



Knowledge Cultures 11(1), 2023
pp. 9–18, ISSN 2327-5731, eISSN 2375-6527

Mobilising for Action: Introduction to the Special Issue

Mark Harvey

m.harvey@auckland.ac.nz

Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries,
Waipapa Taumata Rau|University of Auckland

Marie McEntee

m.mcentee@auckland.ac.nz

School of Environment,
Waipapa Taumata Rau|University of Auckland

How to cite: Harvey, M., and McEntee, M. (2023). Mobilising for Action: Introduction to the Special Issue. *Knowledge Cultures*, 11(1), 9–18. <https://doi.org/10.22381/kc11120231>

Ka whāngaia, ka tipu, ka puāwai. (Nurture, grow, blossom.)

Whiria te tangata. (Weave the people together.)

Mobilising for Action (MFA) is a transdisciplinary project consisting of social researchers and community knowledge holders and practitioners, largely situated in Aotearoa|New Zealand, but also including researchers from the United Kingdom who are investigating the social dimensions of ngahere (forest) health in Aotearoa|New Zealand. Our research focuses on the people and communities who are affected by or at risk of being affected by the plant diseases kauri dieback and myrtle rust. While these diseases are having devastating ecological impacts (Bradshaw et al., 2020; Toome-Heller et al., 2020), it is the cultural and social aspects of these diseases that are the primary focus of the Mobilising for Action team.

MFA recognises that the demise of kauri and *Myrtaceae* species significantly impacts people's engagement with the ngahere. For Māori, kauri and *Myrtaceae* species are taonga (treasures), spiritually significant and for many, tūpuna (ancestors). The storymaps created by MFA's project *He Taonga kē te Ngahere* reveal the special connection Māori have with the ngahere (see Mobilising for Action, n.d.). Kauri and *Myrtaceae* species also shape many of the forest ecosystems or 'bush' visited by all people around New Zealand, and the loss of

these species will have significant impacts on their connection to, and engagement with, ngahere.

Kauri dieback has already been found in many key kauri (*Agathis australis*) forests on Aotearoa's North Island. The impact is critical because, while kauri were once abundant across the northern parts of New Zealand, only around 0.5% of its original coverage remains, largely as a result of forest clearances during New Zealand's European settlement (see the webpage funded by MFA, Kauri Rescue, n.d.).

Myrtle rust, which arrived in Aotearoa/New Zealand in 2017, has spread rapidly and is already devastating some tree species and threatening others (Toome-Heller et al., 2020) (see the film *Mate Tipu, Mate Rākau*, created by Fiona Apanui-Kupenga and funded by MFA's project Toi Taiao Whakatairanga: Kauri Dieback, Myrtle Rust and Public Awareness Through Arts Practices, to hear about the impact of myrtle rust on the endemic shrub species ramarama in the East Cape of New Zealand [Toi Taiao Whakatairanga, 2021]).

Environmental management agencies responsible for the management of Aotearoa/New Zealand's forest ecosystems recognise that New Zealand's biodiversity is dependent on a strong and robust biosecurity system working in government and institutional partnership with Māori, and engaging meaningfully with communities (Hill et al., 2021; Lambert et al., 2018; Ministry for Primary Industries, 2016).

Informing the partnership with Māori is Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi). For readers outside of Aotearoa, this is commonly known as the founding legal document of our nation-state and is a treaty setting out terms for the partnership and relationship in governance between Māori and Pākehā. As many from Māori, Pākehā and Crown-based perspectives (particularly Māori) note, the Treaty has not always been universally agreed upon, particularly between Māori and Pākehā, to the detriment often to Māori wellbeing and sovereignty since its signing (Walker, 2004; Jackson, 2019; Durie, 2011; Orange, 1987). It also provides a road map of partnership for us in our research in terms not only calling for a space of value for our various cultural perspectives and communities in our research, but, more particularly, mana motuhake for Māori (autonomy, sovereignty, amongst other things) over Māori issues and mahi (work and activities).

