

AHB and DOC generally employ a "liaison person who can work with local people" using "cultural impact assessment tools". Their research concludes, "It is unproductive to try to convince people that 1080 is good, harmless or effective. Setting out to persuade or convince, therefore, can be counterproductive. Instead, agencies could more constructively use their time to work with communities to find ways to address their concerns."

Such official agency methodology can often drive a wedge right through a community. Toss a DOC uniform on a few unemployed and presto—opposition to 1080 mysteriously fades away.

A similar approach was successful in overcoming Māori resistance to the opening of the Kauaeranga to gold mining in the mid-1860s. According to historian Paul Monin, "One person broke ranks—Wirope Hotereni Taipari, son of the senior rangatira of Ngāti Maru, Te Hauauru Taipari. Taipari was to acquire "substantial income" and to spend "the new wealth for his own direct benefit, with the tribe receiving no more than limited indirect benefits." Other Hauraki leaders, "like Tukukino and Te Hira of Ngati Tamatera, were little interested in the new wealth... These Māori leaders gave priority to the protection of existing tribal estate and political autonomy over the pursuit of the new wealth and new mana."[98]

ERMA's Māori advisory group, Ngā Kaihautū Tikanga Taiao (NKTT), is charged with protecting and upholding the integrity of tikanga and mātauranga Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi. NKTT's *Te Pūtara* newsletter of November 2005 outlines "the cultural values that any [1080] application must consider". These include "Māori cultural well-being; cultural, spiritual, ethical and socio-economic values; protection of the mauri of culture, language and knowledge; maintenance and control of traditional practice (rāhui, kaitiakitanga etc.); mauri of flora, fauna, water, air and land; taha wairua, taha whanaunga, taha hinengaro, and taha tinana."

The socio-economic benefits cannot be blandly dismissed. Harvesting possums can provide "secure long-term employment where it is most needed and by supporting the local community's kaitiakitanga (traditional guardianship/duty of care) of their forest environment." This statement comes from a group of scientists whose paper—*Serving two masters: Reconciling economic and biodiversity outcomes of brushtail possum (Trhichosurus vulpecula) for fur harvest in an indigenous New Zealand Forest* includes the fact that "commercial trapping could deliver the same degree of control at lower cost than standard ground control. Further, aerial methods are not economic for repeated control, whereas harvest can be."[98a] These findings continue to be ignored.

NKTT employees walk a fine line determined by the corporate chemical industry and National/Labour/Green party policies. The Mana Party aims to "ban the use of 1080 poison and invest in alternative methods (and employment opportunities) to control the spread of tuberculosis by pests and rodents" and New Zealand





First opposes aerial 1080. The Ban 1080 party is the only political group opposed to all use of 1080.

When ERMA released its decision of the *Application for the Reassessment of Sodium Fluoroacetate (1080)* on April 26, 2007 they published a slender report penned by James Ataria—*An Independent Assessment of Oral Submissions and Process for the Ngā Kaihautū Tikanga Taiao-Māori Advisory Group at ERMA.* Landcare researcher Shaun Ogilvie signs off the introduction. At the time, Ogilvie and Ataria were members of NKTT. By 2009 Shaun Ogilvie was one of the team investigating 1080 uptake by pūhā and watercress, with funding provided by AHB.[99] And by 2012 he was investigating the neurotoxin, tutin, as a potential alternative poison.

Ataria's "independent assessment" basically affirms the DOC/AHB position. According to Ataria, the DOC-sponsored publication *The Use of 1080 for Pest Control: A Discussion Document* written by consultant Wren Green provided a "good synopsis".[100] Although hui attendees were there to consider the AHB/DOC discussion paper, many found the document "difficult to comprehend because of the writing style and frequent use of scientific terminology and concepts. There were also a number of verbal and written statements expressing concern that the information contained in the discussion document and applicants' presentation were biased to support their application for the continued use of 1080."[101]

Ataria's "independent assessment" records the view that synthetic poisons "were often seen as unacceptable and contrary to the principles of Tikanga Māori," and "most Māori participants felt uncomfortable with the use of poisons in the environment". Participants also felt there was not an—"objective view," presented by DOC going so far as to call it a "one-sided propaganda machine" with "government representatives pushing government agency agendas."[102]

According to Ataria's report some attendees voiced concerns whether Māori cultural values would be taken into account during the reassessment process, or would be dismissed as "mumbo jumbo".[103] Redirection of funds, to employ iwi representatives to carry out ground control as an alternative to aerial 1080, was proposed at four hui. The impact on the ability to harvest food/kai from poisoned areas was seen to harm mana whenua, with some participants recommending that, "all 1080 drops on Māori land should be banned."[104]

The prevailing view from this record is clear. According to Ataria "almost all participants" were opposed to aerial 1080. Nevertheless his report failed to recommend halting aerial 1080. He records, in black and white, the "most contentious issue, facing 1080 use was the continued employment of aerial application of baits. Almost all participants opposed or had serious reservations about this method of application on the basis of the random nature of where baits land, the validity of contractors' claims that they can aerially apply 1080 with a high degree of accuracy, when they cannot account for wind, or movement of poisoned animals."[105]

Distressingly, the final recommendations of Ataria's report do not challenge the status quo. There is a request for impartial information on 1080 poison and a comment on the need to build levels of trust with pest control agencies.[106] Ataria appears resigned to ongoing aerial 1080, suggesting that "pre- and post-monitoring by Māori become a mandatory component of assessment of environmental effects of 1080 operations."[107]

However even that mild suggestion seems to have gone nowhere. In 2010 the EPA 1080 Annual Report confirmed approximately 40% of aerial 1080 drops remain unmonitored. And this is just for the target species. Non-target species are seldom if ever monitored after a 1080 poison drop. And there are no reports of iwi participated in monitoring of any sort.

