

Alcohol — Maori/Pakeha

The mix has not been magic

For Maori people alcohol stands as an ominous factor in violence, crime and death, through alcohol-related health problems, and alcohol-related road deaths, says Ngamaru Raerino, Maori co-ordinator of the Alcoholic Liquor Advisory Council.

The numerous and wide ranging Social Welfare Schemes directed at Alcohol Abuse and Misuse have not, and are not, improving the general level of Maori well-being.

The current level of Maori underachievement and underdevelopment did not happen overnight, and while some of the blame has been laid at the feet of the Maori, it has been a historical case of misguided social policies.

It is important to note that in fifteen years projected figures show that almost 50% of the school leavers north of Taupo will be underachieving Maoris.

Given that the largest alcohol problems exists with the Maori, with the median age for the Maori being 17 years compared to 29 years for the Pakeha, it becomes imperative that this problem of alcohol abuse coupled with the general level of underachievement amongst Maoris be addressed.

At present 50% of the prison population are Maori and 85% of the convictions are for alcohol or alcohol-related problems.

What typifies this condition of underdevelopment is that the group lacks power over resources, information, decision-making, relationships with key people in positions of power.

For the vast majority of Maori people, their present poor socio-economic condition affects all facets of their lives — education, health, business activity, cultural identity, job opportunities and aspirations.

Without power over these factors, development becomes impossible.

Maoris wish to have a greater say in decisions affecting their health. However Maori health has come a long way in the last 3-4 years and a common theme seems to be emerging.

In terms of the amount of money

currently being spent by the spectrum of governmental and non-governmental agencies, lack of progress and real success is being recognised as being funding in the negative sense.

Douglas and Dyal in their 1985 paper, refer to the need for more appropriate funding, rather than extra funding, from areas with negative rates of return. Simply put, the resources should be transferred from programmes that compound negative outcomes for Maoris to proposals that provide positive outcomes. Only when that transfer begins, can we expect parity between Maori and non-Maori rates of achievement to begin to be attained . . . says Ngamaru.

Aue Aue
Taukiri E
KUA MAKONA
KUA MAKONA
Aue Aue
Taukiri E
KUA MAKONA
KUA MAKONA

Kua Makona
Tena ra to tua wha
Inuhanga
E te rau aroha
Huri mai kia ahau
Koawhi mai
KOAWHI MAI
Kua makona e

Mamae nei ahau
AUE
I tenei hanga i te inu
Panahia atu e
Mamau mai
E te tau e
E TE TAU E
Kua makona e e

Maatoro mai kia ahau e tangi nei
Ka aroha tonu au ki a koe
Ka tiaki tonu i a koe
E te rau aroha
E TE RAU AROHA
Kua makona e e
E E E E
Kua makona

In this light a major campaign has been launched, 'Kua Makona'. It is a phrase that infers satisfaction gained from responsible consumption not just of alcohol, but also of smoking, drug use and food.

Kua Makona is being seen as just a start in using the media to make Maori aware of the need for moderation in all those areas.

A record appropriately called Kua Makona has been released. With lyrics by Ngamaru and music production by Dalvanus and sung by Moana Maniapoto Jackson, it's planned to further get the message across.

A video has been produced to go with the song so that the subject of Maori drinking will be easier to address. It will be a first step in a campaign of education from kohanga reo to universities. The video shows scenes relating to alcohol abuse and the result of abuse, cut in with Moana singing with other positive images. A haka, also written by Ngamaru, highlights a cultural view of alcohol abuse.

The song 'Kua Makona' speaks of a woman's love for a man who has a drinking problem, while the haka is more strongly worded and points out the debilitating effect alcohol has had on the Maori people.

The irony is a Maori campaign, funded by a government body, to tell Maori about the fate they've suffered since the Pakeha introduced them to waipiro. To be sure the funding for Kua Makona is bound to be a drop in the ocean when compared with the national funding for the Say When campaign.

This irony didn't escape the attention of Titewhai Harawira at the launch of Kua Makona in Auckland. She said the focus should be on the oppressors who create the pressure which leads to Maori drinking, not on the victims. She said this was needed to find the causes of excessive drinking. However perhaps the last word should come from the haka, Te Kai Kino, where it is acknowledged that while the Pakeha brought the demon drink to our shores, it was the Maori that used it wrongly and must take responsibility for that.