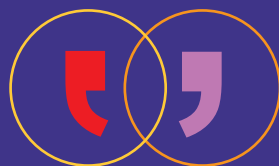


**The  
Workshop**

# Short guide How to talk about co-governance of our bioheritage

---



**Version 1.0 July 2021**

[www.theworkshop.org.nz](http://www.theworkshop.org.nz)



This content is published by The Workshop under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) licence.

# Contents

<b>A quick overview of this guide</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>About this guide</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>How to use this guide</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Why we need a guide on how to talk about co-governance of our biological heritage</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>The landscape of thinking and narratives on co-governance</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>The five building blocks of narratives for change</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Building block 1. Audience: who you should communicate with .....	19
Building block 2. Lead with a concrete vision for a better world.....	21
Building block 3. Connecting with what matters to people: values that motivate .....	24
Building block 4. Provide better explanations.....	30
Frames .....	30
Metaphors.....	33
Using facts.....	38
Choose language that serves your narrative.....	40
Use agentive language .....	43
Building block 5. Storytellers .....	45
<b>Putting it all together – an example message for a healthy taiao</b> .....	<b>47</b>
<b>Glossary</b> .....	<b>48</b>
Appendix 1: A checklist for your communications about co-governance partnership.....	50
Appendix 2: Cognitive bias, public narratives and mental models .....	52

---

Protecting our country's unique biological heritage<sup>1</sup> will ensure a healthy and flourishing taiao. What happens to the land and water and air on our planet affects all of us who live here: we are deeply interconnected. We all benefit from restoring and protecting our taonga species and ecosystems.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, hapū and iwi have a unique relationship with our biological heritage and have been leading innovative, effective environmental protection for generations, bringing a deep knowledge of and connection with the land, water and air. The significant consequences of the destruction of our bioheritage are felt deeply by these communities and will have far-reaching impacts for us all as humans.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the guide, biological/bioheritage refers to Aotearoa's precious environments, native species and biodiversity.

To protect our biological heritage together, requires decision makers to understand and recognise the strengths that mana whenua bring to this work – the values, knowledge and deep experience iwi and hapū have in environmental management – and to ensure mana whenua lead in the decisions that directly impact their communities and local environment.

People of the Treaty (tangata Tiriti) need to understand the importance and validity of mātauranga Māori, to see and discard the harmful narratives about co-governance and Māori and to know that co-governance and Tiriti-based partnerships that properly balance decision making will work for the benefit of the environment we all wish to protect.

Co-governance partnerships provide a way forward for tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti to work together to build the health of our land, air and waterways in order to achieve our shared aspirations and care for our environment. How we talk about co-governance is an opportunity to deepen understanding that decision makers and tangata Tiriti have and build support for these partnerships.

# A quick overview of this guide

If you have only a few minutes, read this section to understand the thinking and mindsets we want to bring to the surface in the public in order to build support for co-governance in bioheritage, and some useful communication strategies and tools to help surface this thinking.

## Helpful thinking about bioheritage and co-governance we want to encourage

- We can create legislation, policies and practices that support co-governance partnerships and actively create a healthy taiao/environment together.
- When mana whenua-led kaitiakitanga is honoured, and environmental management centres on local expertise and knowledge, the benefits are collective and shared by all of us, including te taiao.
- Through agreements that honour this work and create legal pathways to tino rangatiratanga, we can bring together distinct knowledge systems and approaches that complement each other.
- Through partnership and reciprocal balanced relationships we can realise the joint hopes and ambitions that our ancestors had for their future generations in signing Te Tiriti.

## Frames and tools

- Lead with a concrete, shared vision of a flourishing taiao, balanced decision making and tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti thriving as a result. Be clear about the pathways to achieving this vision – co-governance might be one of these.
- Don't focus on the hard to persuade people who are in opposition to this work, look instead for and talk to people who care but need effective communications to draw them in.
- Draw on self-direction and equity values to help audiences understand the importance of co-governance and tangata whenua-led environmental management.
- Use a leadership frame to communicate the strengths that iwi, hapū and local communities bring to this work and how Māori leadership of shared spaces will benefit us all.
- Use solidarity frames to remind tangata Tiriti of their obligations as Te Tiriti partners and how they should offer their support.

# About this guide

---

This guide is for knowledge holders, communicators and advocates across various fields with a focus on co-governance of our bioheritage.

---

## **Its purpose is to provide effective communication strategies to:**

- help people who are designing legislation, policies and practices for bioheritage protection to have better conversations with the public about the importance of tangata whenua-led environmental management
- improve public (particularly tangata Tiriti) understanding of the role of co-governance and mātauranga Māori in the protection of our bioheritage
- connect with those people more likely to support and lead the necessary changes
- build confidence in navigating around people who are hard to persuade, including explaining unhelpful ways of framing the issue
- motivate people to act in support of legislation, policies and practices that build reciprocal and balanced partnerships between tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti for the protection of our bioheritage.

This is a New Zealand's Biological Heritage National Science Challenge | Ngā Koiora Tuku Iko project, led by The Workshop. The guide has been developed from a literature review<sup>2</sup> and The Workshop's unique evidence-based framework of narratives for change for the BioHeritage Challenge Adaptive Governance and Policy team, SO7.<sup>3</sup> With thanks to the co-leads, Associate Professors Maria Bargh and Carwyn Jones.

We would also like to thank our bioheritage champions advisory group for their contributions and thoughtful reflections included throughout the following sections.

---

<sup>2</sup> Jordan Green, "Literature Review: How to talk about co-governance of our bioheritage" (Wellington, New Zealand: The Workshop, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> <https://bioheritage.nz/goals/strategic-objective/policy/>

# How to use this guide

- 
- This guide offers recommendations for your communications based on a research literature review of related topics and from an established body of literature on strategic communications.
  - At this initial stage of the messaging project, we are able to tell you with some confidence some of the things you should avoid in your communications based on what we know to be unhelpful.
  - We also have some recommendations for techniques and suggestions to start using that might be helpful.
  - Since these recommendations have been drawn from research on related issues, such as climate justice, we don't yet know how the messages we have included will work in the context of co-governance for bioheritage in Aotearoa New Zealand.
  - What we are able to offer in this guide are well informed predictions, and in the next stages of the research, we will have an opportunity to see how these messages land with our own persuadable audiences.
  - For now, we encourage you to start experimenting with these messages to see how they work with your audiences. Notice how people respond to them and which parts resonate most, and let us know how they are being received.

