



IAG New Zealand

CULTURAL CELEBRATION HIGHLY COMMENDED



**WATCH
VIDEO**

THE STORY

Ka taea te whakatika te reo hapa, tē taea te whakatika te reo ngū. You can fix language that is broken but you can't fix language that is not spoken.

That's the spirit behind Te Reo Talk, an employee-led initiative that encourages the use of te reo Māori within IAG New Zealand, an insurance company with approximately 3600 employees around the country.

The initiative is the brainchild of IAG's Māori Employee Network Resource Group (ENRG), which wanted to encourage the use of te reo in a fun and interactive way, making it accessible to everyone.

The idea of a video series was brought up at an ENRG hui in 2017 and the first Te Reo Talk was launched shortly afterwards. The video clips are filmed by staff members in the IAG offices and shared on the company's internal social network. Over two years, more than 26 videos have been created and they are typically viewed more than 550 times.

Executive Manager Culture and Business Solutions Fiona Hewitt says people from all levels of the business have participated in the initiative, which reflects IAG's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive culture.

“Te Reo Talk presents an opportunity for every single staff member at IAG, regardless of their geographical location, to experience te reo Māori in a way that is comfortable for them. For some people, that might mean listening to a Te Reo Talk video privately through their headphones, for others the videos give them confidence to try out Māori words around the office. For others still, Te Reo Talk gives them permission and confidence to include a Māori greeting or sign-off in their email correspondence,” she says.

“One of the biggest barriers to non-Māori using te reo is a fear of getting pronunciation wrong or causing offense. Te Reo Talk breaks that barrier down by presenting te reo in a light-hearted and fun way, and by showing that it’s about giving it a go. Kōrero Māori can be easy and the best way to get to a place where you’re comfortable using te reo is by saying the words out loud and practicing using them.”

The initiative has been supported by senior leadership, and leaders across all levels and business divisions of IAG have participated in videos.

Employees report that the initiative has given them a new confidence in the workplace. Lavinia Taylor says she noticed a real shift in the company a few months after the Te Reo Talk initiative launched, both in terms of the company’s approach to diversity generally, and to tikanga Māori and te reo in particular.

“As a Māori mum, Te Reo Talk helped me feel like I could really be myself. It also gave me the confidence to deliver the official powhiri to welcome Peter Harmer [IAG’s Group CEO] when he came to New Zealand in June 2018. I could see that there was genuine willingness [by the company] to embrace welcoming someone with Māori language.”

The judging panel said that by taking an educational approach and creating a strong impetus to normalise the use of te reo Māori throughout the organisation, IAG New Zealand has embodied its values. The staff is very proud of what they have achieved and have made a significant change to the culture of organisation.

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THE CHALLENGE

Te reo was rarely used in the office at IAG New Zealand, and the organisation’s Māori Employee Network Resource Group (whose aim is to grow cultural competency across the organisation) wanted to find a fun and interactive way to change that.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Te Reo Talk is a series of videos filmed by staff aimed at connecting people through te reo.
- Each video shares tips on how to pronounce words and incorporate them into everyday activities.
- Videos are released at least once a month via IAG’s internal social network.
- The emphasis is on breaking down barriers in a fun, light-hearted way.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Videos are typically viewed more than 550 times.

- People from across all levels of the business have participated in the initiative, sharing their pepeha, or introducing a new kupu or whakatauki for others to learn.
- The initiative has led to a willingness to use te reo Māori as part of internal formal communications, encouragement to speak te reo Māori in face-to-face forums, and to open conferences with karakia.
- There is a greater engagement between the Māori Employee Network Resource Group and the wider IAG community.

KEY LEARNING

Giving people flexible tools and taking a fun approach to learning allows everyone to grow their cultural competency without fear of getting it wrong.

**DO WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WELL
AND DO WELL BECAUSE OF IT.**

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