

CONVERSATIONS ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

A talk between Awatea Mita and Adreanne Ormond

*Adreanne Ormond**

Adreanne Ormond: (Rongomaiwāhine, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Tūwharetoa) as a Māori academic at the Centre for Restorative Practice in the School of Government at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, Adreanne is dedicated to the transformation of the Māori people at all levels of society. Through her work in restorative practice, she strives to address systemic inequities and foster pathways for Māori self-determination and well-being. With a deep commitment to Māori knowledge systems and cultural revitalisation, she is a passionate advocate for innovative solutions that honour the past while shaping a more equitable future for Māori and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Awatea Mita (Ngāti Pikiao/Ngāti Porou) is a justice advocate and scholar who draws on her personal experience of incarceration to amplify the voices of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women. In 2023, she represented Aotearoa New Zealand at the first international convention of formerly incarcerated women and girls in Colombia. Awatea currently serves on both the Te Ngāpāra Centre for Restorative Justice Advisory Board and the Services and Strategies Portfolio Board with the government Ministry of Corrections. Pursuing a Master's degree in Criminology, her research interests focus on settler colonialism, Māori justice and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems). Through her advocacy and academic work, Awatea strives to bring lived experience perspectives to the forefront of discussions on justice reform and policymaking in New Zealand.

1 Introduction

Awatea Mita is an Indigenous Māori woman from the Māori nations of Ngāti Porou and Ngāti Pikiao in Aotearoa New Zealand. She has experienced the criminal justice system first-hand, and working in the field, in her own words, won her 'respect and loyalty to restorative practice'. Her story offers the heartfelt perspective of someone who has navigated the complexities of incarceration, grass-roots projects concerning Māori and restorative justice, and who is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Criminology. Awatea's journey highlights the potential and possibilities

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For the reader who is not familiar with Māori terminology: please find a glossary of terms at the end of this conversation.

that Indigenous restorative justice can offer for her own Māori people as well as the state and the current restorative justice programmes in place.

2 A second chance: my journey in restorative justice

Ormond: How did you get involved in restorative justice?

Mita: In many ways, prison became a demarcator of life: there was life before prison and after prison. After prison, my plan was to study information technology because I thought that industry would not hold my prison history against me. To do the course that would get me into the information technology industry, I had to go to Wellington city, which was quite far away from where I then lived. Because I was only just out of prison, my movements were limited, and I had to get permission to leave the area I was living in. I applied to community corrections three times so I could move to the city of Wellington, and on the third time, I was finally given permission. Once there, I applied for the course, but my study application wasn't processed properly, so I didn't get in. I turned to Plan B – I enrolled at university.

Being in Wellington, I needed work, so I applied for jobs through a job agency. However, the agency didn't bother to send me on job interviews. Their attitude was, 'she's got a record, she's not going to get a job.' They were not even going to bother trying. I tried applying for other jobs by myself, and my applications never got any responses. I guessed it was because of my offending history. See, the life before and after prison demarcation is always there.

After a few months, I managed to get a part-time job working ten hours a week in the health sector, supporting Māori and other minority ethnicities. This was my first job after prison. I did not mention my history as I needed to work and no one wanted to hire someone from prison. Down the hall from my new health sector job was the office of a restorative practice entity.¹ I had never heard of restorative justice and didn't know anything about their values or practice.

One day, the general manager of the restorative practice entity, who had seen how reliable I was at turning up to work, offered me some extra hours. I was so happy because I thought I'd never get a job, and here I was about to have two jobs. Amazing! Everything was going well, and after a while, the restorative practice entity offered me more work hours. Up to this point, I had kept my prison history hidden, but I felt the right thing to do was to tell him that I had been released from prison not long ago, so I did.

The general manager didn't say much, just that he would talk with the chairperson of the Board. He did that and came back to me and said their only concern was whether I was doing a good job and that they could trust me. If there were no trust issues, then my past was my business. They weren't going to hold my offending background and imprisonment against me. That really blew me away. Although I had been working for restorative justice, I had not understood what that meant, what their values were and that they could give me a second chance. This restorative practice entity were giving me a second chance, and I was

1 'Restorative justice entity' is a pseudonym used to protect the organisation's identity.