---

## Who can use this guide?

This guide provides a number of narrative strategies and recommendations that can be used by those communicating in the areas of co-governance and environmental management. However, the guide has been created specifically with our Bioheritage SO7 team and their community of practice in mind. This consists of Māori academics, scientists, advocates and campaigners, policy makers and tangata Tiriti working in these fields.



### Champions' reflections

Our champions reflected the importance of respecting hapū and iwi Māori to develop their own communications and visions. Those working on narratives and communication for specific programmes should do so in collaboration and partnership with iwi/hapū in order not to inadvertently speak for them in this space.

Where practical, identify yourself and the perspective/worldview you bring to your communications. Let people know if you are tangata whenua or tangata Tiriti when speaking about co-governance arrangements. It helps audiences to understand your role.

---

## Who is the audience?

The narrative strategies and messages in this report are designed to be effective in engaging and influencing persuadable people who have been identified as being likely to:

- ➔ be tangata Tiriti
- ➔ prioritise the value of a healthy environment
- ➔ not fully understand or value the role of tino rangatiratanga and social justice in environmental and social wellbeing
- ➔ be unfamiliar with the language of co-governance and legal terminology
- ➔ be in varying stages of understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and openness to te ao Māori
- ➔ be regularly exposed to racist narratives in mainstream media and elsewhere
- ➔ hold a combination of helpful and unhelpful thinking identified below.

- » It may be hard to identify this audience, so the scenarios below may provide additional guidance for how to reach them.
- » This does not preclude you from using these strategies to communicate more widely with the general public, although it is important to recognise that this guide does not offer advice for tangata Tiriti communicators who wish to communicate with Māori audiences.
- » Where we have included specific Māori metaphors, values and stories, these are followed with a note that they are to be used with care at the discretion of Māori in developing communications.



---

## Where to use the recommendations from this guide in communications

- When creating a piece of writing or speaking with media about the need for and benefit of co-governance
- When creating a campaign to deepen people's thinking on co-governance and build support for specific actions to enact co-governance arrangements
- When considering how to respond to unhelpful narratives about co-governance
- Anytime you wish to talk to a wider audience about co-governance

» Although these recommendations are not researched for use in interpersonal communications, you may find aspects of them helpful in these situations when describing complex, emotive, and political issues. Our goal is to provide a number of evidenced tools you can use in your communications. While we continue this research we encourage you to explore and use the elements that might be helpful to you and your communities.

# Why we need a guide on how to talk about co-governance of our biological heritage

As with many complex and technical issues, co-governance is not well understood by the general public. Why?

- All of us use mental shortcuts (or cognitive biases) that help protect what we already know and believe. For example, confirmation bias means we look for information to support what we already know so we don't have to relearn everything. Status quo bias means we may think change is unnecessary.
- These mental shortcuts interact with dominant public narratives (stories and explanations about issues that are dominant in media, politics, communities and everyday conversations).
- Often the dominant public narratives, especially about complex issues, are too shallow or even false where powerful interests want to keep the status quo.
- Together, mental shortcuts and shallow but repetitive public narratives mean people have mental models (an unconscious internal story or explanation) that are unhelpful to understanding the role of co-governance as experts understand it.
- All this can make it hard to communicate complex issues and undermine support for evidence-based policies and action.

As experts and advocates for the issue, we often communicate in default ways. We:

- » use facts
- » correct incorrect beliefs and stories (bust myths and negate)
- » lead with problems – costs to society or risks to people
- » use technical language
- » rely on individual emotive stories.

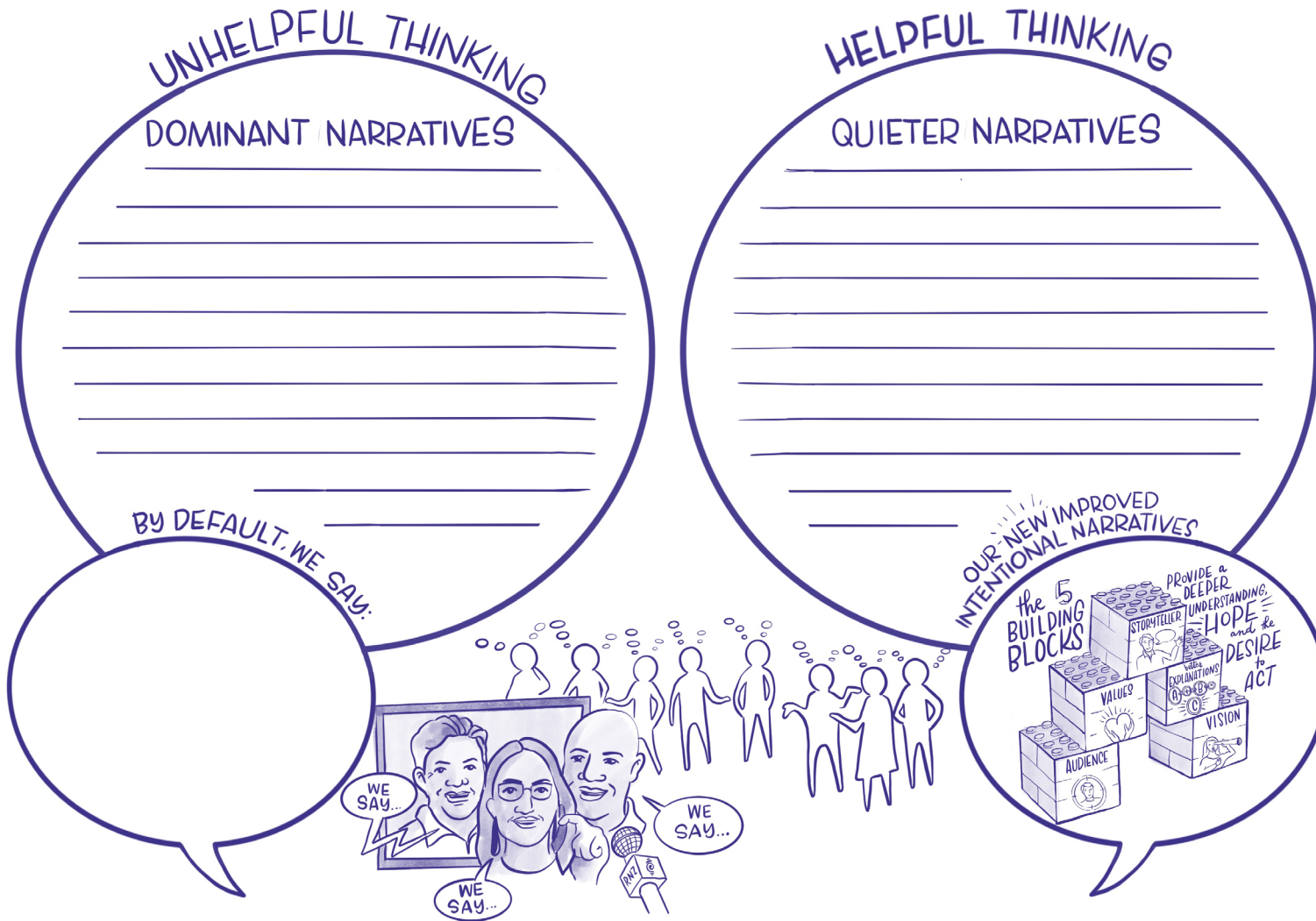
These default ways of communicating can:

- » backfire as people work harder to protect their shallow beliefs
- » inadvertently draw upon and reinforce some of the shallow public narratives instead of building new public narratives
- » undermine our work to deepen thinking
- » fail to create a landscape with better stories and explanations that help people develop new deeper mental models.

*To find out more about mental models and public narratives see Appendix 2.*

Effective communication strategies to deepen thinking require us to:

- » understand the landscape of narratives and thinking we are talking into (to avoid the reinforcing unhelpful ones)
- » create and repeat new effective communication strategies to foster new ways of talking and thinking about your issue.



**Figure 1.** Effective communication to deepen thinking means avoiding narratives that surface unhelpful thinking and instead focusing on narratives that surface more helpful thinking. We can do this using Five Building Blocks of Narratives for Change. What are the dominant narratives that surface unhelpful thinking about co-governance of our bioheritage?

---

## How mindset shift happens

- You might wonder how shifting public mindsets will work to change the minds and decisions of those in power.
- Research shows us that there is a feedback loop between public mindsets and political discourse/decisions.
- When it comes to growing support for change, there is a recognition that people who are in office are accountable to their community and therefore have an obligation to make decisions based on their perception of the views people in their community hold.
- When referring to framing, there is evidence to show that the language of people in politics and so-called 'elites' influences the understanding of people in the general public. However, this is not unidirectional. These influential people draw from existing frames and understanding in their communications, which are defined by the assumed acceptability and popularity of particular frames held by people in the general public.<sup>4</sup>
- Framing that helps people to think more deeply can help build support for social and environmental change as it is shared by advocates (like you), picked up and used among the wider public and eventually heard and reflected by the decisions of those who hold the power to enact change.



## Champions' reflections

.....  
**Based on our champions' reflections:** In using narratives for change it is important to support Māori communication to honour your agency in sharing Māori stories, communicating injustice and voicing both specific and shared visions of tino rangatiratanga. These are tools and knowledge that may assist you in this work. Test as you go, observe their utility in your work, especially with persuadable audiences, and innovate with them.

---

<sup>4</sup> Celestin Okoroji, Ilka H. Gleibs, and Sandra Jovchelovitch, "Elite stigmatization of the unemployed: The association between framing and public attitudes," *British Journal of Psychology* 112, no. 1 (2021): 207–29, <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12450>.

# The landscape of thinking and narratives on co-governance

- These are some of the unhelpful ways the public thinks about co-governance of our bioheritage.
- These ways of thinking are brought to the surface (*surfaced*) by how co-governance and Te Tiriti o Waitangi are talked about in public (public *narratives*).<sup>5</sup>
- As communicators you want to avoid surfacing this thinking and therefore avoid drawing on such narratives.
- Think of them as traps to navigate around.

Mindsets that inform current practices and create barriers to realising tino rangatiratanga and effective environmental action



## Key insight:

One of the most significant barriers to change that we identified in the area of co-governance was policy, practice, and philosophies based on a mindset of settler-colonial and scientific superiority.

**This manifested most prominently in narratives that framed Indigenous communities as victims of climate change as well as invalidating mātauranga Māori and other Indigenous ways of knowing.** Extractive thinking based on colonial structures and ‘Western traditions of knowledge’, and the mindset that colonisation brought only benefits and this was one directional. This thinking leads to people appropriating aspects of mātauranga in environmental strategy – for example, treating mātauranga as something to be taken and added on to Western-led initiatives. These mindsets show a lack of understanding of the integrity of a holistic knowledge system or Māori self-determination and leadership as first nations peoples of this land and as holders and protectors of this valued knowledge.

<sup>5</sup> See Glossary for definitions of italicised terms.



**It can be a bit more difficult to identify where we inadvertently surface this unhelpful thinking as advocates. This could sound like:**

- » referring to mātauranga as myth
- » positioning mātauranga as the only solution to environmental issues (in ways that might lead to appropriation by non-Māori and undermining complementary knowledge approaches)
- » inadvertently claiming only those working in institutional settings as experts on particular issues
- » creating a binary between the ‘Western science tradition’ and mātauranga Māori
- » narratives that lead people to think that mātauranga is unchanging and that Māori and mana whenua are only implementing ‘ancient’ knowledge in caring for the places where we live and belong.