Community engagement in complex socio-environmental issues like kauri dieback and myrtle rust calls for a co-production of knowledge among a range of knowledge holders to identify common goals or problems, with the aim of developing locally determined action or change (Baars, 2011; Reed, 2008). This approach challenges top-down driven environmental management and simplistic behaviour change models that focus on increasing awareness to shape behaviours and encourage positive environmental choices (Shove, 2010). The transformative nature of co-developed approaches to decision-making typically requires changes in institutions, e.g., policy and science, that value different forms of thinking, actions, systems and structures (Fazey et al., 2018).

Despite the recognition in biosecurity of the need for meaningful partnerships and relationships with Māori and engagement and collaborations with the community, the social dimensions of forest health have been under-researched in Aotearoa|New Zealand (Black & Dickie, 2016). In addressing this, the Biological Heritage National Science Challenge Ngā Koiroa Tuku Iho, when tasked with administering the Government's \$13.5 million surge funding for kauri dieback and myrtle rust research, allocated an investment theme specifically to social science research, in their programme Ngā Rākau Taketake: Saving our Iconic Trees. They called the theme Mobilising for Action (MFA) to reflect a need to accelerate critical research to combat the spread of kauri dieback and myrtle rust, make a real impact 'on the ground' and empower New Zealanders to protect and restore the ngahere for future generations.

MFA's Research Framework

MFA has co-developed a programme of research to critically examine: the meaning people attach to te taiao (the environment), ngahere and taonga species (specifically kauri and Myrtaceae); how people's connection to te taiao, ngahere and taonga species can be fostered and supported; and how people can be empowered to make a difference to enable te taiao, ngahere and taonga species to flourish. To do this, in early 2020, the MFA theme co-leads engaged with over 150 people from a wide range of communities and institutions, with a diverse range of opinions and expertise from across New Zealand and the globe in korero (conversations). This resulted in an extensive programme of research guided by a waka hourua framework (see below) which reflects our recognition that mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and Western knowledge both equally have a role to play in understanding the social dimensions of forest health. We acknowledge Dr Natasha Tassell-Matamua, the MFA co-lead 2020–2022, for her contribution to developing MFA's foundational research approach.¹

Within the framework of the waka hourua (double-hulled canoe), each hull of the waka (canoe) represents a body of knowledge that informs this research project pertaining to the ecological threats of kauri dieback and myrtle rust. One hull represents Māori knowledges, and the other hull represents Western science knowledges. The 'ocean we navigate' is te taiao – our environment and we attempt to navigate it through the winds of understanding the human dimensions of forest health and forest health management. This conceptual framework has not only been applied here in this Editorial through Māori and Pākehā collaborative authorship and editing, as well as the articles in this special edition of *Knowledge Cultures*, but it underpins the research undertaken by our Mobilising for Action project as a whole.

As Arama Rata, Jessica Hutchings and James H. Liu (2012) note,

The Waka Hourua Research Framework situates research exploration at the interface between Māori knowledge and Western science (see Durie, 2005). The framework incorporates core Māori values, guiding principles

and contextual research considerations in a dynamic framework that allows for adaptations to be made throughout the research process. (p. 64)

This tukanga (approach) applies a Māori metaphor of conceptual duality and legitimises mātauranga Māori ‘as a platform for generating new knowledge’ while valuing Western knowledge (Rata et al., 2012, p. 64). While Rata et al. (2012) see the waka hourua as being between mātauranga Māori and Western science, for us, the Western perspectives include all relevant Western forms of knowledge to our research. Another way of seeing this project is through Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins’ (2014) notion of the hyphen space, which is where knowledge production is built on the respectful Māori–Pākehā relations, where there can be understanding built ‘from difference’ (p. 48). Many of our research projects are led ‘by Māori for Māori’ in that Māori researchers have focused on issues and perspectives from Māori viewpoints and knowledge systems. Some of our projects are a culmination of Māori and Pākehā (NZ European, mainly of British descent) leadership, researchers and perspectives. And the rest come from Western knowledge perspectives, led by Pākehā.