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overwhelmed. I didn't know there was a line of work, like restorative justice, that someone with my history could be involved in that wouldn't add to the stigma and discrimination I'd experienced. You know, the life before and after prison demarcation that was so much the norm. Their positive attitude to take me at face value, to take me as I was in that moment, and not hold my past against me—it was from that moment that I developed a respect and loyalty to restorative practice.

So I carried on with that job at that particular restorative practice entity, not really knowing where it was going to lead, and it led me to working for them on and off for about five years. I even ended up working with another restorative justice practice, which I will refer to as the Hub,² where I was their administration manager. The Hub trained and accredited the restorative justice facilitators in New Zealand. So gradually, I was exposed to more and more restorative justice, and I found the work environment welcoming for someone with a criminal record. Once again, I was amazed, blown away and overwhelmed by the values, practice and second chance aspect of restorative justice. Having said that, though, it's hard to lose all your doubts about how people are going to treat you when you have a prison record, so I was still finding my feet within restorative justice and seeing a place for me in it.

While working, studying and living my life, I heard about Hopeful Smith,³ who had over 200 convictions and was a practicing restorative justice facilitator. This person had all these charges and was still employed in restorative justice. Amazing! It takes a lot to counter that life before and life after prison judgment from people, and then I learned about Hopeful Smith. I thought, if she can do it, I can do it. Hopeful's real-life example countered the narrative I had internalised that formerly incarcerated people could not get jobs. More than that, it showed that we could be open about our past and be strong. There are limited opportunities for people who have criminal charges and who have been in prison. It made me think I should focus on workplaces that don't have the type of prejudice I had experienced elsewhere, where lived experience is considered an asset. This perspective transformed the meaning and experience of prison in my life and how I could use it as an asset to uplift others. Restorative justice had shown me a new way to see myself and how I could actually use my life experience to contribute for other women like me. I saw a place, a role, how I could use my life before and after prison as a strength for empowerment for others like me.

3 Restorative justice in Aotearoa New Zealand

Ormond: New Zealand is often held up to be a place where 'restorative justice works'. What do you think?

Mita: In Aotearoa New Zealand, the justice system is state-run—that's how it operates. It's controlled by the state. Restorative justice is also conducted according to what the state allows. Training has to align with state requirements for the

2 'Hub' is a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the organisation.

3 'Hopeful Smith' is a pseudonym used to protect the individual's confidentiality.

various restorative justice organisations to maintain funding, and certain benchmarks must be achieved. The interpretation of whether those benchmarks are being achieved can be distorted, or the actual information can be misrepresented to suggest that the benchmarks are being met, even when we may not truly know if they are. I don't think there's any conclusive evidence in the state-run model that restorative justice reduces harm. The Ministry of Justice's focus isn't so much on repairing harm as it is on the idea that restorative justice can reduce or lower re-offending rates for people who participate in the restorative practice.

4 An Indigenous Māori perspective of restorative justice

Ormond: As an Indigenous Māori woman from a Māori community, who understands the Te ao Māori or the Māori world and is familiar with the justice system which is part of the state in Aotearoa New Zealand, how would you define restorative justice?

Mita: Restorative Justice, at its simplest, would be about providing a safe space to have a conversation between the person who has caused harm, the person who experienced that harm and preferably the community. If I bring a Māori worldview and what I understand about restorative justice into the same space or practice so the two sit in Te ao Māori, then restorative justice will ask three questions, which are:

- 1 What was the harm? So firstly, we establish, 'what was the harm that occurred?' Not like Pākehā, who ask what law was broken.
- 2 Who was harmed by this? Then we ask if the persons involved identify as part of a collective because we also need to think of their whānau, the people in their community, and sometimes also the environment because we're also in relation with the natural world. What aspects of well-being for the collective or whānau or essentially what relationships have been disrupted? We understand the harm and the necessary restorative practice is not just about an individual; it is never just about an individual being affected.
- 3 Who caused this harm? Lastly, we as a collective—and by that I mean the community, whānau consider how we are going to address these harms, take responsibility and right the wrongs.

Ormond: How do you see yourself in the field of restorative justice? Do you consider yourself a restorative justice practitioner, and how would you describe your role within it?

