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**Peer-Reviewed Article**

## How Can Managers in Libraries Support their Teams to Engage with Mātauranga Māori (Māori Knowledge)?

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### ABSTRACT

The library and information profession in Aotearoa New Zealand has long prided itself on its proactive approach to issues of diversity and inclusion as they relate to its Indigenous Māori population. Up to this point, however, the processes that non-Māori librarians undergo to bridge the gaps in their knowledge in relation to this had not been investigated. This paper reports on findings from a larger study which investigated how non-Māori librarians in Aotearoa New Zealand learn about and engage with mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge), and highlights key findings of relevance to leaders and managers: the roles of te reo Māori (the Māori language) and LIANZA Professional Registration in non-Māori engagement; the need for non-Māori librarians to work through fear and discomfort and ensuring that Māori librarians are not overworked because of it; and encouraging initiative, humility and ongoing commitment to development in this area among library teams.

### KEYWORDS

Librarians, Professional Learning and Development, Māori, Indigenous, Management

### SUGGESTED CITATION

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## Introduction

In 2020 the author completed her PhD at Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington, the focus of the research was how non-Māori librarians in Aotearoa New Zealand learn about and engage with Māori knowledge (Oxborrow, 2020). This paper will discuss some of the findings of the research, and specifically those of relevance to managers and leaders. The author is a non-Māori immigrant to Aotearoa New Zealand from the United Kingdom with English and Scottish ancestry and has lived there since 2010. As a person who has always been interested in learning about and engaging with different cultures, when she moved to Aotearoa New Zealand, she was surprised to find that not all of her non-Māori colleagues were as keen to learn about and engage with Māori knowledge as she was. This was the beginning of a question which became her PhD research. Since moving to Aotearoa, the author has had the honour of learning about and engaging with Māori knowledge through various communities she has been a part of, both professional and personal. She has also undertaken studies in the Māori language, of which she has basic conversational fluency. The author now works in a Māori-led tertiary institution.

The paper begins with a brief discussion of the cultural context in Aotearoa New Zealand, broadly at first and then in the library and information profession specifically. Some aspects of library and information practice that are specifically related to Indigenous knowledge will then be briefly discussed. The paper will then touch on the research process and the methods employed in the study, followed by some of the key findings and their relevance for managers and leaders. While this study has a local focus on Aotearoa New Zealand, readers from other nations who are interested in librarian professional development in regard to Indigenous and other minoritized populations are also likely to find something of interest here.

Mātauranga Māori is a multifaceted concept, but it has been defined by Mason Durie as "...Māori knowledge complete with its values and attitudes." (2012, p. 9), and this was the definition that was used in this research. Due to the subject matter of this paper, it is necessary to use other words and phrases in te reo Māori (the Māori language, Te Huia, 2016) throughout. Translations will be given in brackets for the first use of a word or phrase only. All translations of words and phrases in te reo Māori are taken from Te Aka Māori Dictionary online (<https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>) unless otherwise stated.

## Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand is a small island nation in the Pacific Ocean with a population of just under five million (Stats NZ | Tatauranga Aotearoa, 2024). Māori migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand from islands in the Pacific prior to 1300 CE, and European settlers began to arrive from early in the nineteenth century (Royal, 2005). In 1840, over 500 Māori chiefs and representatives of the British Crown signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi which is the founding document of modern New Zealand, a document designed to give a structure to the relationship between the Indigenous population and the settlers (Orange, 2012). It did not take long for the colonial powers to begin breaching Te Tiriti o

Waitangi, with Māori losing ownership of the majority of their land (Orange, 2012) and attempts being made by subsequent governments to disconnect Māori from their language and culture (e.g. Hill, 2012; Jones, 2007; Selby, 1999).

These acts have had devastating effects for Māori, for while Māori made up 17.8 percent of the New Zealand population in the 2023 Census (Stats NZ | Tatauranga Aotearoa, 2024), they are over-represented in negative social indicators such as incarceration (53% of the prison population as at June 2024, Department of Corrections | Ara Poutama Aotearoa, 2024), death rates (Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand, 2024), and obesity (Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora, 2023). While ongoing language revitalization efforts over several decades have included full-immersion Māori education up to tertiary level (Calman, 2012) and have led to an increasing use of te reo Māori in public life, such as on broadcast media and in New Zealand Government communications, the language is still facing threats. The 2023 Coalition Government has halted bonus payments for public servants who are fluent in te reo Māori (see, for example, Pennington, 2023), and begun requiring all Government departments except those with a primarily Māori focus to be referred to by their English name first – some departments had previously been referred to by a Māori name, such as Te Whatu Ora referenced above – (Wade, 2023). Recent projections suggest that the language is not yet out of danger (Barrett-Walker *et al*, 2020) and thus such development is of concern to language advocates.