Our collective approach here is in contrast to the now widely critiqued belief that mātauranga Māori is not science, which some Pākehā academics and scientists maintain (Ngāta, 2021). To many, this is not only colonial but, in turn, is an attempt to lower the status of mātauranga Māori as a form of knowledge (Ngāta, 2021). By applying the waka hourua model, we intend to place both Western and Māori terrains of knowledge production on an equal footing, which can inform one another and interface the energy from both systems to create new knowledge beyond what many see as colonial positivist views of science (Durie, 2004).

Outline of the Articles in this Special Edition

We have endeavoured to develop this journal edition through a kaupapa (approach) of whakamana (empowerment) for our researchers and writers, empowering and raising the mana (spiritual wellbeing) of our researchers, which is inspired by the inclusive peer-reviewing process of the previous *Knowledge Cultures* edition on kindness and a range of mātauranga Māori perspectives in research including the scholarly work of Angus McFarlane and Sonja McFarlane (2019). In particular, this has included us attempting to uphold Māori values and ways of engaging, such as allowing space for the various cultural perspectives of our authors and their respective disciplinary approaches to thrive, while respecting and uplifting the mana of them (as they align with submitting articles for this journal). A key method in our peer-reviewing has involved processes of kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) feedback and exchange between peer reviewers and authors. From a mātauranga Māori perspective, this has not lowered the standard of peer-reviewing from normative Western blind peer-review processes but has enriched the depth of critical enquiry in our collective experience, building on our diverse knowledges. To work with blind peer-reviewing, we propose would be to undermine the Māori frameworks of research that we propose here.

We have engaged with our waka hourua framework in this special edition as follows. We begin with five articles from the research area that specifically focuses on projects and initiatives that are grounded in a kaupapa Māori approach/framework and three which emerge from projects that interweave both mātauranga Māori and Western knowledge approaches. We then present five articles that are generated from research areas that are specifically grounded in critical social science approaches/frameworks. Our current MFA projects are outlined next, along with the articles in this special edition that emerged from each project.

He Taonga kē te Ngahere is grounded in the understanding that Māori cultural beliefs, values and practices are intimately connected to te taiao and are grounded in an inherent understanding of the inter-relativity between humans, the ecosystem, the celestial spheres and the entire universe. While te taiao is of unique cultural significance, contemporary Māori live in diverse realities, so beliefs, values and behaviours cannot be viewed through a singular lens and, instead, are likely to diverge according to whānau, hapū and iwi, as well as socio-economic status, socio-historical-political issues (e.g., Te Tiriti o Waitangi [the Treaty of Waitangi], tino rangatiratanga [sovereignty]), access concerns, intergenerational trauma, systemic bias, wellbeing, spirituality, traditional practice and rituals, among other factors. The following articles in this special edition emerged from this work:

- ‘He Taonga kē ngā Kaumātua: Kaumātua Perspectives of te Taiao, Ngahere and Taonga Species,’ by Ariana Apiti, Natasha Tassell-Matamua and Te Ra Moriarty.
- “‘Pūrākau o te Ngahere’’: Indigenous Māori Interpretations, Expressions and Connection to Taonga Species and Biosecurity Issues,’ by Bevan Erueti, Natasha Tassell-Matamua, Nicole Lindsay, Pikihiua Pomare, Bridgette Masters-Awatere, Kiri Dell and Mariana Te Rangi.
- ‘Te Mauri o te Kauri me te Ngahere: Indigenous Knowledge, te Taiao (the Environment) and Wellbeing,’ by Pikihiua Pomare, Natasha Tassell-Matamua, Nicole Lindsay, Bridgette Masters-Awatere, Kiri Dell, Bevan Erueti and Mariana Te Rangi.

