

communities. So in launching its Tu Tangata programme the Department of Maori Affairs has attempted to hold a mirror up to the people, to encourage them to see themselves as they really are and as they could be, and not through the distorting mirrors of other people's stereotypes and assumptions.

An area where the Department has felt the need for this kind of encouragement is among Maori youth. It is certainly not because Maori kids are stupid that they so rarely end up in the traditional professions and better-paid careers, and even in an economic climate where job opportunities of any sort are few and far between, we urge our youth to consider their capabilities and strong points and nurture and use them. In many areas, teachers, community leaders and parents — and students themselves — have got together to organise homework centres. Students are encouraged to strive for higher educational and vocational qualifications, and to think about their future careers in a wide context than in the past.

But to encourage this sort of attainment in what is often regarded as the "Pakeha world" does not mean denying our youth their Maoriness. Hand in hand with these developments has gone a tremendous upsurge of interest in Maoritanga. Recently wananga have been held on marae in tribal centres all over New Zealand, in an attempt to show young unemployed Maori people from the cities something of their heritage. Many of them, born and brought up in the urban environment, had had no contact with their roots before; had never visited their home marae, learned anything of their tribes or met their kaumatua and whanaunga.

In taking them home for a short period, the idea has been to help them realise that there is pride in being a Maori, and that while it may be difficult to know where they are going,

they can take some positive and constructive satisfaction in knowing where they come from.

Tu Tangata is not for Maori people only, neither is it only for youth. Maori in inspiration, it is nevertheless for anybody. It is a home-grown ideal for New Zealanders of whatever origin and culture.

Because Tu Tangata is rooted to the inner spirit, or wairua, of all individuals, it can never be the sole property of any one culture. It is not the Maori people striving to become brown-skinned Pakehas, neither is it an attempt to impose Maoritanga on a nation of reluctant non-Maoris. It is more an appeal to recognise the worth in both these cultural systems — and in any others too. That this is possible has been demonstrated by the success of the many women's wananga held in New Zealand over the past two years or so.

That success continues, at all levels and in all areas. The Tu Tangata concert tour will encourage success still further, for proceeds from the tour will be added to the newly formed Tu Tangata Trust Fund. Its first priority will be to back up teaching at pre-school, primary and intermediate levels, to develop the cultural enrichment and awareness of our children. What happens after that is up to all of us, for Tu Tangata belongs to everybody and not to Maori Affairs.

Tu Tangata groups are springing up all over the country. Inquire around: there may be one you would like to get involved with. If not, start one yourself. It may be a centre where your local young people can do their homework in an atmosphere of peace and encouragement; it may be a forestry or agricultural development on under-utilised land; it may merely be a forum for getting to know people. Which-ever, it will provide an opportunity to stand tall with dignity and pride in being whatever you are.

*Howard, Noel and Gerry with the real stars of the show: 200 Waikato primary schoolchildren.*