The largest ethnic group in Aotearoa New Zealand is New Zealand European (which is a term used in New Zealand as a synonym for White, Allan, 2001) at 67.8% of the population in the most recent data (Stats NZ | Tatauranga Aotearoa, 2024). Pākehā is a widely used Māori term for New Zealander of European descent. There are a variety of definitions of Pākehā that exist within the public discourse, with both positive and negative connotations, and both including or excluding non-Māori who are not of European descent. Due to the contested nature of the term, the author chooses to use the phrase non-Māori. The word Pākehā is used occasionally where it reflects the terminology used by participants or cited authors.

### **The library and information profession in Aotearoa New Zealand**

The library and information profession was one of the first professions in Aotearoa New Zealand to begin actively embracing Māori culture and knowledge. A review of education for librarianship at Victoria University of Wellington in 1988 failed to mention Māori culture and knowledge and this triggered change within the profession, beginning with a group of Māori and non-Māori library school students (Te Ropu Takawaenga, 1988). This led to a series of actions by the main professional association for librarians in Aotearoa New Zealand, the New Zealand Library and Information Association (now the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa, LIANZA) including formally recognizing Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi (Szekely and Barnett, 2007), and commissioning several reports including a series called Te Ara Tika – the right path, definition from Szekely, 2002 – (MacDonald, 1993; Simpson, 2005; Szekely, 1997). Te Rōpū Whakahau, the professional association for Māori in libraries and information management

was set up in 1992 initially as a Special Interest Group of LIANZA, and then as an independent organization (Lilley, 2013). It has been instrumental in advocacy work on behalf of Indigenous librarians and library users internationally, including hosting the first International Indigenous Librarians Forum in 1999 (Lilley, 2013).

### ***LIANZA Professional Registration and Body of Knowledge 11***

One way that library and information professionals in Aotearoa New Zealand have been encouraged to engage with Māori knowledge is through Professional Registration. Professional Registration was introduced by LIANZA in 2007 (Millen, 2010). Following on from the initial application, registrants retain their professionally registered status by participating in a three-yearly revalidation cycle (LIANZA, n.d.a.). This requires registrants to prove that they have undertaken professional development relating to the profession's Bodies of Knowledge (BoK). The Bodies of Knowledge include BoK11: *Awareness of Indigenous Knowledge Paradigms* (LIANZA, n.d.b). BoK11 is mandatory for revalidation, meaning that all registrants must demonstrate they have undertaken some form of development in this area every three years. The key elements of BoK11 are (LIANZA, n.d.b, para. 1):

- Understanding the importance, diversity or structure of Māori knowledge (mātauranga Māori)
- Understanding ... that Māori processes, philosophies and language (kaupapa, tikanga and te reo Māori) are intrinsic in Māori knowledge frameworks
- Understanding the importance of Māori research methodologies when assisting clients with their information needs

Suggested activities include attending specialized workshops, reading articles about aspects of Māori knowledge frameworks, and taking part in a traditional welcoming ceremony (LIANZA, n.d.b). The Bodies of Knowledge have in recent years been included in a new workforce development tool called Te Tōtara which was created by a working group led by Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa | National Library of New Zealand (2022).

At the time of its inception, the Professional Registration scheme was intended to become an industry standard, something that would be a requirement for professional library roles in Aotearoa New Zealand (Lulich, 2007), but unfortunately this has not eventuated. From a registration roll of 1400 members in 2010, the number of professionally registered librarians in Aotearoa New Zealand has trended downwards and stood at 323 at July 2024 (LIANZA, 2024a). This is consistent with decreasing LIANZA membership in recent years. LIANZA had 952 personal members (both registered and unregistered) in 2021 (LIANZA, 2021), declining to 826 by 2024 (LIANZA, 2024). This is a relatively small proportion of the 5730 people who reported their occupation as either librarian, library assistant or library technician in the 2023 New Zealand Census (Stats NZ | Tatauranga Aotearoa, n.d.).