He Taura Here ki te Taiao is a smaller project within He Taonga kē te Ngahere that is exploring the emergence of kauri dieback and myrtle rust from a perspective that aligns with Māori ontology by mapping the temporo-‘placial’-spatial relationship between the wider socio-historical-political-cultural-spiritual landscape and the discovery and trajectory of both kauri dieback and myrtle rust in Aotearoa New Zealand. The following article in this special edition emerged from this work:

- ‘Mai i te Pū ki te Wānanga: Interpreting Synchronistic Meaning through a Wānanga Methodology,’ by Nathan Matamua, Te Rā Moriarty and Natasha Tassell-Matamua.

Māra Tautāne has partnered with a Māori community – Te Māhurehure (Ngāi Tūhoe) in the Ruātoki valley adjacent to Te Urewera – to observe and record the deep cultural and spiritual significance that Māra Tautāne (ceremonial gardens) hold for Māori, and to understand the potential effect that biosecurity threats can have on cultural practices that are associated with the ngahere. The following article in this special edition emerged from this work:

- ‘Indigenous Knowledge Revitalisation: Indigenous Māori Gardening and its Wider Implications for the People of Tūhoe,’ by Natasha Tassell-Matamua, Teina Boasa-Dean and Marie McEntee.

Toi Taiao Whakatairanga: Kauri Dieback, Myrtle Rust and Public Awareness Through Arts Practices aims to engage with how contemporary public art and live art can cultivate and grow public awareness and positive behaviours to caring for the ngahere. The research draws on the team’s and their collaborators’ extensive collective research, knowledge and experience, weaving contemporary arts and artistic research paradigms with mātauranga Māori, public psychology, current ecological science, education and community perspectives and qualitative research frameworks. The following articles in this special edition emerged from this work:

- ‘Toi Taiao Whakatairanga: Tukanga: Processes of Navigating the Interface Between Art Curation/Research, Forest Ecologies and Māori Perspectives,’ by Mark Harvey, Molly Mullen, Sophie Jerram, Nick Waipara, Ariane Craig-Smith and Chris McBride.
- ‘Disease Narratives and Artistic Alternatives,’ by Sophie Jerram, Gradon Diprose, Emily Levenson and Nick Waipara, Mark Harvey, Molly Mullen, Ariane Craig-Smith and Chris McBride.

Toitū te Ngahere: Art Practices in Schools draws from the arts, education, social sciences, mātauranga Māori and the local wisdom and knowledge of schools and their communities to generate positive social action in relation to the ecological challenges of forest pathogens. By forming strategic partnerships and using a transdisciplinary approach, the project aims to give voice and agency to children in the schools to engage and empower them to contribute to Aotearoa / New Zealand’s biosecurity and biodiversity. The following article in this special edition emerged from this work:

- ‘Interweaving Multiple Knowledges to Support Children’s Participation and Engagement In Biosecurity and Forest health: Toitū te Ngahere,’ by Marie McEntee, Mark Harvey, Molly Mullen, Christina Houghton & Ariane Craig-Smith.

Reframing Biosecurity Tension through a Citizen Social Science Approach: Co-producing Biosecurity for Ngahere uses citizen social science approaches to enable

diverse users to make decisions about what forest health and biosecurity measures they would like to see that protect the health of managed forests and then undertake these actions themselves and enact these measures. The following article in this special edition emerged from this work:

- ‘What We Do in Kauri Forests: Exploring the Affective Worlds of ‘High Risk’ Users of Vulnerable Forest Areas in New Zealand,’ by Sara MacBride-Stewart, Marie McEntee, Vicki Macknight, Fabian Medvecky and Michael Martin.

Finally, *What Postcolonial Possibilities for Kauri and Myrtaceae Emerge When We Map their Shared and Relational Values?* seeks to gain a better understanding of how people, organisations and social groupings attach meaning to te taiao, ngahere and taonga, and to connect value to that meaning across different contexts. These values are represented, embodied and enacted diversely across ngahere, neighbourhoods, meeting rooms, legislation and organisational budgets, and often create contestation over the way kauri and *Myrtaceae* ecosystems are understood, as well as the tension between the different ways people relate with them, thus limiting the potential for Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based biosecurity in New Zealand. The following articles in this special edition emerged from this work:

- ‘Healing Fragmentation of Forest Biosecurity Networks: A Conceptual and Reflexive Mapping Analysis of Postcolonial Relations That Matter in Aotearoa and Wales,’ by Sara MacBride-Stewart, Liz O’Brien, Andrea Grant, Maria Ayala, Susanna Finlay-Smits, Will Allen and Alison Greenaway.
- ‘Positioning Research to Improve Tree-Biosecurity Relations,’ by Alison Greenaway, Sara MacBride-Stewart, Andrea Grant, Susanna Finlay-Smits, Maria Ayala, Will Allen, Liz O’Brien and Michael Martin.
- ‘Walking, Sensing, Knowing: An Ethnography on Foot Around Forest Biosecurity Interventions in Te-Ika-ā-Māui,’ by Maria Blanca Ayala.
- ‘Neoliberal Knowledge Production in Aotearoa New Zealand: Confronting Kauri Dieback and Myrtle Rust,’ by Katja-Soana Ehler, Courtney Addison, Andrea Grant and Susanna Finlay-Smits.

Closing remarks

This special collection of thirteen articles shows the diverse range of disciplines, knowledges and methodologies that MFA has brought to its research programme, including kaupapa Māori research and principles; participatory action research; local knowledge; traditional knowledge; Indigenous psychologies; ethnographic research; social epistemology research; environmental management; human geography; feminist scholarship; creative arts; curation; culturally responsive methodologies; education; discourse analysis; narrative and story-telling. This extensive range of knowledge production, theories, methods and approaches provide critical insights to our understanding of how people attach meaning to te

taiao, ngahere and taonga species, connect with them and can be empowered to make a difference so they flourish. Collectively, we argue that a reflexive biosecurity system in Aotearoa|New Zealand should embrace the contribution of mātauranga Māori, Western knowledge, local knowledge and indeed other knowledge systems to enable reconnections between forest and humans and a more ethical and Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led approach to forest management and research. We hope our insights and learnings will also contribute to related current and future international knowledge production and exchange.

Kia hōhonu ai te puna kupu. (Let the pool of words be deep.)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following:

- Kate McKendrey for her editorial assistance in the production of this special edition
- The School of Environment and Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries at Waipapa Taumata Rau|University of Auckland for their funding assistance
- Sean Sturm (Waipapa Taumata Rau|University of Auckland), Editor of *Knowledge Cultures*
- The researchers and collaborators in Mobilising for Action
- The research participants and communities of Mobilising for Action.

All the research in this special edition has been funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment through the Mobilising for Action theme of the Ngā Rākau Taketake programme of the Biological Heritage National Science Challenge in Aotearoa/New Zealand C09X1817). We thank the Biological Heritage National Science Challenge for their funding.



Mark Harvey, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5383-7512>

Marie McEntee, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7228-2930>

Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Note

1. MFA acknowledges that the waka hourua model had initially been introduced into kauri dieback conversations by the Tangata Whenua Roopu and specifically Matua Hori Parata, as a way of reflecting the need for an equitable partnership between mātauranga Māori and Western science, to place both Western and Māori terrains of knowledge production on an equal footing, which can inform one another and interface the energy from both two systems to create new knowledge beyond what many see as colonial positivist views of what science is (Durie, 2004).