**The second and interrelated mindset preventing change in this area relates to policy language and principles that frame and treat the environment as a simplistic and non-dynamic commodity.**

These mindsets and language – a consistent feature of local and global environmental policy and strategy – are preventing us from recognising our environment as a dynamic, changeable and connected ecosystem. This mindset also prevents people from seeing how the health of the environment is fundamental to and interconnected with human health. An example of language that can surface this thinking:

**“Natural capital refers to all aspects of the natural environment. It includes individual assets such as land, soil, water, trees, plants and wildlife. It also includes broader ecosystems and the joint functioning of different environmental assets.”**

---

The purpose of this guide is to help advocates shift these and other unhelpful mindsets identified below. We can shift and replace unhelpful thinking through a story of potential, opportunity and visionary outcomes and relationships where decision making is equally shared between Māori and tangata Tiriti working together on the changes that make the biggest difference – changes at the scientific, policy, government and decision-making level to ensure a much more appropriate, effective and inclusive approach to environmental care.

Unhelpful thinking about co-governance partnerships	Examples of public narratives that surface this unhelpful thinking	Why is this way of talking unhelpful?
<p>That balancing power between tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti means less for tangata Tiriti.</p>	<p>“Owners are concerned that if iwi gain ownership they will lose access and be locked out of their homes.”</p>	<p>This references the zero-sum game that if Māori have power and self-determination, tangata Tiriti will miss out. It also triggers ‘us versus them’ thinking.</p>
<p>Lack of trust in Māori leadership. One version of this is that Māori are passive victims to biodiversity loss and climate change and incapable of leading the solutions. Another version is the frame of ‘corporate Māori’ following capitalist drivers and using extractive practices.</p>	<p>“We need to help Māori living rurally who are the most impacted by climate change and biodiversity loss.”</p>	<p>Framing Māori as passive victims removes agency and self-determination, leading to paternalism thinking that tangata Tiriti are better able to make decisions.</p>
<p>That mātauranga and other Indigenous ways of knowing are irrelevant or less valid than the Western scientific tradition.</p> <p>Another version of this is that mātauranga is static and unchanging, when we know that all knowledge is constantly evolving as it is used and adapted within contemporary settings.</p>	<p>“Traditional Māori myths may hold clues to natural hazards.”</p>	<p>This unhelpful thinking is based on scientific superiority framing and implies that scientific measures are better or more accurate. In this example, this thinking is surfaced by referring to mātauranga as myth.</p>
<p>There should be one law for all, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori sovereignty is in direct conflict with this principle.</p>	<p>“Article 3 guarantees Māori equity, which does not mean all individuals should be treated the same.”</p>	<p>Universal fairness thinking is a concept that describes thinking that excludes the context in which people make decisions and assumes that fairness means everyone should be treated the same in the law. This thinking ignores the impacts of colonial privilege and harm in assessing what is fair in contemporary contexts. The example provided here is engaging this unhelpful framing in order to negate it – repeating an unhelpful opposition frame expanded on in later sections.</p>



## Special topic: leading with Te Tiriti o Waitangi aspirations



### Key insight:

Messages that lead with the value of solidarity and working together may help shift people away from these unhelpful mindsets. In Aotearoa this value could be engaged by using the frame of shared aspirations in caring for our environment.

- Recent narrative research<sup>6</sup> found that, despite increasing concern for the environment, many people in the UK still struggled to make connections between social justice and environmental issues.
- This is an important finding for us here in Aotearoa, as co-governance for bioheritage is as much about joint decision making, equity and human relationships as it is about shared aspirations and care for our environment.
- In order to build deeper understanding about the inequities central to climate issues, the authors suggest drawing on solidarity framing that highlights our shared humanity and affinity for those most impacted by climate change.
- They suggest that, in order to avoid shallow thinking of separatism or ‘us versus them’, we should use messages that emphasise solidarity such as “standing shoulder to shoulder”, and “working together”.
- One effective way we see solidarity already framed in Aotearoa New Zealand is through the message of Tiriti-based relationships and partnerships that build from the shared hopes and dreams of our tīpuna and ancestors in signing Te Tiriti and how this agreement provides the basis for tino rangatiratanga, co-governance and the sense of belonging together in this country.



### What does this sound like?

“In order to best care for our environment, we need to realise the shared hopes and ambitions of ancestors in signing Te Tiriti. This agreement provides the foundation for partnership and balanced decision making for the benefit of our collective wellbeing and the environment we all wish to protect.”

**\*Note:** Here we offer the notion of partnership and relationship as one way of speaking to our shared values and hopes in broaching this important kaupapa. We recognise that this is difficult work. There are a number of harmful and deeply ingrained narratives that create significant barriers to building understanding and support and impact us all on different levels depending on who we are and what our experience is. For Māori, co-governance encompasses the Crown honouring fundamental human rights and arrangements that Māori have been fighting for too long to have recognised, and that partnership may only be one step towards realising full tino rangatiratanga. For tangata Tiriti, mentions of Te Tiriti can create a strong reaction as some will perceive this as an attack on their identity and sense of belonging in this country.

.....

In the next stages of this research we will be able to better identify how well different messages of solidarity do in explaining the issues most important to you as the advocates in this space. Recognising the different understandings, for now we suggest that you use the notion of partnerships with some care, and when using this, give an explanation of what you consider partnership to look like e.g., reciprocal, respectful and balancing decision making.

*Continued over page >>*

<sup>6</sup> PIRC, 350.org, and NEON, “Framing Climate Justice,” 2020, <https://framingclimatejustice.org/headlines/>.





## Champions' reflections

Our champions raised questions about how to talk about power imbalance, how we get people to understand what this means, why it is a problem and how we communicate what a balanced power-sharing relationship looks like. For now, we've talked about reciprocal, respectful, balanced partnerships to make this concrete. We suggest taking this to testing to understand the most effective ways to talk about power with our persuadable audiences so they understand. We believe there is a way to explain relinquishing and balancing power, but this will likely need an explanatory chain and some good metaphors.