Thus, while the Professional Registration scheme is no doubt of individual benefit to registrants, it has not achieved the coverage that would make it a highly influential factor

within the profession. It is now rare to see a professional library role advertised with Professional Registration as a requirement. In 2023, two of 99 job advertisements (including duplicate reminder emails) posted through the [NZ-Libs-Jobs](#) list email distribution service (one of the main channels for advertising library vacancies in Aotearoa New Zealand) mentioned Professional Registration as a requirement for a role in the text of the email advertisement. This represented one employer, and they were prepared to make allowances for those who did not hold Professional Registration but were prepared to work towards it.

### **Indigenous Knowledge and Libraries**

There are various aspects of library and information work that require an understanding of local Indigenous language and cultural knowledge. Oxborrow, Goulding, and Lilley (2017) analysed a series of documents guiding practice in libraries and related fields in connection with Indigenous peoples and their knowledge. The key themes they found included:

- Dealing with library materials which portray Indigenous people and cultures in ways that are inaccurate and/or stereotypical;
- Classification and cataloguing of Indigenous materials, especially where standard terms are inaccurate or offensive;
- Who should have access to particular materials. Some knowledge is only intended for specific individuals or communities and making it publicly available is inappropriate;
- Return, digital return and digitisation. In some cases it is appropriate for cultural institutions to return materials that have been misappropriated from Indigenous communities. In other cases returning a digital copy is acceptable;
- Ownership, Intellectual Property and copyright. Indigenous knowledge is often collectively owned, which can cause complications when it comes up against Western notions of ownership, copyright, and Intellectual Property.

Other considerations covered include involving Indigenous stakeholders, recruiting more Indigenous library staff, providing an environment that is welcoming for Indigenous clients, and upskilling library staff through professional learning and development.

### **The Research**

The main research question for this project was 'how are non-Māori librarians in Aotearoa New Zealand making sense of mātauranga Māori?'. The author conducted interviews with twenty-five non-Māori librarians from various locations across Aotearoa New Zealand, from a variety of sub-sectors with different levels of experience. The majority of interviewees identified as New Zealand European. Each interviewee was asked to tell their stories of learning or engagement with Māori knowledge. The types of instances that interviewees discussed varied from language and cultural training programs to relationships with particular Māori colleagues or workplaces, to learning about Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The

Treaty of Waitangi to name just a few. Those who had experience with LIANZA Professional Registration were also asked about their views on its role in their journeys.

In addition to interviews with non-Māori librarians the author also undertook focus groups with Māori librarians. The focus groups had a different emphasis; focus group participants discussed their experiences with their non-Māori colleagues in relation to engagement with Māori people, culture and knowledge. These discussions proved to be an interesting counterpoint to the interviews and some of the most interesting findings came from the contrasting perspectives of interviewees and focus group participants. Most interviewees had enthusiastically engaged with Māori knowledge and culture in some way and thus had plenty to say about it, but the comments of Māori librarians covered a broader spectrum of engagement and non-engagement by non-Māori colleagues and thus led to a fuller picture of the state of the profession in relation to this issue.

### **Findings and applications for leaders and managers**

This research did not have a specific focus on those in leadership and management positions. However, since it was a strongly practice-focussed study, it offers real-world applications for those who wish to encourage their team members to engage with Māori knowledge. The key findings that will be highlighted in this paper are as follows:

- Te reo Māori;
- Fear, discomfort and the ethical issue of opting out;
- LIANZA Professional Registration;
- Initiative and ongoing commitment;
- Humility.

### **Te reo Māori**

Te reo Māori was discussed by both interviewees and focus group participants as a key mode of engaging with Māori cultural knowledge more widely. This often began with a purely academic interest but led to a depth of learning and understanding that was unexpected.

Interviewee 8: I think learning a language has been the best thing for learning about mātauranga Māori because you learn about protocol and you learn, like through learning proverbs and whakataukī<sup>1</sup> and things like that, you start to learn about a culture.

This is consistent with other authors who discuss the connection between language and culture (e.g. Royal-Tangaere, 1997; Zuckermann, 2014). If staff or managers want to increase their competency in engaging with Māori people and knowledge, then te reo Māori is a great place to start. Librarians often have easy access to learning resources through their

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<sup>1</sup> proverb, significant saying

own collections – the depth and breadth of print and online resources available to learners of te reo Māori is extensive in comparison with a lot of other Indigenous languages – and some organizations run internal language learning programs for their staff. All New Zealand citizens and permanent residents have access to free language courses run through organizations such as Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, a Māori-led tertiary education provider. Managers can think of ways to encourage their team members to engage, such as enabling them to attend courses during work hours as professional development. Another way to encourage engagement discussed by focus group participants is incorporating more te reo Māori into daily team rhythms in ways that are both accessible and meaningful such as karakia (to recite ritual chants, say grace, pray, recite a prayer, chant) and waiata (song). Posters or booklets with commonly used karakia and waiata were methods highlighted by participants that could be used to help staff to be ready to participate on such occasions.