References

- Apanui-Kupenga, F. (2021). *Mate tipu mate rākau* [Documentary film]. Toi Taiao Whakatairanga: Mobilising for Action (Auckland). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IEAs3viVyE&t=21s>
- Baars, T. (2011). Experiential science: Towards an integration of implicit and reflected practitioner-expert knowledge in the scientific development of organic farming. *Journal of Agriculture & Environmental Ethics*, 24(6), 601–628. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-010-9281-3>
- Black, A., & Dickie, I. (2016). *Independent review of the state of kauri dieback knowledge*. Bio-Protection Research Centre, Lincoln University. <https://www.kauriprotection.co.nz/assets/Research-reports/Decision-support/Independent-review-of-the-state-of-kauri-dieback-knowledge-2016.pdf>
- Bradshaw, R. E., Bellgard, S. E., Black, A., Burns, B. R., Gerth, M. L., McDougal, R. L., ... & Horner, I. J. (2020). *Phytophthora agathidicida*: Research progress, cultural perspectives and knowledge gaps in the control and management of kauri dieback in New Zealand. *Plant Pathology*, 69(1), 3–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ppa.13104>
- Durie, M. (2004). Understanding health and illness: Research at the interface between science and indigenous knowledge. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 33(5), 1138–1143. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyh250>
- Durie, M. (2011). *Navigating Māori futures: Ngā tini whetū*. Huia.
- Fazey, I., Schöpke, N., Caniglia, G., Patterson, J., Hultman, J., Van Mierlo, B., ... & Wyborn, C. (2018). Ten essentials for action-oriented and second-order energy transitions, transformations and climate change research. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 40, 54–70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2017.11.026>
- Hill, L., Ashby, E., Waipara, N., Taua-Gordon, R., Gordon, A., Hjelm, F., & Jesson, L. K. (2021). Cross-cultural leadership enables collaborative approaches to management of kauri dieback in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Forests*, 12(12), 1671. <https://dx.doi.org/10.3390/f12121671>
- Jackson, M. (2019, March 24). *The connection between white supremacy and colonisation*. E-tangata. <https://e-tangata.co.nz/comment-and-analysis/the-connection-between-white-supremacy/>
- Jones A. & K. Jenkins. (2014). Rethinking collaboration: Working the indigene-coloniser hyphen. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L. Tuhiwai Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies* (pp. 471–486). Sage.
- Kauri Rescue. (n.d.). <https://kaurirescue.nectar.auckland.ac.nz/kauridemise/>

- Lambert, S., Waipara, N., Black, A., Mark-Shadbolt, M., & Wood, W. (2018). Indigenous biosecurity: Māori responses to kauri dieback and myrtle rust in Aotearoa New Zealand. *The human dimensions of forest and tree health: Global perspectives* (pp. 109–137). Palgrave Macmillan.
- McFarlane, A., & McFarlane, S. (2019). Listen to culture: Māori scholars' plea to researchers. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, *49*, 48–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2019.1661855>
- Ministry for Primary Industries. (2016). *Biosecurity 2025: Direction statement for New Zealand's biosecurity system*. Ministry for Primary Industries|Manatū Ahu Matua. <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/14857>
- Mobilising for Action. (n.d.). *Mobilising for action*. <https://www.mobilisingforaction.nz/>
- Ngata, T. (2021). *Defence of colonial racism*. Tina Ngata. <https://tinangata.com/2021/07/25/defending-colonial-racism/>
- Orange, C. (1987). *The treaty of Waitangi*. Allen & Unwin.
- Rata, A., Hutchings, J., & Liu, J. H. (2012). The waka hourua research framework: A dynamic approach to research with urban Māori communities. *Australian Community Psychologist*, *24*(1), 64–74. [https://psychology.org.au/aps/media/acp/rata-et-al-acp-24\(1\)64-75.pdf](https://psychology.org.au/aps/media/acp/rata-et-al-acp-24(1)64-75.pdf)
- Reed, M. S. (2008). Stakeholder participation for environmental management: A literature review. *Biological Conservation*, *141*, 2417–2431. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2008.07.014>
- Shove, E. (2010). Beyond the ABC: Climate change policy and theories of social change. *Environment and Planning A*, *42*(6), 1273–1285. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a42282>
- Toi Taiao Whakatairanga. (2021, October 27). *Mate tipu, mate rākau*. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IEAs3viVyE>
- Toome-Heller, M., Ho, W. W. H., Ganley, R. J., Elliott, C. E. A., Quinn, B., Pearson, H. G., & Alexander, B. J. R. (2020). Chasing myrtle rust in New Zealand: Host range and distribution over the first year after invasion. *Australasian Plant Pathology*, *49*, 221–230. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13313-020-00694-9>
- Walker, R. (2004). *Struggle without end*. Penguin.