Mita: I wouldn't really describe myself as a practitioner, I wouldn't say that. So not in the sense of restorative justice, being nestled in a criminal legal system. So, not in that sense. I don't have accreditation as a restorative justice facilitator. So, in that sense, I would only describe myself as a former office manager for restorative practices and a former restorative justice training and accreditation manager in the way that restorative justice is administered in this country. That would be the only kind of legitimate way I could describe myself from within that perspective.

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Ormond: So that's kind of like the systemic definition. If you are talking to someone about what you've been around and done with restorative justice, how would you describe it?

Mita: I know a lot about it, not only from out of my own research, but also travelling through my jobs. I guess the depth of knowledge that developed from that and through all the relationships and those roles that I held. I don't think there's that many people who have had all the opportunities that I've had to observe the practice of restorative justice in this country. And I'm talking about in the criminal legal system, but also other ways that restorative practices and restorative ways of being with one another as people. So beyond just how it's confined in the criminal legal system, but also how we can be restorative as whānau in our communities in all kinds of settings. I don't think it's something that just happens in the criminal legal setting or in the education setting. It's in many ways a philosophical approach to life and living and relationships.

5 Restorative justice and the Māori world

Ormond: How would you define restorative justice in relationship to Māori? You were talking a little bit about it before.

Mita: Well, I think when it comes to restorative practice, Māori people are really the teachers. I think I refer to a philosophical approach because within our values, I feel there's always this element of restorative reconciliation, not just between people, but with ourselves. That idea of a person being right within themselves, being tika and pono. So, on [the] one hand, it's this thing that's studied and has all these conditions placed around it. And then, on the other hand, as a Māori person, I regard it more as a state of being, sort of just in relation to Māori. So, there's nothing in the criminal legal system version that I think relates to Māori at all. What's imposed on Māori? Just more hoops to jump through in the criminal legal system. I think for many Māori, the difference in the system lies in whether the services are delivered by Māori practitioners or Māori organisations with a Māori philosophical approach. These providers offer a different perspective that mainstream providers lack.

Ormond: Do you want to describe that a little bit more?

Mita: Yeah. It's just that idea about, say, there's a family violence situation and you have him and her, and it's referred to a mainstream service. The man's not ready to go to conference. It's off the books, that's where it ends. But with some Māori providers, he may not be ready for conference, but he might want to join the men's group. He might want to do some of the other programmes that are being offered. She might need some budgeting help now that the income in the house has been slashed in half, or maybe she didn't even receive that type of support from him, she might need help with the kids because the partner, the father's no longer in the picture. So, there's all these other different services. When we talk about being

‘restorative’, then I think that’s the difference with the types of service that Māori offer because they have the capability to be truly restorative, to have a truly restorative impact on the people who come through their doors. And that’s not something I think that’s philosophically embedded in the way that mainstream delivers restorative justice, but it’s something that Māori people, Māori services would consider. It’s not just about this law that’s been broken, but it’s like, here’s the whānau that’s presented, aside of the issue with the law breaking and the violence. There are other needs that need to be met and healed. We have placed ourselves intentionally in a place to be able to be responsive to those needs.

6 Restorative justice initiative from a Māori marae

Ormond: That’s really interesting, what you just said. Is that something you’ve thought through yourself or have you been around others who talk like that? Where does that thinking come from? Is it stuff that you know from being a Māori and living in a Māori community?

Mita: Yeah, so when I was younger, one of the first Māori restorative justice practice initiatives that I saw was one that my auntie and uncle were involved in. There was a custody case that was held on our marae. The whole hapū turned up because everyone had a stake in the future of these children who were at the centre of the dispute and for the well-being of the parents. And there was an intention right from the start to not let this raru raru tear our family apart. Most of us were aware that in custody battles that can happen. So we came together on our marae. In my experiences growing up, the marae was such a centre of everything and a place for us to come together, whatever’s happening outside, whatever. If you come to a tangi, whether your cousin’s a cop and your cousin’s a lawyer and you’re some sort of outcast, there’s times where you can put all those identities aside and just be whānau and just come together.