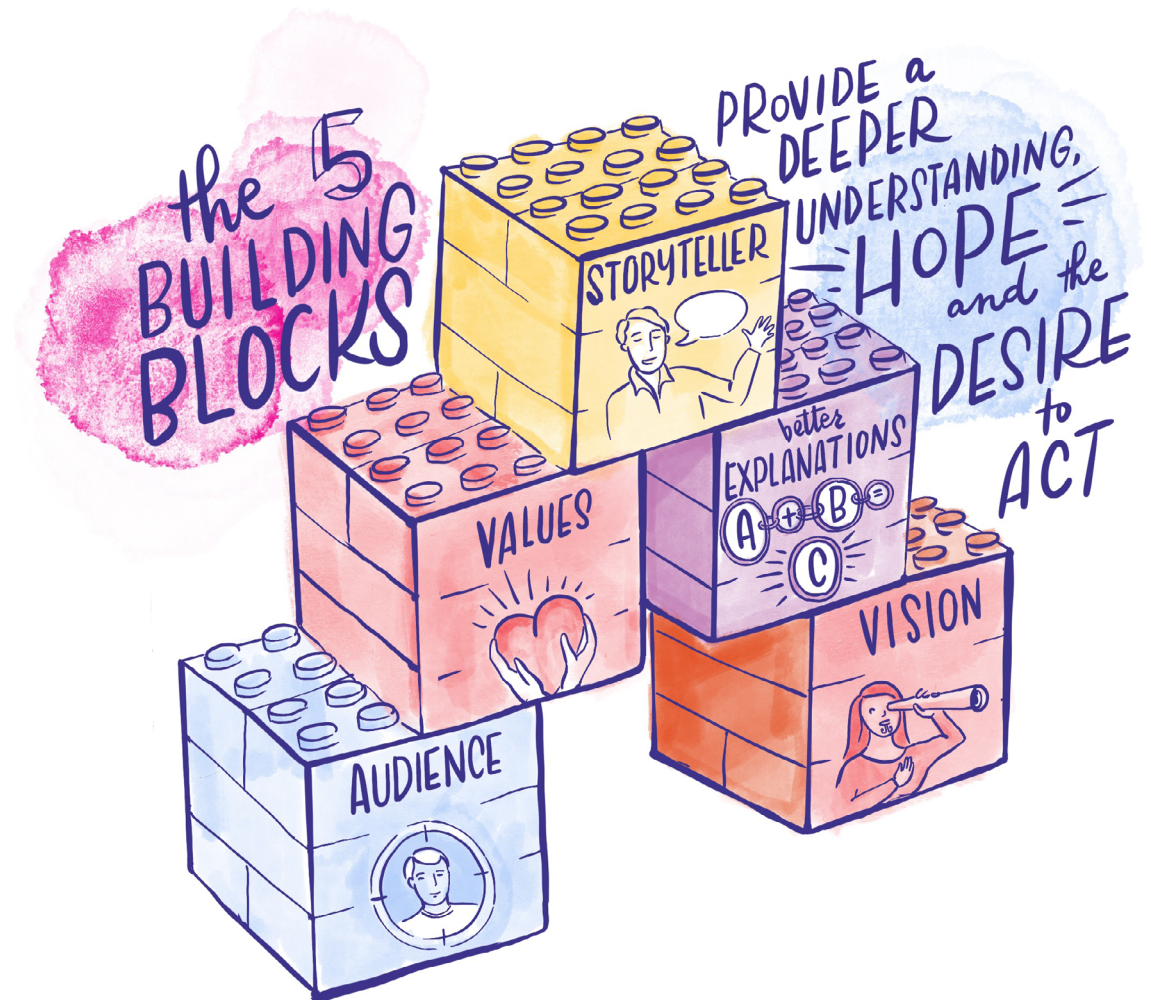
# The five building blocks of narratives for change

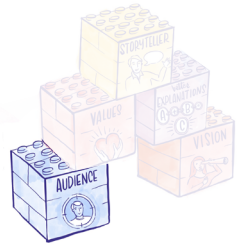
Now you know the thinking and narratives you want to avoid and the thinking you want to surface, how do you do that? How do you redirect people's thinking? To do this, we use the five building blocks of narratives for change.

At The Workshop, we've drawn on research from various disciplines to create a five-part framework of communications tools and strategies to surface more helpful thinking.

## This framework will:

- help you build new narratives (or surface existing helpful ones that are recessive)
- help you communicate your evidence – whether from science, mātauranga Māori or lived experience – and deepen people's thinking.





## Building block 1. Audience: who you should communicate with

The way you think about your audience matters when you are building new helpful narratives.

### Generally speaking, there are three main groups of people to consider when you think about your audience:

- People who are already persuaded.
- People who don't yet have a fixed view or who have mixed and sometimes competing views on climate change and climate action (the persuadables).
- People who are firmly opposed.

### Don't focus on people who are hard to persuade:

- If you think about and talk mainly to those who are firmly opposed to your message you will reinforce dominant narratives and unhelpful thinking. This can be hard to resist because those people are often loud and demand your attention.
- Engaging the firmly opposed often leads us into myth busting and negating false arguments. This amplifies those myths and unhelpful thinking for others and is both ineffective and potentially harmful.
- Instead, treat this small noisy opposition as an inevitable and fundamental part of shifting thinking and systems.



### Key insight:

Effective strategic communications will activate the people who are already persuaded by your message and convince people who are open to being persuaded on the issue.

### Engage people who are persuaded, but don't focus only on them:

- If you talk only to those who already understand your issues and are persuaded by your evidence and proposed solutions (your base), you won't develop new communication strategies, narratives or deeper understandings.
- If you test out ways of communicating your issue and evidence on this group, they will often make sense of confusing or ambiguous messages because they are already persuaded.
- While your base of persuaded people is important to your work and for carrying your message to others, treating them as your core audience and testing messages on them is often unhelpful.

