



Inquiry into how we can better tap into the talent of “mozzies” (Māori young people living in Australia)

Recommendation

The Māori Affairs Committee makes the following recommendations to the Government:

- that it support effort by iwi to develop stronger links with “mozzies”
- that it take innovative steps to strengthen Māori culture in Australia
- that it focus on encouraging rangatahi to remain in New Zealand, for example by providing bonded scholarships
- that more research be done into why Māori stay in Australia, their iwi affiliations, and other important data
- that it consider Ngati Rānana in London as a potential model for promoting te reo and tikanga in Australia
- that it establish an Australian Māori seat
- that it support the Māori Television Service to broadcast in Australia
- that it support a hui for “mozzies” to discuss the issues raised in this report.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarise our consideration of how New Zealand can tap into the talent of “mozzies” (Māori young people living in Australia). In the last two decades, the number of Māori in Australia has risen markedly, with as many as one in six Māori now living there. It is estimated that by 2020, much of the Māori population will never have lived in their tribal rohe or even New Zealand, and it is important that the increasingly diasporic nature of Māori society, and specifically its “Australian future”, be recognised. “Mozzies”, and all overseas-based New Zealand citizens, present a potential

development opportunity for New Zealand, and finding ways to encourage them to return to, invest in, and maintain cultural connections with, New Zealand should be explored.

Migration to Australia

Australia is by far the most popular destination for emigrating New Zealanders, with over 77 percent of New Zealand's expatriate population living there. We were told that Māori emigration to Australia is better described as a "same drain" than a "brain drain" – consisting mainly of blue collar workers, who are attracted by Australia's strong economy and high wages. In fact, the "best and brightest" young Māori are more likely to stay in New Zealand, where there is a high demand for people skilled in te reo and tikanga Māori.

Why Māori move to Australia

There is not one overriding factor that motivates Māori to move to Australia. Some of the reasons most commonly cited by Māori and non-Māori alike are the reciprocal work entitlement, higher wages, the ease of travel between the two countries, and family reunification.

We heard that many Māori feel freer in Australia, as they do not experience the pressure of whānau expectations or social discrimination that exist in New Zealand. We were also told that for many Māori, the desire to leave communities which are increasingly dominated by gangs is a motive. However, Australia is not wholly free of these problems, and more research could be done to explore why Māori decide to stay there, what their iwi affiliations are, and other useful data.

Immigration to New Zealand

We are aware that 64 percent of Māori go directly into the workforce after leaving school, and were concerned that immigration to New Zealand might be reducing employment options for young Māori, and encouraging them to move to Australia. However, we are also aware that living in Australia allows New Zealanders to participate in a far broader labour market, where young Māori can access opportunities that ultimately serve to reduce unemployment in New Zealand.

This issue emphasises the many facets of migration, where both "push" and "pull" factors must be considered. We think that the question of "mozzies" must therefore be considered in light of the bigger picture of New Zealand's position in the global community, which guides New Zealand policy-making as a whole.

Cultural support for Māori in Australia

While ultimately having "mozzies" return to New Zealand would be ideal, trying to force them to do so is unrealistic. We were pleased to hear that a 2006 survey showed that 58.2 percent of Māori believe they would "definitely" or "probably" return to New Zealand some day. Priority should therefore be given to maintaining ties with "mozzies," to ensure that those who want to return home feel supported in doing so, and those who do not, maintain a connection with New Zealand and their iwi.

It is clear that while moving to Australia often results in material gain for Māori, it also results in a "cultural deficit". We heard that many Māori in Australia thirst for their culture, and would embrace ways to strengthen ties with their rohe, and to build a more united Māori community in Australia. We think that Māori cultural strength in New Zealand and Māori earning power in Australia can form the basis of a mutually beneficial relationship, and that by providing cultural support, which cannot be readily accessed in Australia, we

could tap into the talents of “mozzies”. For example, encouraging “mozzies” to recognise their strong ties to New Zealand could motivate them to become cultural ambassadors for Māori in Australia, provide financial investment to their iwi, or use their knowledge to support Māori businesses in entering the Australian market.

Marae

Building marae in Australia would be a way of enabling “mozzies” to gather and engage directly with their culture. This would ensure that Māori culture, and therefore New Zealand, remained an important part of their life and identity, and would encourage them to decide to “give back” to New Zealand, potentially economically. However, we were concerned that having marae in Australia would allow “mozzies” to distance themselves further from New Zealand, as they would no longer have to look homeward for cultural support.

We note that other countries, for example France, provide support to promote their language and culture in foreign countries. We recommend that research be done to explore such a programme for Māori in Australia, not necessarily at marae, but in cultural centres.

New forms of cultural expression

Some of us expressed concern that if Māori culture began to develop independently in Australia, it would eventually become distinct from New Zealand Māori culture. We heard that a pan-tribal and kaupapa-based system of representation and governance, as distinct from a whakapapa-based system, has already begun to develop. Others of us felt that, in the era of globalisation, demographically, and increasingly, culturally, socially, and economically, Māori society has as an “Australian future”; so attempting to arrest “mozzie” cultural development was unviable. It would be more beneficial to focus on building connections that encourage people to recognise the role of New Zealand in their identity, in the hope that they too will want to maintain the tie.

Iwi and Government responsibility

We note that in other countries, such as Ireland, diplomats play an active role in seeking the return of and investment from their diaspora, and are specifically required to cultivate and maintain ties with expatriates. Increasing New Zealand embassies’ involvement with expatriates, including “mozzies”, could help strengthen cultural ties to New Zealand. We believe the Government should take modest, innovative, steps, such as supporting kapa haka festivals and other cultural events (including sports events) in Australia, as this would contribute greatly to this aim.

However, we believe that deciding how to develop links between “mozzies” and New Zealand Māori should be the responsibility of iwi, who could be financially supported by the Government in this endeavour. Many New Zealand Māori no longer live in their traditional iwi areas, but maintain a strong link with their communities nevertheless. The methods iwi have used to develop such links could be applied across the Tasman, and iwi are likely to be best placed to guide policy development in this area.

For example, Ngati Rānana is a London-based Māori community. They work closely with the New Zealand High Commission, and have support from Māori in New Zealand. Despite London being far further away, Ngati Rānana is successful in keeping the reo and tikanga alive, and we think it could be a model for supporting Māori in Australia.

Australian Māori Seat

We think that the large and growing population of Māori in Australia warrants establishing a Māori electorate in Australia, which would be represented by one seat in the New Zealand House of Representatives. Having an elected “mozzie” representative could be a means of co-ordinating “mozzies” to address many of the issues raised in this report.

Scholarships

While it is important to maintain ties with Māori who have chosen to move to Australia, we think it is also important to encourage rangatahi to remain in New Zealand. We recommend providing more scholarships that bond the recipient to remain in New Zealand for a specified period. These could cover universities, sports academies, internships, and wānanga. We think that eligibility for such scholarships should also be loosened so “mozzies”, who are often ineligible because they haven’t been living in New Zealand, can also apply.

Committee procedure

The committee met on 6 and 7 July 2010 to consider the inquiry. The committee received and heard three submissions. Evidence was heard from from Martin Wikaira, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Paul Hamer, Victoria University of Wellington, and Courtney Tairi, the Sydney Swifts; and advice was received from the Ministry of Youth Development.

Committee members

Tihema Baker (Chairperson)

Rawiri Biel

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