

Tohu Pin Transcription

There is a lot of work being done in Kohanga Reo and through Kura Kaupapa Māori and language schools. But the language can't be sustained without New Zealanders engaging with it. We all have to play our part in learning and sustaining the language, it can't just be left to Māori, because there just aren't enough of us.

Air New Zealand is working with the Māori Language Commission to promote and encourage Te Reo Māori. Staff members who have been identified as Māori language speakers will be taken through an examination process and once they've I guess been certified as a Māori language speaker, they're honoured with this Tohu.

The Tohu represents competence in Te Reo Māori, so if you see somebody wearing it, then you know that you can have a conversation with that person in Te Reo Māori.

Obviously creating a symbol requires us to move into the world of the arts and the people at the New Zealand Māori Arts and Crafts Institute are the experts. We were really lucky to be able to connect with the Master Carver – Clive Fugill. Between Designworks and Clive they came up with a really relevant symbol in the Waha (in the mouth) as the Communicator for the Māori language.

So the first stage of the design process complete, we've got the final form and shape that we need for it. But now we will be taking it back down to Rotorua to work with Stacy Gordine, who is the bone and stone carver down at the Maori Arts and Craft Institute and he'll be applying the finer detail and finesse to the design.

The reference I suppose about the Waha comes from the ability to speak. The ability to communicate.

That place where we express our thoughts, our emotion, our history. And that's a part of our culture, part of our Manaakitanga, a part of our hospitality.

Te Reo Māori is a taonga that needs acknowledgement. It needs acceptance, it needs all those things.

It's a language that can unlock a whole lot of things about this country, not only for the people that live here but also for the visitors that come here from other countries.

I've flown in a few aircrafts recently and the vocabulary is increasing and you hear staff members saying "Nau mai, haere mai, ke Tahuna" (Welcome to Queenstown). Where even two years ago you wouldn't hear that.

There is the interest there to make sure that, you know, Te Reo Māori, becomes a language for everyone.

We're an international link for our customers to New Zealand as a destination. They begin their journey to Aotearoa once they step on board our aircraft. And so it's a great place for us to showcase and showcase our pride in the culture and the language.

We're going to be really proud when our people do wear these Tohu on board and people can see actually there are Māori language speakers on the national airline for which will just add value to us as a destination and add value to us as a nation going forward.

The language is a key part of that, acknowledgement of Māori values like Kaitiakitanga and Manaakitanga, just simple things but they add a richness and depth to the experience that people have coming here to embrace those things for us is good for business.