### Focus on people who are persuadable:

Instead, focus on communicating with people who don't have a fixed view or who have mixed and sometimes competing views on the issue. We call these people 'persuadable' or 'fence-sitters'. On most issues, they are the majority.



## Special topic: simplifying co-governance for your audience through partnerships/relationships

- In this research, we have identified tangata Tiriti who are values-aligned on environmental issues as one important persuadable audience. These people may not yet have made the connection between environmental and social justice issues. As noted above, we don't recommend focusing on tangata Tiriti who are firmly opposed to co-governance, and although tangata Tiriti who are already persuaded are an important audience, we want to develop messages that are persuasive to those who are not yet settled in their view of the value or viability of co-governance.
  - In order to build support with persuadable audiences, we need to recognise their existing level of familiarity and understanding with the topic and use language they are likely to understand.
  - Many of us will have been told to 'meet people where they are' in our communications, but people in your persuadable audiences are not in one fixed place. Instead, they hold a range of different and sometimes contradictory views, so our job as communicators for change is to use language, frames and narratives that will engage their most helpful ways of thinking. This can and should include te reo Māori.
- One essential part of this is using language that is accessible and understandable to our persuadable audience. Most general tangata Tiriti audiences, beyond the already persuaded base, are unlikely to be familiar with the concept of co-governance.
  - Research has identified that the terms 'co-management' and 'co-governance' have become less understood as they are used in different contexts and across different sectors – even to those working in these areas.<sup>7</sup> As these phrases are adopted within the private sector, they have taken on new meanings based on more hierarchical and market-based arrangements rather than joint and shared decision-making relationships.<sup>8</sup>
  - Throughout this guide, we propose balanced and respectful partnership as an alternative framing of co-governance – those that build on common understandings of how reciprocal relationships work. This means working together in ways that encompass Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and rights, tino rangatiratanga and the care and protection of our biological heritage.

<sup>7</sup> Louis J. Kotzé et al., "Framing Governance," in *Global Environmental Governance: Law and Regulation for the 21st Century*, New Horizons in Environmental and Energy Law Series (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2012), 51–99, <https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/global-environmental-governance-9781781002520.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Leonie J. Pearson and Melanie (Lain) Dare, "Framing up the 'Stretching' of Co-Management," *Society & Natural Resources* 32, no. 4 (April 3, 2019): 363–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2018.1544677>.



# 2

## Building block 2. Lead with a concrete vision for a better world

- A vision builds hope – this is important because people are constantly being reminded of all the problems in the world.
- A vision can help overcome some of the cognitive biases that undermine support for change.
- A vision creates an invitation for people to consider the issue as important to them.
- When the front door is blocked by despair, fatalism or cynicism, a vision can open a side door for your evidence to be heard.

## Key principles of vision-making

### Make your vision concrete, believable and specific.

Paint a vivid picture of how the world will be better in concrete terms as a result of co-governance. How will people's day-to-day lives be better? In what concrete ways will the health and wellbeing of te taiao be improved?

When you talk about these concrete future benefits, be explicit about the interconnection of the benefits for people and for te taiao. Avoid talking about environmental benefits in isolation.

Lead with partnerships and demonstrate how environmental wellbeing is a direct outcome of established relationships or partnerships where decision making is shared equally.



### Key insight:

Lead your message with a clear vision of how the world will be better in concrete ways when the changes you are advocating for have all been made. This will motivate people to support your change and build their hope that change is possible.



## Special topic: visioning a world characterised by racial equity

Seeing and experiencing what the change feels like in small ways can help build understanding and support for longer-term changes and form part of effective vision making.

In the space of Tiriti-based partnerships, we may encounter shallow and hurtful thinking based in racist, colonial mindsets and explanations. In order to build deeper understanding and support, we can build inclusive visions of the future based on tested framing advice on how to frame race, racism and racial inequity.

Narrative research by FrameWorks<sup>9</sup> found that many White Americans were hesitant to support meaningful changes to racial inequities as they felt racism had little impact on their separate worlds and ‘fates’. This is an example of a common unhelpful mindset – us versus them – which is also reflected in some of the unhelpful thinking about co-governance in Aotearoa.

To counter this, FrameWorks suggested that advocates communicate how racism impacts everyone, complemented by a positive vision that clearly demonstrates the collective benefits of racial equity.

To do this, they suggest leading with a collective aspirational vision of the future by asking what would it actually look like to have a society characterised by racial equity?

- To make this vision clear and concrete for us here in Aotearoa, we should give examples of what an inclusive future of trusting relationships between tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti and the resulting thriving environment all look like. This could look like healthy birds, plants and waterways, people feeling connected to te taiao, tangata whenua feeling connected with each other and their Māoritanga, and tangata Tiriti feeling a secure sense of belonging in their own unique and shared identities.



### Champions’ reflections

Our champions reflected on some of the challenges around creating visions together. They reflected that the vision for many of them was that tangata Tiriti support tino rangatiratanga, which is much more expansive than the idea of a partnership.

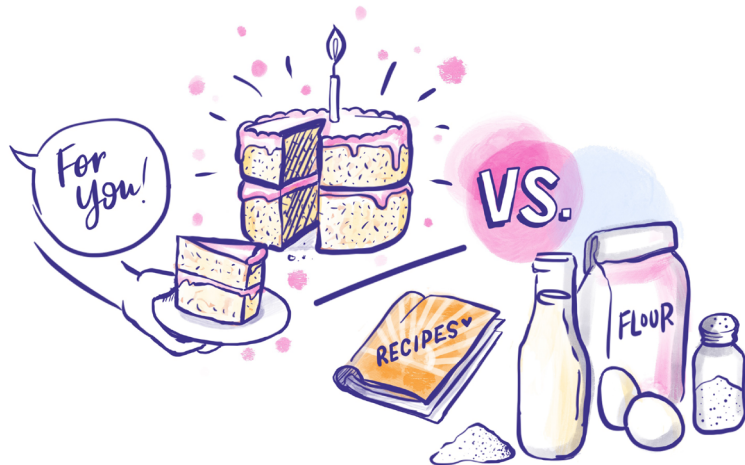
Such challenges will be best worked through by doing the actual mahi of collective vision making, testing and trying what works in respectful, reciprocal and balanced partnerships. One example of this is work we are doing with Actionstation, Tokona te Raki and Whakaaro Factory asking rangatahi what their vision for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi looks like.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Nat Kendall-Taylor and April Callen, “Here’s How Nonprofits Can Get Americans to Fight the Racism Laid Bare by Covid-19,” *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, April 29, 2020, <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/heres-how-nonprofits-can-get-americans-to-fight-the-racism-laid-bare-by-covid-19/>.