I don’t want to romanticise life on the marae – it’s not always idyllic. But I definitely had glimpses of how we could come together and resolve harm within our community. When I was growing up, we didn’t necessarily need to go to the police or follow the mainstream state approach. We had a different outlook on handling not just harm but even disputes within our community. My perspective was shaped by experiencing both rural and urban life. As part of the rural-urban drift, I lived between the city and a rural place with my parents in different locations. This allowed me to see the big differences between country and city approaches to conflict resolution. There’s been a whole journey since then, especially in urban areas like Auckland. We’ve seen the development of both urban Māori authorities and iwi authorities, along with a focus on service provision that’s more visible now compared to the past. Back then, you might get help through organisations like the Māori Women’s Welfare League and other Māori organisations. Now, there are clearer pathways for support through service provision via urban Māori and iwi providers.

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7 Between two worlds: Te ao Māori and state restorative justice

Ormond: I want to ask you, so it seems that you understand restorative justice in more than one way. It sounds to me like you understand it as a life philosophy that is embedded in being Māori, and you can use restorative measures to repair Māori by bringing that life philosophy to be, or if it's broken, making it whole. This is just my thinking and I'm just saying it so you can add or correct it. It sounds like you understand restorative justice within Te ao Māori, not necessarily as an institutional practice, but something that Māori had anyway. And if you can bring it to be, it will repair Māori. This is my understanding of what you've said, which is beautiful, by the way. But then you also understand restorative justice in terms of it being a state practice that is done unto Māori. It sounds like you are involved, you've had experience in both, and you sit across both, but as a Māori you are drawn towards it as a life philosophy within Te ao Māori and understand how it can work there. But at the same time, you understand that engaging with Māori often comes off the state restorative justice institutional model.

Mita: Luckily, Māori have other priorities than just the state institutional outcomes of the restorative justice process. By that I mean counting how many Māori are using restorative justice processes so that we can tally up whether or not Māori are meeting the benchmarks of the state restorative justice criteria. That is not what is driving Māori who participate in restorative justice, including the practitioners. For Māori there's a sense of responsibility and accountability to the community. For Māori organisations, your purpose is to help your people, they won't come and your whole community is not going to be happy with you if restorative justice practice is not aligning with their worldview and needs. I think in the community there's a sense of *kanohi ki te kanohi*, person-to-person accountability and responsibility that brings a relational element to the process and makes it very personal for Māori. This type of relational accountability is also shared by other Indigenous cultures around the world. I have a friend who is First Nations, from Canada, and when we talk about it, they're talking about the sweat lodge. They're talking about taking young men to experience traditional teachings, traditional cultural experiences, and they won't have a word said against their Indigenous understanding of restorative justice. I get where they're coming from. When I'm critical of restorative justice, it's mainly about the state model and the contentious mismatched process.

Having said that, though, I also understand that other Indigenous groups can decide for themselves how their own autonomy, in terms of defining its worth for them, and what it looks like for them. Then you have tribal courts as well, like in America, and that's a model where you just have an Indigenous judge and stuff. Maybe you're not sitting on bench, maybe you're sitting around a table, but if the agreements that are made by everyone in that conferencing aren't met, that person can go into the mainstream system and be jailed. And so that would be something that I see more in line with our state model here. But yeah, there's so much variation wherever you go.

Ormond: I want to pick up on a theme that keeps coming up in our conversation. Are you suggesting that the restorative justice that is best suited for [the] Māori community and perhaps should be the one practiced in our community is that which comes from Te ao Māori and the Māori life philosophy?

Mita: This is something I really honestly think about. I really think about just coming back to Te ao Māori, that's what I think about a lot. Probably other Māori think like that too. In what I say, that returning to Te ao Māori is at the heart of it. That's what I'm really talking about.

To answer your question about how I bring together the restorative justice practice rooted in Te ao Māori and the state's approach, let me start with an example. My mum says, 'When you work in the system, it makes a liar out of you'. This resonates with me because any site can be an arena of struggle. The state justice system is one such site of struggle, especially for our people.

One way I try to reconcile these two worlds is by working within the state restorative justice system while bringing my understanding of what it means to be Māori. I also try to bring other Māori into the system. For instance, one of my goals when training and accrediting facilitators was to ease the pathway for Māori facilitators. There's a huge need for this – about 70% of my clientele are Māori, but most facilitators are not. If Māori in the justice system can engage with a Māori facilitator, it might make their experience a little bit better, less of a struggle, because there's somebody who has a cultural understanding that most mainstream practitioners wouldn't have.