Managers should acknowledge the challenges facing their team members when it comes to learning te reo Māori: some who have grown up with or spent a lot of time in mainstream New Zealand culture will have learned incorrect ways of pronouncing Māori words through place names and other commonly used words. Language learning can be a greater struggle for some people than for others, and many have demands on their time that would make learning outside of work very challenging. Focus group participants mentioned that some organizations expected employees to engage but the support in terms of time and resources for them to do so was lacking. While the time commitment required to develop a level of fluency is likely to also require an individual's personal time, creating space in work hours for staff to learn and practice could make a big difference in encouraging them to make a start.

### **Fear, discomfort and the ethical issue of opting out**

Interviewee 12: One of the first kind of panic things that can happen as a non-Māori person and you see a Māori person turn up and they're like 'I want some information about a Māori issue' You're like 'Ooh, can I find someone who's Māori to answer that question? I don't feel qualified! Ah!'

A barrier to engagement with Māori knowledge mentioned by several interviewees was fear and other associated negative emotions such as guilt, discomfort or embarrassment. These emotions had either held them back from engaging in the past or had potential to do so in the future. This is a very real issue and was discussed in the focus groups as well. If this can be addressed or mitigated in some way it could go a long way to encourage non-Māori to engage more with Māori knowledge. When asked about what helped interviewees in the situations where they had a knowledge gap, it was often other people who offered support, advice and information that enabled interviewees to move forward. The way this worked appeared to be quite specific to the individual – some interviewees spoke of being corrected by colleagues on things like pronunciation as something that really helped them to keep improving:

Interviewee 2: Having someone actually have the courage to keep correcting me [laugh], in a kind way but being firm with me all the time and not letting it slide because they were too embarrassed not to say anything has been really good.

But others found it really difficult to be corrected and felt it was a big effort to keep engaging after that happened:

Interviewee 19: I feel that as a Pākehā woman, a lot of this knowledge, I've felt intimidated in the past when I've gone to people and when I was at [employer] and I went and asked a woman something or other and she corrected me, and when I was at the market talking to the woman about her weaving and she kept correcting my pronunciation and so on, and I found that really humiliating and then very difficult to then keep going and engage with them.

A problem that can make this issue difficult to talk about is its connection to white privilege and white fragility. White fragility is a phenomenon where white people have an extremely low tolerance for any sort of challenging situation involving race (DiAngelo, 2018). Non-Māori, and particularly those who would describe themselves as White or European, may wish to avoid a situation where they are corrected (or otherwise revealed to be less competent) while attempting to engage with Māori knowledge. They can instead exercise their privilege to choose to opt out of that situation. This leads to the phenomenon of overreliance and helplessness, which was described by focus group participants. Some of their non-Māori colleagues had been unwilling to answer even basic Reference queries on Māori topics or might refer a Māori client on to a Māori colleague even if their query was not related to a Māori topic. A similar expectation can be put on Māori librarians by their organizations, with requests to support everything involving Māori knowledge such as pōwhiri (welcome ceremony on a marae), mihi whakatau (speech of greeting, official welcome speech - speech acknowledging those present at a gathering), karakia, consultation with iwi (tribes) or other community involvement, support for te reo Māori or providing training for non-Māori staff. Focus group participant 1 expressed the attitude she encountered as “ah, you're the Māori, so you can look after anything Māori”. Māori librarians are not always employed in roles with an explicit cultural element. While the Māori librarians in the focus groups said they were often happy to provide this support, the expectation to do so on top of their substantive roles could lead to stress and burnout.

This experience is not unique to Māori librarians and has been discussed elsewhere in the literature in relation to other professions. Mercier, Asmar and Page (2011) describe similar challenges experienced by Māori academics in university contexts. In a study of Māori scientists, Haar and Martin (2022) described what they called the cultural double-shift, which was the additional cultural workload experienced by participants, particularly in the area of stakeholder engagement, which could be an intensive and ongoing process. Other authors have referred to this phenomenon as cultural load (e.g. Tipene-Leach, Simmonds, Haggie, et al., 2024; Sivertsen, Ryder, & Johnson, 2023) or colonial load (Andrews, 2024). Sivertsen et al. (2023) describe cultural load as “...the invisible workload employers knowingly or unknowingly on [Indigenous] employees to provide Indigenous knowledge,

education and support. This is often done without any formally agreed reduction or alteration to their workload” (para. 2). These studies demonstrate that overreliance on Māori by non-Māori colleagues and employers is a systemic issue that needs to be addressed.

