

ICOMOS 2018

CULTURE: Conserving it Together

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Post Conference Overview

Research Team

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Conference paper

Integrating Kaupapa Māori and Te Aranga Design Principles into the development of policy to inform better design processes

Abstract

The Te Aranga Strategy is a cultural landscape approach to design, incorporating a series of Māori cultural values. The Te Aranga Design Principles, which evolved from the strategy, address the processes of economic, social, environmental and spatial development changes. The principles have arisen from a widely held desire to enhance mana whenua (indigenous people of the land) presence, visibility and participation in the design of the physical realm. They are a set of outcome-based principles founded on Māori cultural values and formulated to provide practical guidance for enhancing outcomes in the built environment. This enables local government, the development community, and construction industry to understand how they can positively engage with mana whenua in shaping our built environment. Te Aranga Design Principles can also be embedded through procurement and develop a framework to translate into the design process and contracts for public-private partnerships in community development. This paper discusses the Te Aranga Design Principles, their origins, and the ways in which they might be useful and applicable in the development of policy and design. This is driven by the Kaupapa Māori (Māori-centric) approach, as opposed to eurocentric and western models. Through research, policy advocacy and design work, this paper recognizes methodologies which can contribute towards shaping the places people live in. It contributes to models for future sustainable development through localised solutions, founded on indigenous worldviews and aspirations.

Conference Overview

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a professional association that works for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places around the world.

Australia ICOMOS, ICOMOS Pasifika and ICOMOS New Zealand hosted a 3 day conference in Suva, Fiji to share knowledge, celebrate the rich culture of the Pacific and discuss common issues on heritage conservation across the region. The main theme of the conference was “Culture: conserving it together”. This was also supported by four sub- themes:

1. Heritage at Risk - Climate Change and Disasters;
2. Cultural Landscape Practice and Management;
3. Diverse Communities - Intangible Heritage; and
4. Heritage as a Pillar of Sustainable Development.

Jade and Jacqueline presented their conference paper under sub-theme ‘Diverse Communities - Intangible Heritage’.



Key Reflections and Learnings

Jade Kake provides an oversight into her experience at the conference:

“E te hau kāinga, e te iwi iTaukei e, tēnā koutou. E ngā whanaunga o te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, tēnā koutou. E pūpuri nei I te mauri o rātou mā, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā rā tatou katoa.” I began our conference presentation to the CULTURE: Conserving it Together conference in Suva, Fiji, with this short mihi.

I attended the conference with two goals in mind – one, to connect with others across the Pacific taking a similar approach to strengthening and reinforcing living cultural heritage through the built environment, and to see where there might be opportunities for shared learnings and support, and two, to see how the international heritage profession might be able to support and strengthen iwi and hapū-based cultural landscapes work. As someone deeply involved in cultural heritage work but not connected to or a part of the wider heritage profession (which I would suggest, much like anthropology, is at its core an inherently Eurocentric, colonial – and at other times outright racist – discipline), I was unsure that I would have much in common with (non-indigenous) heritage professionals, but went in determined to keep an open mind.

Initially, I found the conference challenging. On the first day of the conference, a presenter included numerous photos of indigenous peoples from various global communities in their presentation, without names or context, seemingly displayed as cultural artefacts in support of an overarching narrative. Over the days that followed, numerous (non-indigenous) heritage professionals presented projects in which they had studied indigenous communities and their natural and built heritage, with a shocking absence of invitation or partnership. It was apparent in a number of these examples that there was a lack of informed consent, or else the research was carried out despite community opposition, or else the community’s involvement was very limited. This is a far cry from the indigenous-led collaborative approach that we have come to expect in Aotearoa. This experience made me so grateful for the foundational work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith and others in establishing Kaupapa Māori methodology and clear expectations around ethics.

Given this apparent deep divide in cultural understanding, I (silently) questioned the rationale for delivering a joint conference. A conversation with one of the Fijian conference organisers during the post-conference tour resolved this question – Fiji, as with other nations in the Pacific, is heavily dependent on foreign aid. By bringing Australians and other professionals from wealthy developed countries (like New Zealand), they were creating opportunities for much needed resources and skills to be channelled into Pacific heritage projects. A fantastic example of this approach was evidenced by Mark Love, an Australian anthropologist working in collaboration with communities in Vanuatu. Mark co-presented with Samuel Kenneth and Gordon Edward, two local community-based collaborators. In later discussions, he made it clear his motivation for doing this work was to upskill and build capacity and capability within these communities, and noted that there are other communities with which he has had long associations, that he no longer works with, because they now have internal capacity and he is no longer needed. Tautoko e Mark.