<sup>10</sup> Another great example of a Māori-led vision making project by Tokona te Raki can be found here: <http://www.maorifutures.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Kia-Puta-ki-Rangi%C4%81tea.pdf>

## Sell the cake, not the ingredients.

- It's the cake that motivates us to gather the ingredients and follow the recipe.
- While your ingredients are really important, they are not a vision. Your vision is the cake.
- Lead your communications with a vision, not a list of ingredients or steps needed to make it.
- If we spend a lot of time researching and thinking about what is needed to create change, it's natural to want to lead our messages with the detail of those recipes.
- Avoid leading with policy, legal or technological solutions such as "upholding the legal framework of the Treaty".



## Ensure your vision is inclusive of all people and their needs.

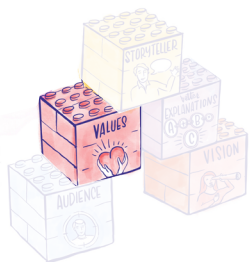
- Create inclusive visions in partnership with those most negatively impacted by current social and environmental conditions. This is also likely to improve long-term engagement.

## Show credible human-driven pathways to achieving the vision.

- A vision is motivating and can inspire hope, but without a credible pathway to achieve that vision, hope won't last long. This is where your recipe comes in. Having led with a vision, now identify the steps to achieve the vision. These may be smaller local-level changes such as ensuring local iwi and hapū are strongly resourced to undertake bioheritage protection measures.
- Put people in the picture. Persuadable audiences often don't have a clear idea of who can create change, especially at a system level. You can increase people's sense of control and agency if you identify the people in a system who can act to achieve the vision e.g., people in local government, hapū and iwi, the local community, a particular industry.
- Avoid passive language, by including a human agent. Without clear agents, people default to thinking change is impossible. Name the agents who can build trusted partnerships for environmental action.

## Avoid negating or myth busting.

- Repeating myths or opposing stories in order to negate them just reinforces them in the minds of some persuadable people. Don't spend your precious energy and time doing that. Instead, focus on telling your positive story for action and reframe the debate.



## Building block 3. Connecting with what matters to people: values that motivate

Values are what matters most to us in life. They are at the heart of human motivations. Engaging with people's values is shown to help better communicate science and human rights messages.

# 3

- ➔ Dominant public narratives tell us that money, personal success and our public image are most important. These are known as **extrinsic and individual values**.
- ➔ Many public narratives also surface fears for our own health and safety or that of our loved ones. These are known as security values.
- ➔ Research shows that what matters most to most people is taking care of each other and the planet, discovery, creativity and reaching our own goals. These are known as **intrinsic and collective values**. These intrinsic values are the ones most likely to engage people in deeper thinking about complex issues and improving systems for collective wellbeing.



### Key insight:

Use intrinsic and collective values to communicate about issues of collective wellbeing.



### Tip:

One way to identify the values in your message is to ask what is the reason this message gives for why this change should happen?



---

## Values for co-governance and environmental health

### Use the value of self-direction as a reason for co-governance

This self-direction value encourages helpful thinking about people and communities having the ability to realise their own aspirations and lead their own futures.

Self-direction helps people to connect with the social justice aspect of environmental issues, particularly when our messages are explicit about the power and decision-making imbalance that not only affects the environment but people and communities as well. Importantly, this value can be used to avoid *zero-sum* thinking by pointing to social inequity, the conditions that keep these inequities in place and the specific agents who hold the power to enact change.

In Aotearoa, self-direction could refer more specifically to ensuring that Te Tiriti o Waitangi and tino rangatiratanga are honoured through co-governance agreements that mean mana whenua have greater decision making over their whenua and natural resources.

**\*Note:** In UK research, self-direction was used to talk about rebalancing power and those who were most impacted by climate change needing to have a say in the decisions that directly affect them.<sup>11</sup> We are not sure yet what happens when you talk about one community being impacted more deeply by something many of us care about. In the next stages of the research, we can look at different ways to build understanding around the impacts and harms of biodiversity loss and climate change in relation to self-direction and solidarity.



### What does this sound like?

“No matter who we are, having the freedom to decide what should be done about the things that matter to us is important. For local communities, including iwi and hapū, being able to decide how we want to respond to harms to the environment we live in and are closest to is critical to solutions that work. This means decision making needs to move from corporates and government to those local groups working together on place-based social and environmental outcomes that will benefit us all.”

---

<sup>11</sup> PIRC, 350.org, and NEON, “Framing Climate Justice.”

---

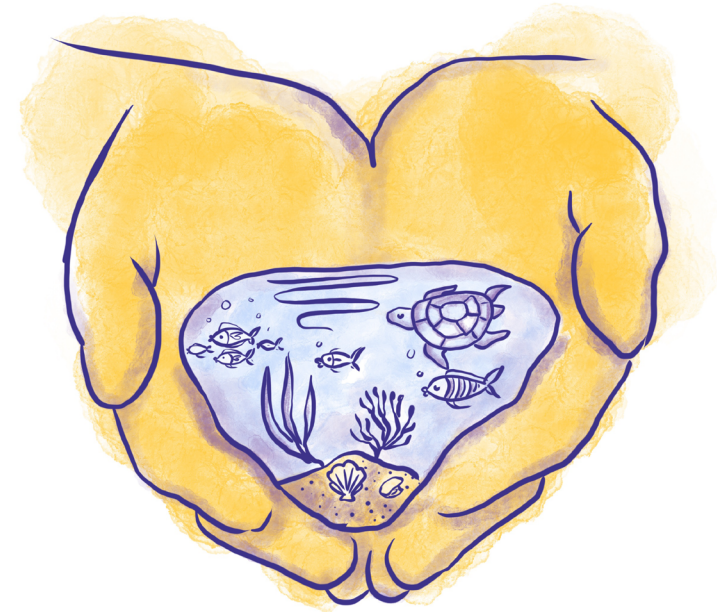
## Use the values of protection and interconnection with the environment