Librarians have an ethical duty towards one another as well as the clients they serve. This is unfortunately not currently acknowledged in the LIANZA code of professional conduct (2019), but it is recognized internationally in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions code of ethics (2012). Behavior that leads to one group of librarians becoming burnt out and stressed on account of another group opting out of engaging because of fear is unethical. Thus, managers and leaders have the challenging task of encouraging their team members to push through their fear whilst also making it clear that opting out has negative consequences on others and is unacceptable.

### **LIANZA Professional Registration**

This research revealed that, for the vast majority of interviewees and also in the view of focus group participants, LIANZA Professional Registration and its mandatory element BoK11 had not been a major change-agent as relates to non-Māori engagement with mātauranga Māori in the library and information profession in Aotearoa New Zealand. Most professionally registered interviewees did not see Professional Registration as playing a major role in their decisions to engage, with many saying that they would have done the things they had done regardless:

Interviewee 24: I think the reason I’m registered ... is because I think it’s important to show a commitment to your own professional development. I’m pleased that Body of Knowledge [11] is there, but it wouldn’t be the reason that, if it hadn’t been there, I still would have become registered.

For most, the impact of Professional Registration was limited to making them more systematic in their approach to engagement (by keeping a revalidation journal ensuring they had completed the requisite professional development every three years), or through extra training opportunities that were made available as a result of the introduction of the scheme. Focus group participants expressed concerns about a box-ticking mentality where non-Māori colleagues undertook training to meet the requirements of BoK11 but did not genuinely engage. Interviewees and focus group participants agreed that BoK11 was a good thing, however. They were happy it was included in the Bodies of Knowledge, and one interviewee described how it had led to a transformative experience for them. But since Professional Registration has never attained its goal of becoming an industry standard for librarianship, and numbers of registered librarians in Aotearoa New Zealand appear to be falling year-on-year, it would be unwise for managers to view BoK11 as the primary tool for encouraging their staff to engage.

### **Initiative**

Interviewees and focus group participants spoke about non-Māori colleagues who were waiting to be directed by others in their journeys of learning and engagement. They were waiting for a course to be run or to be told what to do, but often what is required is for

individuals to be proactive, to act on their own initiative. Encouraging team members to take responsibility for their own learning and engagement whilst also creating a culture where Māori knowledge is respected and valued will help employees to carry their learning forward if in the future, they move on to an organization which is less engaged in this area. Interviewees and focus group participants spoke about how some people can really resent having to undertake mandatory training, so creating an environment where team members are encouraged to engage and encouraged to take responsibility for how they do so, could be a really powerful approach.

### **Ongoing commitment**

Despite the growing visibility of Māori culture and knowledge, it is still possible to operate and succeed as a professional librarian in Aotearoa New Zealand whilst actively avoiding any need to develop one's understanding of Māori knowledge and culture. One thing this emphasizes is the need for ongoing commitment from non-Māori individuals to developing their knowledge and engagement. One challenge that was mentioned by participants in this study was that there was not always that ongoing commitment, and engagement could be on-and-off. Focus group participants pointed out that non-Māori could opt in and out of engagement with Māori culture depending on their priorities: "It's really motivated individually ... it's an option, optional, 'I'll choose to be bicultural today, tomorrow I might not be', whereas we're always in sights of it" (Focus group participant 2). Another point that they raised was that initiatives could be spearheaded by one non-Māori person who was really passionate and committed, but if they moved on to something else this commitment was not always held by the next person in the role, and thus momentum could be lost. Some interviewees spoke about either themselves or other non-Māori feeling as if they had 'done their bit', some having encountered opposition or the correction that was discussed earlier and not having energy or motivation to continue with the same intensity. Anything that managers can do to support their team members to continue engaging could make a big difference: two key roles for managers are leading by example and creating a culture of ongoing engagement.

### ***Leading by example and creating a culture of ongoing engagement***

The first key role for managers and leaders is to set a positive example for others to follow by embarking on your own journey of learning and engagement and displaying ongoing commitment to this. Being willing to share your own learning journey with your team and being authentic is likely to encourage others to undertake their own journey:

Focus group participant 3: but also, I think leadership, so I think that 'cause your, [Focus group participant 4's workplace] leadership team in the library are learning up here and then it will disseminate out.

