

06. Pou Tuaono – Tūāpapa Cultural Awareness

A foundation for practice in supplier diversity.

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This article is six of six in
our Tere ki Tai impact series



A foundation for practice in supplier diversity

Supplier diversity is about more than just acknowledging a range of suppliers; it involves recognising and respecting the diverse cultures, values, and principles they represent. In Aotearoa New Zealand, cultural awareness is crucial, particularly in understanding the cultural nuances of Māori and Pasifika communities. This awareness is underpinned by building strong relationships with mana whenua and honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Let's explore the importance of cultural awareness and how it can be effectively integrated into supplier diversity practices.

① The importance of cultural awareness

Cultural awareness is essential for successful supplier diversity efforts in Aotearoa. It means aligning your organisation's values and policies with the rich perspectives of te ao Māori.

A practical approach involves prioritising cultural competency and safety within your organisation. This can be achieved by offering comprehensive training to ensure that everyone understands and respects te ao Māori. Such training should be part of the onboarding process for new employees, laying a strong foundation for cultural understanding and appreciation.

Participation in Māori and Pasifika community events is another key aspect. Engaging with these communities, learning their traditions, and understanding their customs goes beyond mere attendance—it fosters genuine connections.

“Māori businesses do not want to engage in contracts with organisations that do not have shared values”

(Malcolm, et al., 2023)

Cultural awareness isn't about tokenism, it involves initiatives that elevate cultural voices and address systemic challenges. Recognising and addressing barriers that prevent the full inclusion and participation of Māori communities in the business world is crucial.



② Building relationships with mana whenua

Establishing and nurturing relationships with mana whenua is vital for sustainable supplier diversity. Understanding who mana whenua are in your region and their role in decision-making processes related to their land and the treaty is essential.

Engaging with mana whenua means involving them in decision-making processes and collaborating on projects. This ensures their voices and perspectives are valued and integrated into your strategic planning. Building these partnerships demonstrates a genuine commitment to respecting mana whenua authority and knowledge.

“Effective engagement with Māori is key to producing better quality outcomes and realising Māori Crown partnerships”

(Te Arawhiti, 2018)

③ Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is fundamental to cultural awareness in Aotearoa, especially concerning supplier diversity. It's not just about knowing the treaty but actively honouring and embedding its principles into your organisation's strategies, policies, and practices.

For a foundational explanation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its relevance to DEI in employment outcomes, the Good Employer Matrix has an easy to understand resource [here](#).

“Government agencies need to acknowledge Māori rangatiratanga as Treaty partners, Mātauranga Māori, the resources, and capability that Māori have and that Māori are best placed to create their solutions”

(Te Arawhiti, 2018)



This commitment signifies dedication to upholding the principles outlined in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. By integrating these principles into your operations, you can build trust and develop meaningful relationships with Māori communities, fostering a more inclusive and equitable business environment.

In conclusion

Supplier diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand goes beyond recognising diversity. It requires a deep understanding and integration of Māori and Pasifika cultures, values, and principles into your organisational practices. Cultural awareness, strong relationships with Mana Whenua, and honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi are essential for effective supplier diversity. By genuinely committing to these practices, organisations can create a more inclusive and diverse business environment.



References

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Te Arawhiti, 2018. Guidelines for Engagement with Māori, Wellington: Te Arawhiti.

Tere ki Tai

Tere ki Tai Buyer Maturity Matrix is a powerful framework designed to inspire and guide organisations towards becoming global leaders in supplier diversity.

Tere ki Tai sets a benchmark for supplier diversity maturity in Aotearoa. It provides a way to measure how well organisations have progressed and improved across supplier diversity indicators.

This article references one of the six **Ngā pou o Tere ki Tai | The Pillars of Tere ki Tai: Tuāpapa | Cultural Awareness.**



Start your Tere ki Tai journey by contacting your Supplier Diversity Lead or our Capability Manager, **Paul Tukukino**