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What is Tu Tangata?

"Tu Tangata" has become a common phrase around New Zealand in the last year or so. It crops up pretty often in this magazine, and almost as frequently in the newspapers, on radio and television. Nevertheless, here at the Department of Maori Affairs we are still asked: "What does it **mean**?"

It is a difficult question to answer, for the very reason that the answer is so simple. It can be an individual state of mind, an isolated community farming project and a nationwide concert tour. It's a homework centre, a district planning conference and saying hello (or *kia ora*, or *talofa*) to your neighbour.

You're probably no wiser. Let's put it another way. Assimilation, integration, multi-culturalism: these and other catch-cries have their popularity, but for the average person they may not mean very much. Dull, academic phrases, they offer little personal stimulation to individual New Zealanders. And it's at the personal, individual level that Tu Tangata begins to work.

Tu Tangata. It has been translated as "the stance of the people" and "stand tall". Tu Tangata is for each and every one of us something positive to *feel*, to grasp as our own. It means examining ourselves and assessing our skills and talents, and acknowledging those of the other people around us — being ready to make friends and accept the other person.

Many people would dismiss this as obvious — yet few seem to have put it into practice to the benefit of themselves or their