Image: Jade Kake, Gordon Edward, Jacqueline Paul (Kake, 2018)

*Gordon was also funded by the New Zealand Government to attend the conference.

On Day 3, keynote speaker Dr Frances Koya-Vaka'uta asked the important question: "Heritage" – defined by whom? Although I think, Eurocentric standards and colonial white cultural hegemony still tend to dominate the heritage space, we were hugely inspired by some of the Pasifika presenters, and the non-indigenous professionals working collaboratively in true partnership with indigenous communities and professionals. Dr Jeffrey Noro (The Kainake Project, Bougainville, Papua New Guinea), Mere Ratunabuabua and Elizabeth Edwards (ICOMOS Pasifika), Dr Frances Koya-Vaka'uta (Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture & Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific), Elia Nakoro (Fiji Museum), and Ron Vave (University of Hawai'i) were some notable speakers from across the Pacific. Although delivered over Skype (and with a somewhat unstable internet connection), Lorylie Crisostomo's work with communities in the Philippines held much that was of relevance to our work with Māori communities in Aotearoa.



Image: Dr Frances Koya-Vaka'uta (Paul, 2018)



Image: Dr Jeffrey Noro (Paul, 2018)

It was also a pleasure to meet Wellington-based conservation architect Ian Bowman and archaeologist Kevin Jones from ICOMOS New Zealand. Both hold an incredible wealth of knowledge, and humbly accepted and invited our critique and perspectives, and (rather enthusiastically) encouraged us to join the ICOMOS New Zealand chapter. We also met colleagues from Heritage New Zealand (Vanessa Tanner) and Wellington City Council (Amanda Mulligan), the latter of whom attended our conference session and asked serious and thoughtful questions about the process of developing the Te Aranga principles, and how these might be adapted to other contexts. Although we were confronted by the conduct and attitudes of some of our Australian colleagues, we were extremely encouraged by the many positive interactions we had with the New Zealand Pākehā heritage professionals we met at the conference.

Before travelling to Fiji for the ICOMOS Pasifika and Australia joint conference, I will confess that I was relatively ignorant of iTaukei (indigenous Fijian) culture, with a fairly vague understanding of the history of colonisation and decolonisation, beginning with the cession of Fiji to the British in 1874, the slave trade of Indian plantation workers from the late 1879 to 1916, through to subsequent independence in 1970. I absolutely loved learning about the many connections across the Pacific, and in particular the links between iTaukei and Māori culture. The opening pre-conference function provided an opportunity to view the exhibits at the Fiji Museum. The masi (iTaukei tapa cloth) and tabua (whale tooth taonga used in ceremony to mark significant events) exhibits were highlights. We were interested to learn of shipwrecked Māori living in Fiji in the 1800s, and the emergence of hybrid taonga that incorporated Māori whakairo. A visit to the National Archives of Fiji on day 3 of the conference - where we were generously hosted - provided opportunities for learning about the history of cession and independence, the history of land claims and the current land tenure system, and the system of recording whakapapa for the purposes of verifying iTaukei descent. On the final evening in Suva, I attended a kava ceremony at the Fiji Museum, with some of our iTaukei hosts and whanaunga from Vanuatu, which helped to deepen my understanding and connections.

On the Saturday morning following the conclusion of the conference, I set out with a group of delegates on the post-conference tour, which saw us visit Sigatoka National Park, Momi Battery, and Lautoka Sugar Mill. Driving from Suva to Lautoka, Elizabeth Edwards gave a frank and very

interesting commentary, noting the names of local villages, personal anecdotes, and relating sites to events of political and cultural significance. Sigatoka was a particular highlight, where we were generously hosted by local guides. The Driodrio forest (native dry forest) was the local Madroga equivalent of Te Rerenga Wairua, a concept I had not previously realised was transferrable across (and in fact, drawn from) the Pacific. I also learnt a little bit about their rongoā, native plant species, local dialects, and conservation efforts.

The Lautoka Sugar Mill was fascinating from an architectural perspective, and featured an extensive company town, with a hierarchy of housing typologies with occupancy determined by rank within the company. The town was master-planned and the houses designed by architects in Australia, with the homes modelled on the Queenslander typology. Our host, Australian historian and conservationist Chris Richards, described the CSR empire as “the closest Australia came to colonialism.” Much of the discussion centred on the potential closure of the sugar mill, which is actively losing money (with debt now sitting at around \$800M), but which is also an employer of around 60,000 Fijians. This would, of course, be devastating for the local people, economically, but for the heritage professionals the key concern was around preservation and retention of the buildings, including potential adaptive reuse.

