

## **Te Pakiahipu**

My name is Elise Paki but I will never know what my name should have or could have truly been. Sometimes when I sign my last name, I wonder if I should be signing “Te Pakiahipu” instead.

There is some controversy in our whanau that says; about 3 generations ago during the early 1900's, my great grandfather had to change the name Te Pakiahipu to Paki because Te Pakiahipu was considered too hard to say. It was around this time that a law came about saying everyone had to have a surname. Before that our ancestors did not have to have surnames, they were often just named after events that were happening around them. If this family controversy is true, it makes me feel really frustrated. Our name is a part of who we are. It helps define us and connects us to our past. Not knowing my true surname makes me feel incomplete.

I think my family's story contributes to why I am so passionate about how important Te Reo is in Aotearoa. Te Reo became an official language in our country in 1987 (The Māori language by Rawinia Higgins and Basil Keane, n.d.), and I am glad because this protects the language. It explains why I feel a connection to a protest that happened in 1995 when TVNZ announced they were going to suspend the Maori language news programme Te Karere, and the protest that happened because of that. (One Network News. 2 January 1995.) Te Karere was a very important programme. It was the first Maori news programme on mainstream television and has had a regular time slot since 1983.

When Te Reo was made an official language an act was passed in Parliament called 'The Maori Language Act'. (Maori Language Act. 1987.) This Act was about making sure the landmarks in New Zealand were changed back to their original Maori names, for example Mount Egmont would be referred to as Mount Taranaki. It also stated that newsreaders should pronounce Maori words correctly. The impact of this Act meant that viewers were now listening to Te Reo being spoken correctly. In addition, it would also influence them to work on their pronunciation too.

In 1995 Te Karere was going to be suspended and taken off air over the summer holidays. ( One Network News. 2 January 1995.)

So a small group of Maori protesters decided to barge into the TVNZ studios while the One Network News was about to be broadcast at 6pm. The protesters included two men and three women. It was a peaceful protest however, the protesters were angry. Their spokesman Ken Mair said, "From our point of view Maori news should receive the same time allocation as Pakeha news. It's as simple as that and that's why we're here".

I completely agree with him. If both English and Te Reo are two of New Zealand's three official languages, why should one be treated more importantly than the other? What about if people are fluent in both Te Reo and English – shouldn't they have had the choice to watch either Te Karere or One Network News back then instead of that choice being taken away over summer?

During that protest the police came and took the protesters away and the One Network News went to air 10 minutes late that night. There is a lot of information online about the protest and what happened but there is not a lot of information about the result of the protest. My guess is that Te Karere was still suspended over summer but what really matters is that they were able to express what they thought about the issue and now what matters is the future. If the protest had never happened awareness may never have been raised about the issue. Their protest became the leading story on One Network News that night so their issue was brought to the attention of thousands of viewers. If they hadn't protested that would never have happened.

When I hear about how in the past Te Reo was discouraged and these days it is encouraged it makes me feel hopeful that the language is here to stay. I don't know much Te Reo yet but I plan to become fluent in it soon. Hearing Te Reo spoken helps me, because I like to identify some of the words that I do know and gain an understanding of other words by putting them into context. Listening to it spoken fluently now will help me to get a feel for the language when I do start learning it as a subject in high school next year. As I begin to get the hang of learning Te Reo it will

become my responsibility to make sure the members of my whanau learn it too. That is how I will help to keep the language alive for future generations because I don't want what happened to me to happen to anyone else. My whanau name change and the Te Karere protest both represent the lack of respect and equality that used to exist for Te Reo Maori. I am so grateful for how far we've come since then and I'm sure my great grandad and those protesters would be too.

Ko Elise toku ingoa

Ko Te Pakiahipu te whanau ingoa

No reira

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa

#### References:

(The Māori language by Rawinia Higgins and Basil Keane, n.d.)Retrieved from

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-reo-maori-the-maori-language/print>

(One Network News. 2 January 1995) Retrieved from

<https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/one-network-news-protest-1995>

(Maori Language Act 1987) Retrieved from

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maori\\_Language\\_Act\\_1987](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maori_Language_Act_1987)

---