Summing up his report Ataria records, "most Māori participants felt uncomfortable with the use of poisons in the environment, although a broad spectrum of views on 1080 exists. Some support 1080 use, providing there is more Māori involvement in the process, and others feel that 1080 is a threat to the environment and that its use contradicts their beliefs. Aerial 1080 baiting operations remain controversial, and some participants were adamant that alternatives to aerial application, and in some cases alternatives to 1080, are required."[108]

Ataria's findings were nothing new. Māori community opposition to poison 1080 was recorded back in 2004 in *Forest&Bird* magazine—"While nobody has any firm ideas about how to control pigs, most agree that using 1080 is out of the question. Māori communities, like the ones with an interest in the East Coast Dactylanthus Reserve, are precisely the sorts of stakeholders DOC needs to keep onside. 'They simply wouldn't tolerate it,' says Julie Black, manager of Nga Whenua Rahui (a Government fund to





protect natural values on Māori-owned land). 'They would have issues about the use of 1080 around a traditional food source, and also with waterways and people's diets. It's about traditional Māori beliefs and values about upsetting the natural system with introduced toxins."[109]

The results of poorly attended hui were accepted by ERMA as an objective and independent method of Māori participation.

At a bare minimum, ERMA could have required cultural impact assessments. The Assessment of Environmental Effects process for every 1080 operation should have taken into account the diminished cultural right to hunt for kai in the forests. The ERMA 1080 reassessment decision section entitled, *Risks, costs, benefits to Māori* reaffirms the view "that aerial 1080 operations, in particular, violate wairua and mauri. Therefore in a spiritual context Māori are generally opposed in principle to aerial operations and to the use of toxins that are perceived as a pollution of the environment. Protection of mauri is a concern not only for land, but also for waterways."

Māori economic aspirations to harvest fur, meat and skins are negatively impacted by aerial 1080 drops. Māori health and wellbeing are similarly impacted when toxins are deliberately dumped into waterways and onto ancestral land.

After years of effort to get Māori onside with 1080 poison, it may all be for nothing. Landcare research, published after the ERMA review noted, "Although it is likely that maintaining possums at low densities would result in some conservation benefit, we did not measure this directly."

It is disclosed, in the summary of this extensive research, that no one knows the history of the poisoning of some regions and "there was a general lack of institutional memory of the details of possum control operations in several of the regions surveyed."[110]

1080 poison does not maintain possums at low densities anyway, it temporarily knocks them out—and 3 years later 1080 poison must be used again. Over and over, more and more. This process is best described as a kind of farming practice benefiting helicopter companies and poison manufacturers who guarantee themselves permanent profits far into the future.

Further revelations come in June 2007, when Jim Doherty, James Waiwai together with Ataria and Ogilvie write a report *Overcoming barriers to Māori inclusion in the appropriate use of 1080:*

*final report*. An alternative title could be, *Navigating tactics to gain consent for a deeply unpopular policy (for brown people).* These Māori 1080 advocates concede "support amongst Maori for aerial application of 1080 is probably minimal, particularly in culturally significant areas (e.g. sites where food and water are gathered, historical sites)." This separate strategy to bring Māori on board is arguably racist at its core.

The authors note "a recurring theme being voiced by Maori that the forests are dead after aerial 1080 operations...that there are no birds singing and all the life has been removed" and they found strong opposition among some sectors of the Maori community about the impacts of aerial 1080 operations on non-target species—with some hui participants unwilling to accept existing 1080 environmental data at all, because "that research was done by the same people that are dropping 1080...we can't trust it".

To counter these concerns the authors created a snazzy "visual web-based database that would provide a graphical representation of the fate of 1080 in forests" The pictorial format was created "based on an ecological food web as described by Innes & Barker (1999)."

Finally in 2009 a brief article—*Māori Perceptions,* co-authored by Shaun Ogilvie and Aroha Miller, is published as part of a 1080 poison promotion, endorsed by none other than the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. The cover letter signed by David Lawrie, refers to the report—*The State of New Zealand's Birds 2008 Special Report: Conservation of Birds on the Mainland*—as a "peer reviewed assessment," with Lawrie claiming 1080 poison is most "cost-effective" over "rugged or remote terrain."

The disclaimer reads— "the views expressed by the contributors to this report do not necessarily represent those of the Ornithological Society of NZ Inc, the NZ DOC or employers of contributing authors."

This would appear to undermine the nature of those peer reviews . This is opinion, not science.

Ogilvie and Miller write, "Over half of Māori who made submissions to the recent ERMA reassessment of the use of 1080 poison stated there was not enough consultation with iwi in areas where 1080 use is planned. Many submissions expressed distrust in the information provided because the relevant research is mostly done, or funded by, the organisations that use 1080. Many





of the submissions indicated that Māori believed that there was insufficient investigation into the environmental effects of 1080."

Ogilvie and Miller's brief article of five paragraphs ends, "The way 1080 is used at the moment restricts customary practices. Many of these concerns are also shared by many other New Zealanders."

Restriction of customary practices should be a central concern in reassessing toxin 1080. Given that it is not, the question must be asked why such a serious infringement is not considered significant under the HSNO protocols for engaging with iwi.