Although the planning and architecture was fascinating, I couldn’t help but wonder two things – one, who were the original landowners and what were their pre-sugar mill narratives and associations, and two, what were their views on the future of the site? A conversation with Mere Ratunabuabua provided the context I was seeking. In her grandparents generation, there was something of a revolt against the Colonial Sugar Company, with very few benefits accruing to indigenous Fijians. At least partially in response, an indigenous Fijian banana industry was established. She also noted that the original landowners have been alienated for a long time, that the government had recently stopped paying dividends to them, and that if the site was nominated for World Heritage status they would need to be consulted.

Spending time in the Pacific caused me to reflect on the much-used categories of Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian, and the inherent racism embedded in these terms. The interactions I had throughout the conference emphasised for me the importance of connectedness across the Pacific, rather than divisions, and in working together to reclaim a collective identity (internationally) as Ngā Iwi o te Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa. One of my key takeaways was the importance (for us as Māori) of locating ourselves as peoples of Te Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa, whilst also recognising the political and economic power imbalances that exist across the Pacific. Climate change was a significant focus for many of the presenters, given our location within the Pacific. Although we have many urgent and pressing issues to attend to at home, I could not help but feel that there is so much more we as Māori could be doing to influence New Zealand government policy and resources to support our Pasifika whanaunga who are faced with this pressing issue.

The trip to Fiji, and the many interesting and challenging experiences therein, gave me pause to reflect on the reason why our work is so interdisciplinary. The work that we do does not and cannot easily fit into the binaries of built/natural, heritage/development because it is heavily informed by a Māori worldview. In this paradigm, cultural heritage protection and development are two sides of

the same coin. All of this is inherently, and necessarily, politically, because whoever makes the rules and controls the resources determines the physical (built environment) outcome. Post-conference, I still feel that our work does not clearly fit within the (existing) heritage profession, however, I do believe that this is more due to an incongruence of worldviews than the incompatibility of the work itself and that there is potential and momentum for change. On the first day, I asked myself the question (out of frustration) “must I decolonise every space I enter?” In this, I am reminded of the whakataukī, ‘kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua,’ which underpins our approach to heritage as those who are tasked with shaping the future.

Recommendations to ICOMOS

We would suggest and support a working group of indigenous knowledge holders to provide support to the ICOMOS international body and national bodies. This may vary depending on capacity but needs to be established as this is very significant to the heritage space. Further exploration into this space will influence and inform better-integrated processes and spaces for indigenous people. Based on this experience it does seem to be very absent in the heritage space of indigenous practitioners and academics. In order to strengthen and build capacity and capability, there needs to be a very high-level approach to lead and provide strategic advice.

Additional to this, emerging professionals under 35 as originally identified is also an evident gap but the beginning of a conversation. We could potentially support the current emerging professionals' group if there is cultural support within the wider executive. We are in communication with the current president of ICOMOS NZ Ian Bowman regarding this Kaupapa and look forward to supporting the development of this group.

Acknowledgements

Identified in the methodology of our conference paper, this paper is part of a wider project ‘Shaping Places: Future Neighbourhoods’ a response to growing housing and urban development challenges. The National Science Challenge: Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities is a collective made up of institutional and independent researchers who partner with industry, iwi (tribes), communities and government, both local and central, to deliver robust evidence. It will identify new ways of living that reflect New Zealand's unique identity and respond to our changing lifestyle needs and aspirations. This will improve future urban environments, like local government, developers, iwi, and the community can implement practices known to be successful, as evidenced by the research. Also, it will inform better planning practices and land use decision-making about the structure of successful communities. (National Science Challenge: Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities 2018).

This research is driven by a kaupapa Māori (Māori-centric) approach as opposed to Eurocentric and Western models. Graham Smith identifies that “the very emergence of Kaupapa Maori as an intervention strategy, critiques and re-constitutes the ‘Western dominant’ resistance notions of conscientization, resistance and transformative praxis in different configurations” (Smith 2003). This view demonstrates that Māori have a responsibility to develop their own theories to counteract



Eurocentric theories. It is a form of Indigenous critical theory - the term was not used in academic literature prior to 1987.

This notion has also transformed government approaches to policy, for example, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) have adopted a Vision Mātauranga Policy. As a requirement to address Vision Mātauranga, a policy for “unlocking the innovation potential of Maori knowledge (Mātauranga Māori), resources and people” (Henry 2017).

We would like to thank the National Science Challenge: Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities. This is important to recognize and acknowledge how the challenge has supported this opportunity to allow our research team to contribute and participate in the ICOMOS conference in Suva, Fiji. New Zealand plays a significant role in precedent for the Pacific region and this platform allows us to contribute and support our wider communities beyond the shores of New Zealand by strengthening relationships and networks in an international context.