

MEDIA RELEASE
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Te Hunga Rōia Māori o Aotearoa
The Māori Law Society Inc.

TE HUNGA RŌIA MĀORI O AOTEAROA COMMITTED TO ADDRESSING RESULTS OF THE RECENT COLMAR BRUNTON SURVEY FOR ITS MEMBERS

Te Hunga Rōia Māori o Aotearoa, the New Zealand Māori Law Society, is committed to working alongside law firms and other workplaces to ensure a safe workplace culture and provide support to any Te Hunga Rōia Māori members. Te Hunga Rōia Māori o Aotearoa maintains this commitment particularly in light of the Colmar Brunton results on the workplace environment.

“We tautoko the New Zealand Law Society for taking the initiative to conduct this survey,” says Ophir Cassidy, Tumuaki Wahine of Te Hunga Rōia Māori. “For us, these results shine a spotlight on the legal profession and where Māori lawyers are experiencing workplace stress, discrimination and bullying. The results show that Māori have higher than average overall scores for having experienced bullying. And that physically intimidating bullying is more common among those who work in family law or Māori / Treaty of Waitangi law – these are areas of the law where a large number of our members practice. Maori lawyers are also more likely than average to feel they work to unrealistic time pressures.”

Tu'inukutavake Barron Afeaki, Tumuaki Tane of Te Hunga Rōia Māori, says “Tikanga Māori requires all people to be treated with respect and dignity. It is incumbent on us to observe and uphold mana wahine, mana tane and mana i te tangata in our work, within our own membership and how we treat all people. Racial discrimination and / or harrasment in any form is completely unacceptable. It is crucial that lawyers, law students and all staff in the legal sector are safe in the workplace. A culture that permits abuses of power or turns a blind eye to sexual and racial misconduct, harassment, and bullying, must be confronted.”

Te Hunga Rōia Māori has made a clear commitment to its members that it will establish a formal “Friends Panel” of senior Māori practitioners to assist members in need of support. The Panel will be in place by the end of the year. Additionally, the topic of workplace culture and manaaki tangata is on the work programme and agenda for the Hunga Rōia national hui in October. “This will be an opportunity to have an open and honest kōrero amongst our hunga about the systemic issues present within the profession and to develop some pathways forward in accordance with tikanga Maori,” says Ms Cassidy. “We do not have all the answers right now. As a hunga, we need to discuss the issues and develop steps moving forward. As an immediate next step, our executive have set up a working group to analyse the survey results, which will help to facilitate discussions at our annual conference.”

Te Hunga Rōia Māori o Aotearoa / New Zealand Māori Law Society (THRMOA) was formally established in 1988. Since then the organisation has grown enormously and the membership includes legal practitioners, judges, parliamentarians, legal academics, policy analysts, researchers and Māori law students. The Vision for THRMOA is *Mā te Ture, Mō te Iwi – By the Law, For the People.*

The objectives of Te Hunga Rōia Māori o Aotearoa include acting in a manner that is consistent with tikanga Māori and promoting mutual support amongst its members. The organisation also promotes Ngā Pou Tikanga (Guiding Principles) such as whakawhanaungatanga (networking/relationships), manaakitanga (support/advocacy) and Tuakana-Teina (mentoring/professional development).

Te Hunga Rōia Māori o Aotearoa made a statement earlier in the year about its commitment to this kaupapa in the context of the sexual misconduct complaints – see [here](#).

Contact details:

Ophir Cassidy, Tumuaki Wahine: 021 861 807

Tu'inukutavake Barron Afeaki, Tumuaki Tane: 021 828 253