Focus group participant 4: Yeah, that's the plan, that's the plan, yeah.

Focus group participant 3: I think it's really important because, not that everyone's following the managers or the senior management team but because they influence what happens underneath them, slowly and surely you will get actually a bit more.

This will naturally flow on to the second role, commitment to creating a team and/or organizational culture that values and celebrates Māori people, culture, and knowledge. Interviewee 16 spoke about this as being something that was helpful for them: “I think just knowing that it was a supportive work environment, that they did nurture the curiosity in staff members to find out more.” This has the potential to be effective not just for those staff who are already interested and engaging. Even those who are initially unwilling to take those steps towards increased understanding may find themselves encouraged to do so if such behavior is normalized within the team and eventually the organization. Such an approach may also mitigate some of the fear encountered by non-Māori at the prospect of engagement with Māori knowledge, and could lead to more non-Māori having positive, and even transformational experiences, which hopefully may lead to a desire to continue to engage further. One focus group spoke about the frustration of short-term initiatives that were treated as tick-box exercises that didn’t lead to long-term change in individual librarians or the organization as a whole. The key to ongoing change is that it needs to be sustainable.

### **Humility**

Both interviewees and focus group participants in this study discussed the role of humility and understanding the place of non-Māori librarians in relation to mātauranga Māori. For interviewees, one outcome of engagement with mātauranga Māori was that they had an increased knowledge of the problems that could occur due to lack of awareness or understanding. Focus group participants spoke more directly about the connection between humility and non-Māori (particularly those belonging to the mainstream culture) being able to recognize their privileged position:

Focus group participant 5: And some of the best examples I’ve seen of non-Māori expressing Māori, being experts in the Māori, what am I talking about?

Focus group participant 6: realm [laugh]

Focus group participant 5: ... They always step away and start completely by acknowledging their own privilege and recognizing that they’re coming from that platform, and that they don’t have any, well it’s starting with that ‘I am not Māori’, so that’s part of that humility and making sure that they realize that their knowledge base is very different.

Focus group participant 6 also pointed out that enthusiasm is important, but non-Māori also need to have humility and respect. Focus group participants also spoke about ways that non-Māori could engage with mātauranga Māori in culturally insensitive ways, such as cultural appropriation. So having the humility to acknowledge that there is a risk of these things happening, but being willing to persevere and seek to operate well in this space was seen by participants as being very important.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has discussed some of the challenges and opportunities for non-Māori librarians in Aotearoa New Zealand who seek to engage with Māori knowledge. Leaders and

managers can take an active role in encouraging their teams by working on their own development in this area and sharing the journey with their teams. They can also take steps to create a team culture that fosters engagement and creates space for librarians at different stages of their journeys. For any non-Māori librarian wishing to learn more about Māori culture, taking steps to learn some te reo Māori, the Māori language can act as a gateway to understanding the culture more broadly. While professional development schemes such as LIANZA Professional Registration can play a role in individual non-Māori learning and development around Māori knowledge, they should not be relied upon as the sole means of engagement. Managers who encourage their non-Māori team members to push through their fear and to take initiative by creating a team culture of ongoing engagement are more likely to see meaningful engagement from their teams.

While this study refers to the cultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand, there are also actions that can be taken by librarians in relation to the knowledges and cultures of other Indigenous and minoritized groups. The emphasis on te reo Māori in this study would not have the same applicability and impact in contexts where multiple Indigenous populations have very different languages and cultures from each other. In such contexts, support for Indigenous languages may take different forms than learning the languages themselves, though all Indigenous languages need support from their mainstream populations if they are to survive (e.g. Stephens, 2014). Examples of how libraries can support revitalization of Indigenous languages can be found in Roy (2013).

Ongoing commitment, initiative and humility are perhaps the recommendations which are most transferable to other contexts. These qualities are listed in the literature on being an effective ally (e.g. Land, 2015; Margaret, 2010), suggesting applicability for anyone wishing to be a supporter of a minoritized population. The ability to discern when to act on one's own initiative and when to seek support from Māori colleagues is something that is not always obvious and will likely be learned through trial and error. It requires humility for individuals to recognize that they will make mistakes and will not always know what to do. Because there are professional and societal elements which are actively antagonistic towards the Māori world and those who seek to engage with mātauranga Māori, those who would hope to do so need to develop perseverance, recognizing that this is a struggle that Māori and other minoritized groups do not have the option of opting out of, and thus choosing to keep going alongside them, committed to working as allies.

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