Another way I try to bring the two together is through hope for more community-based restorative justice. There's a response and movement underway for this, which is significant in a state-run system. It's not to be underestimated – it's huge because the state is just so powerful. For example, there was an iwi-based project where a kuia was trying to get her training and accreditation in the state model to participate in the community model. She didn't make it through, which I believe was fundamentally wrong. In my opinion, that kuia had all the knowledge and experience to succeed in that role. If the criteria require mainstream people to do cultural competency training just to be on the marae for this role, many would fail. The values in this training are still very much mainstream values.

My hope, perhaps naive, is that there could be a doorway open for iwi-based and hapū-based restorative justice programmes. This would mean our people being able to implement their tikanga in their own places, in whatever way that looks like. It could become a reality where the shackles of the state are shaken off, and this whole coercive control of Māori has another layer of resistance added. That's what I truly hope for and believe in, even if it might seem idealistic.

Ormond: I think I understand. It sounds to me like you don't believe in the state justice system? But that you believe that if Māori can be put in positions of power in it, that they can help change it and make it more effective for the Māori that are in the system. It sounds like you do not romanticise that Māori are coming through the system and into prison. They're coming through society into prison and that there then needs to be Māori in the state system who are able to speak to their

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needs and the restorative justice that can be drawn from Te ao Māori. But it seems to me that you reconcile the Te ao Māori or Māori life philosophy of restorative justice with the state justice system (of which state restorative justice is a part) by understanding their combination as a compromise. The integration of Māori perspectives, which embrace Te ao Māori, with the state system is by no means perfect. Without these two worlds coming together, even imperfectly, and without Māori embodying the Māori restorative justice and Te ao Māori life philosophy that you have spoken about, it would remain solely a Pākehā state system. For Māori in the state justice system, as well as for the wider Māori community, this would pose significant problems socially, communally and culturally. It sounds like while you work in this space, you are able to live with it as a compromise. This compromise includes having Māori who understand the values and philosophy of Te ao Māori within the state system. You believe that if Māori are in professional positions, they might be able to help other Māori in the system navigate it better.

Mita: Yeah. It's a huge problem and one that I have experienced personally from my time incarcerated to now when I practice restorative justice in the state system as well as restorative practice in the Māori community. The lack of state system recognition for the restorative practice drawn from Te ao Māori, the lack of empowerment for Māori to practice as Māori, only contributes to the further colonisation and co-option or control of our people.

Ormond: Right. And it sounds like you are conflicted because the state's restorative practice is not always restorative for Māori as you understand it needs to be. It sounds like you are saying it is coming from a different worldview, which is at odds with Te ao Māori, the Māori worldview.

Mita: Yeah, ultimately, I think it's harmful, but I can't deny from my own experience that it does have some good outcomes for individuals. If you remember my story, I told you about how I got into restorative justice, their belief in me and how transformative that was for me. I acknowledge that on a personal individual level. In terms of its impact on Māori on a systemic level, though, we don't really know. We don't really have the data to talk to that across the system. Part of how we assess our knowledge around restorative justice has to be to ask: is it beneficial for the people? There are issues with participation in restorative justice for Māori, and we have to ask, why is that? Is it because it does not reflect them, their values, beliefs, worldview? Is it because they know it will not empower them? A low level of trust based on historical distrust is at work here. For Māori in the state justice system, and myself working in that same system, these are real questions that we continually ask each other and the state and put on the table.

If we don't ask these questions then we invisibilise these problems. Actually, that's the other thing about having Māori in the system: at some point we have to see ourselves as the change makers. And if all we are seeing in the system is being arrested by Pākehā, sent to prison by Pākehā, maintained in the prison by Pākehā, doing a restorative justice conference with Pākehā, we are not really seeing ourselves anywhere in that chain of events as being a change maker for our own people, and it has an impact, and that's not our destination. That's not our goal. If

we can see ourselves as being able to avoid participating in that system altogether, then we put ourselves in a stronger position, we can be in positions outside of the system where we have autonomy and power over the processes. I feel like we don't see ourselves in positions of power often, that's not the sort of opportunities we get, and when we see someone that looks like us doing something that we didn't think we could do, it's encouraging. Hopefully it can start to expand our thinking, both Māori and Pākehā, about our position so that it increases our social mobility and solidarity. It's not always only about the law and legal system being imposed on us. And while there are obviously people working within that system, maybe we can start to think about how we Māori can also work outside of that system.

