
Congratulations

The primary objective of *Science Review* is to inform and stimulate. This thematic issue entitled 'Mātauranga and Science' is no exception. The New Zealand Association of Scientists (NZAS) is delighted with it and congratulates the many authors involved and especially our distinguished Guest Editors, Ocean Mercier and Anne-Marie Jackson.

Why now and why this topic? This year, 2019, is significant in terms of Māori culture: it is the 250th anniversary of the momentous sudden 'arrival' of a European ship in Aotearoa. Unbeknownst to Māori, the man in charge had instructions from his 'chief', King George III, to search for a putative continent. Hence, he spent some time in Aotearoa, trying to determine its geographic extent. Was this 'new land' a continent, or just an island? Notwithstanding the pivotal role Tupaia¹ played in the voyage, on board were James Cook and a group of men and boys, not a single woman, and they came from a completely different culture.

Most significantly, they were not Māori, and yet they were people. The rest is history, you might say. However, over the past 50 years, since the 200th anniversary of Cook's arrival, there has been a considerable revival of Māori culture within New Zealand and along with it a huge interest in mātauranga, as is clear from the contributions herein.

Science, in its broadest sense, is the exploration of ideas; it comprises ideas that have been explored and discarded, and ideas that have yet to be refuted. Fundamental to science is evidence and repeatability of results. In so-called Western science this requires documentation and publication; it is part of an established written record. Mātauranga is/was different: it is part of an oral tradition.

However, within the past 50 years there has been a sea-change: mātauranga has been documented and committed to written publication, primarily with the advent of legal instruments within the Ministry of Justice, namely the Waitangi Tribunal and the Office of Treaty Settlements. As such, a huge body of Māori knowledge has been captured for posterity.

This special issue is a tribute to where we, in New Zealand, have got to thus far in this endeavour. What has been accomplished is truly remarkable, and NZAS predicts that it is only a matter of time before mātauranga will be 'mainstream' across all New Zealand education providers as part of our unique New Zealand culture.

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for NZAS Council

¹ See: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/6t2/tupaia>