

 PEOPLE

New Tumuaki aim to be effective advocates for all Māori lawyers

BY **CRAIG STEPHEN**

THE NEW TUMUAKI (CO-PRESIDENTS) OF TE HUNGA RŌIA Māori o Aotearoa – the Māori Law Society, are looking to boost membership and be effective advocates for all Māori in the profession.

Marcia Murray was elected Tumuaki Wahine and Glenn Tootill Tumuaki Tāne at the Society's 30th Hui-ā-tau (annual conference) in Rotorua in October.

Ms Murray says both herself and Mr Tootill are keen to empower the Society's executive members and hear their ideas about what they should be doing for the next year.

"As the new Tumuaki, we want to focus on building our membership, bringing us together as a collective and being an effective advocate for our people.

"One of the initiatives that was launched at the Hui-ā-tau was our Ngā Hoa Aroha panel which is designed to be proactive and provide tautoko and awahi (support) to members of Te Hunga Rōia Māori on a confidential basis, relating to a safe working environment," she says. "Added to the Wahine Māori Mentoring Programme which we launched at Parliament in April this year, these fundamental mechanisms are just the beginning to proactively support our members and to bring us all together."

Hitting the ground running

Mr Tootill says that within the first few weeks as Tumuaki they've already hit the ground running. "We are going through the process of finalising a draft Memorandum of Understanding with the New Zealand Law Society," he says.

"We are finalising our membership database, establishing a communications platform and we are also hoping to set up a constant revenue stream. All of the foundations of these aims were laid by the previous executive."

Before being elected as Tumuaki Wahine, Ms Murray held the executive position of Te Whanganui-ā-Tara Regional Co-Representative for two years.

"Six out of 21 of the executive have remained from the previous year," she says. "As a member of the previous executive, it's important to maintain some continuity

► Marcia Murray, the Tumuaki Wahine (left), and Glenn Tootill, Tumuaki Tāne, were elected Tumuaki of Te Hunga Rōia Māori o Aotearoa at the society's 30th Hui-ā-tau.

and ensure that initiatives that have been set up are followed through. In saying that, I'm excited that over two-thirds of our executive are new. That means that we have some fresh faces with bright ideas and energy to push our hunga to places that we have never been before."

Ms Murray, of Ngāi te Rangī, Ngāti Ranginui, Tūhourangi and Ngā Puhi descent, is an in-house lawyer for the Ministry for the Environment. She has also worked for the Ministry of Justice, Tuaropaki Trust and the University of Auckland.

While with the Ministry of Justice, she worked at the Waitangi Tribunal, predominantly as an analyst/inquiry Facilitator for the Wai 898 – Te Rohe Pōtae Inquiry. In 2015 she joined the Ministry for the Environment's freshwater rights and interests team as a policy analyst, and in late 2016 took up a solicitor position in the ministry's legal team.

Mr Tootill, 35, of Waikato-Maniapoto descent, is a Business Consultant with Te Tumu Paeroa – an independent organisation supporting Māori land owners led by the Māori Trustee. He also does some consultancy work with Hamilton law firm McCaw Lewis, focusing on Māori land matters.

In his role at Te Tumu Paeroa he works primarily with Māori land trusts establishing kiwifruit orchards on their land.

Among those who have stepped down from the executive are Haines Ellison (Ōtepoti Co-Regional Representative) who has served on the executive for the past six years; and Tu'inukutavake Afeaki and Ophir Cassidy, the Tumuaki who spearheaded the 30th anniversary of Hui-ā-tau.

More than 300 people attended the Hui-ā-tau in October at the Toi Ohomai Campus in Rotorua. Keynote speakers included founding members Justice Joe Williams and Dr Moana Jackson; the Solicitor-General Una Jagose QC; and the University of Canterbury's Head of School of Māori and Indigenous Studies, Sasha McMeeking.



30th anniversary awards

To mark the 30th anniversary of Hui ā-tau, the following awards were established to recognise the efforts and achievements on Te Hunga Rōia Māori members:

Matiu Dickson Award for Te Reo me ona Tikanga

Alana Thomas (Kaupare Law Ltd).

In recognition of the late Matiu Dickson who was a regular supporter of Hui ā-tau and the composer of the Te Hunga Rōia Māori waiata, Alana Thomas received this award for establishing and running Te Hunga Rōia Māori's first Kura Reo wānanga (Māori Language conference), providing innovation in legal services and being a strong advocate for the revitalisation of the Māori language. Ms Thomas is also writer of a regular column for LawTalk (see page 52 of this issue).

Community Contribution Award

Season-Mary Downs (Tukau Law Ltd).

This award recognises a member who has made an outstanding contribution to the community beyond their "day job". Season-Mary Downs is a young lawyer and social entrepreneur with significant national reach and she was nominated for her role in establishing Tukau Community and Clothing which focuses on empowering the communities of Moerewa and Kawakawa.

Pae Tata Award

Arena Williams, Kiri Toki and Rachael Jones (Chapman Tripp).

In recognition of a member or group who has been working on a case or project that has advanced Māori interest in the last year, Arena, Kiri and Rachael were members of the legal team for Ngāti Whātua Ōrakei, who recently won a landmark Supreme Court decision which indicates when the Crown's decisions in relation to the way it engages with Māori in Treaty settlements can be challenged.

These awards complemented the already existing awards which are celebrated each year, including:

John Te Manihera Chadwick Award

Natalie Coates (University of Auckland).

In celebration of a young Māori Rōia who contributes significantly to their community.

Taonga for the National Kaupapa Māori Mooting Competition

Tanira Fisher-Marama (University of Auckland).

Te Toroa Taataki Prize for Best Te Reo Māori mooter

Mereana Te Whata (AUT University).

Manukura Trophy for best mooting team

Edmond Carrucan (Waikato University), **Mereana Te Whata** (AUT University) and **Nerys Udy** (University of Otago).