8 Restorative justice: by Māori for Māori

Ormond: It is intense kaupapa you're discussing. What you're referring to is quite a different practice of restorative justice. When did you come to understand that Māori are broken through coloniality and its ongoing harm, which is now embedded in the system and normalised? Alongside that, I want to ask, when did you realise that Te ao Māori restorative practice has the cultural philosophy to repair the harm that Māori have experienced and continue to experience? Were you aware that you were thinking Māori and our world have the answers for ourselves?

Mita: Yeah, that is what I think and it's my dream. The problem with my dream is that the state reforms required to empower Māori in their use of restorative justice, by that I mean a restorative justice that is drawn from Te ao Māori, according to the state requires us to buy into colonial capitalism. At present, the system is a mix of Māori and state restorative justice which is not transformational. For us to get our Māori restorative *practice* initiatives off the ground, it currently requires us going through this mainly monocultural process which risks us becoming co-opted further into colonisation, so that we end up somewhere down the colonial track, further embedded in the system, with further cultural losses; that is not transformation but rather furthers colonialism. There is a big problem with the empowerment of Māori restorative justice, because we currently have to seek that empowerment through the current state system, and the two are in conflict, one seeking disempowerment and domination over the other. I think the fatal flaw in what is currently presented as a benign representation of a mix of Māori restorative justice and state restorative justice is the intention, or to be blatant, there's no intention, to relinquish power so Māori can practice restorative practices that align with Te ao Māori, our Māori worldview and the philosophies, values, beliefs, culture, language that underpin it. In order for that to happen, Te ao Māori has to be empowered, and that is at odds with the state and the colonial philosophies and ideologies that underlie it. There's always the appearance by the state and the state-sanctioned restorative justice practices to look as though it is transformational, that's what's happening, the appearance to look as though they're providing culturally appropriate and culturally sensitive and culturally competent pathways that align with Māori needs and respond to the harm Māori suffer, but it is not so.

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Ormond: Has your perspective of the Western idea of restorative justice changed over time?

Mita: I guess the longer I've been involved in restorative justice, the more I get perspective. I think I definitely became co-opted to a cause that I actually didn't even really know about or believe in. But I did see, in a way, in the absence of other options, and knowing that there was this gap between being able to realise Māori justice values and Māori aspirations, that restorative justice offered some type of in-between place that other models did not and that has held my interest and aspirations. So, although it is produced from Western thought, it might also be a useful tool or expression for my people and the way we experience the world and harms, I also have to say, that from when I started to now, my knowledge and involvement has changed and so I am not always thinking about restorative justice in a detached abstract way because it has become a part of how I view the world and a part of what I do now.

Ormond: As a Māori, what challenges do you see in restorative justice for Māori?

Mita: I have to acknowledge that state restorative justice is not a silver bullet for Māori. One of its biggest limitations is that it's embedded in the criminal legal system. It's just another mechanism of that system. This is difficult for Māori because that legal system is an extension of coloniality, which has not served our people well. Because it is nestled within the criminal legal system in Aotearoa New Zealand, it reflects and is controlled by the state. For Māori, this is a problem, as the state also incarcerates Māori and refuses to acknowledge that it is part of the problem, and, therefore, it can't be the solution.

This disparity creates a tension within restorative justice, as it attempts to function in a space that perpetuates inequality. While it offers opportunities for healing and dialogue, we must critically examine its limitations and advocate for a framework that genuinely respects and uplifts Māori perspectives. True transformation requires not just participation in the system, but a commitment to reshaping it in ways that align with our values and aspirations. Without this, restorative justice risks becoming another tool of oppression rather than a pathway to liberation. While I recognise the value of restorative justice in my life on a personal level, and while I work in this field as an advocate and scholar, it's not straightforward. However, this is my area of work, and I genuinely believe in what restorative justice has to offer when it is managed in the right way, with Māori values. I am a living example of this.

9 Where to from here for Awatea Mita's vision of restorative justice

Ormond: Do you see yourself continuing to work with restorative justice or engaging in restorative practices specifically for Māori in a uniquely Māori way? Do you envision yourself doing this work in the foreseeable future?

Mita: I always try to have a restorative outlook on life, especially in my relationships with people. I push for it in the different spaces I'm in, because in some ways, it's about embodying those values every day. It's not just about formal processes or roles; it's about living in a way that honours our connections, restores balance and upholds the principles of tika and pono in all that I do.

10 Glossary

Aotearoa New Zealand: Aotearoa is the Māori name for what the British called New Zealand. Today, both Māori and Pākehā use both names together to reflect the presence of both cultures.

Auckland: The largest city in New Zealand, located on the North Island, known for its economic and cultural significance.

Cop: New Zealand slang for police officer.

Hapū: A sub-tribe or clan in Māori society, typically consisting of several extended families (whānau) that are descended from a common ancestor. Hapū are important social units within Māori culture, often responsible for managing land and resources, and playing a central role in community decision-making and governance.

Kanohi ki te kanohi: This Māori phrase translates to 'face-to-face' in English. It refers to in-person meetings or interactions, emphasising the importance of direct, personal communication in building relationships and conveying respect. In Te ao Māori, kanohi ki te kanohi is a valued approach for discussing important matters, as it allows for a deeper connection and understanding between people.

Kaupapa: A Māori term meaning purpose, plan or philosophy. It refers to the underlying principles and objectives that guide actions, projects or practices. In a Māori context, kaupapa often reflects cultural values and collective goals.

Kuia: A respectful term used to refer to an elderly Māori woman or grandmother. It is often used as a term of endearment or respect for older women within the whānau or community.

Iwi: A Māori term for tribe or large kinship group, made up of related hapū (sub-tribes) and whānau (families). Iwi are central to Māori identity and are often connected to specific geographic areas in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Marae: A sacred meeting place in Māori culture, serving as a focal point for social, cultural and spiritual gatherings. It typically consists of a wharenui (meeting house) and an open courtyard, where important ceremonies, discussions and community events take place. The marae is central to Māori community life and identity.

Māori: Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Māori Women's Welfare League: An organisation dedicated to improving the social, economic and cultural well-being of Māori women and their whānau. It works to address issues such as health, education and economic development while promoting Māori culture and values.

Pākehā: A Māori term that is used to refer to New Zealanders who are the descendents of the British European colonisers of the country.

Pono: Māori concept that refers to truth, honesty and integrity. It embodies the idea of being genuine, sincere and faithful to one's beliefs and values. Pono is about being true to oneself and others, ensuring that one's actions and words are consistent with what is morally right and just. It is closely related to concepts of authenticity and reliability in relationships and decision-making within a Māori worldview.

Raru raru: A problem, difficulty or issue; something that causes trouble or presents a challenge.

Rural to Urban Drift: The large-scale migration of Māori from rural areas to cities, primarily occurring from the 1950s to the 1970s. This movement was driven by industrialisation, a search for better economic opportunities and changes in government policies. It significantly impacted Māori social structures and cultural practices.

Te ao Māori: Māori worldview, encompassing the values, beliefs and perspectives that shape how Māori understand and interact with the world. It is deeply rooted in concepts such as whakapapa (genealogy), mana (authority, power), tapu (sacredness) and the interconnectedness of all living things. Te ao Māori integrates the spiritual, physical, social and cultural dimensions of existence, guiding the Māori way of being and relating to the environment, people and the cosmos.

Tika: A Māori concept that refers to what is correct, right or just. It is often associated with truth, fairness and ethical behaviour in accordance with Māori customs and values. Tika is a key principle in guiding actions and decisions, ensuring they are aligned with what is considered morally and culturally appropriate within a Māori worldview.

Whānau: A Māori term meaning extended family or family group. Whānau includes not just immediate family members but also extended relatives, often encompassing several generations. The concept of whānau is central to Māori culture and identity, reflecting a collective approach to family and community, in which relationships, responsibilities and support are shared among all members.