Protection is a useful value for talking about co-governance when it is specifically framed as part of a mutual, interconnected relationship between people and the environment. This interconnectedness frame helps to avoid engaging unhelpful, colonial ideas of conservation that treat different areas or species as independent from one another. Be intentional about framing people as living in a mutually sustaining relationship with an environment that must be taken care of to take care of us, our health and wellbeing.<sup>12</sup>



### ***What does this sound like?***

“Living in harmony with the planet and environment is important to ensure our own good health and wellbeing. Deciding and working together in reciprocal and respectful ways to protect our biodiversity and taonga species helps the environment and it helps us.”



---

<sup>12</sup> Sharon Bell, Jess Berentson-Shaw, and Marianne Elliott, “How to Talk about Air Quality and Environmental Health” (Wellington, New Zealand: The Workshop, 2021).

---

## Use the values of solidarity and equity

Recent narrative research<sup>13</sup> found that, despite increasing concern for the environment, many people in the UK still struggled to connect the dots between social justice and environmental issues. This is an important finding for us here in Aotearoa, as co-governance for bioheritage is as much about joint decision making, equity and human relationships as it is about shared aspirations and care for our environment. In order to build deeper understanding about the inequities central to climate issues and avoid shallow thinking of separatism or us versus them, the researchers suggest drawing on the value of solidarity that highlights our shared humanity and affinity for those most impacted by climate change. One way we see solidarity framed in Aotearoa New Zealand is through relationships, collective responsibility and working together.



### What does this sound like?

“To protect our biological heritage together requires decision makers to understand and recognise the strengths that mana whenua bring to this work: the values, knowledge and deep experience iwi and hapū have in environmental management. For this to happen, we need to stand in solidarity with hapū and iwi and support mana whenua-led kaitiakitanga and decision making that benefits our interconnected ecosystems.”



---

<sup>13</sup> PIRC, 350.org, and NEON, “Framing Climate Justice.”

---

## Use the values of responsible management and pragmatism

From research on climate change by the FrameWorks Institute<sup>14</sup>, the idea of responsible management value is to surface thinking around both stewardship or duty to our planet and local environment and doing the thing that works. The pragmatism value communicates that it is important to solve our communities' problems by taking a 'common-sense' approach, replacing approaches that don't work with 'proven alternatives'.

People often use cost-effectiveness arguments when they would be better to lead with responsible management and pragmatism. Leading narratives with cost-effectiveness, money or allocation of funding tends to surface zero-sum thinking – more for you means less for me. Responsible management and pragmatism, on the other hand, can help surface more collective thinking while also allowing the space for more generative cost-effectiveness discussions – “which of these effective solutions?” as opposed to “none of these solutions”. In the area of co-governance for bioheritage, we see this being used effectively to frame the responsibilities of decision makers to share leadership with tangata whenua as responsible Te Tiriti partners, and because it's common sense and practical to do this thing that works for the health of the environment.



## What does this sound like?

“It's important we take responsible steps to manage the issues facing our environment, including threats to our native species. We need to listen to the people who understand what works to solve these problems. The most practical approach to environmental management is drawing on all available evidence and expertise to help us protect our ecosystems. Responsible management of our bioheritage means thinking long term, balancing decision making with iwi and hapū and ensuring those with localised knowledge can lead in protecting our local environments.”

---

<sup>14</sup> Susan Nall Bales, Julie Sweetland, and Andrew Volmert, “How to Talk about Climate Change and the Ocean: Prepared for the National Network for Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation with Support from the National Science Foundation” (FrameWorks Institute, 2015), <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/publication/how-to-talk-about-climate-change-and-the-ocean-prepared-for-the-national-network-for-ocean-and-climate-change-interpretation-with-support-from-the-national-science-foundation/>.

## Values to avoid and embrace in your communications

Avoid	Embrace
<p>→ <b>Fear and security values.</b> This is when communicators imply that something dreadful will happen if we don't act on climate change or biodiversity loss.</p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, "If we don't take steps to preserve our biodiversity our very future is under threat."</p> <p>→ There is a subtle difference in talking about the loss of something being important because this thing is inherently valuable to all of us as opposed to it being important because its loss puts the audience's individual sense of safety and security at risk. Make sure you are talking about its inherent value and ask why does this loss matter?</p>	<p>→ Hopeful messages that embrace solidarity through social justice values and self-direction of iwi, hapū and local communities.</p> <p>→ Talk about the need for a voice, self-determination, and working together.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>→ This can also look like finding creative solutions together, being responsible, loving and wanting to protect the environment we care about and each other.<sup>16</sup></p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, "Through co-governance partnerships, we can effectively care for our environment and protect our biodiverse ecosystems. To do this, we need to support the efforts of hapū and iwi who hold deep knowledge of their local environments and potential solutions. We need to ensure mana whenua lead in decisions that benefit our interconnected ecosystems."</p> <p>→ Draw connections between the collective values shared between some non-Pākehā tangata Tiriti communities and tangata whenua where applicable to your audiences.</p> <p>→ Talk about protecting something because it is important to us and something we care about.</p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, for Māori communicators, "By protecting our taonga species, we can ensure that our cultural knowledge and practices continue to be handed down to future generations."</p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, "By protecting our native species, we can retain our collective history and the living things that make the place we live special."</p>
<p>→ Leading with economic values like cost-effectiveness or value to the economy when discussing the benefits of improved biosecurity and diversity. This triggers individualistic thinking and action (what's in it for me versus what's in it for us).</p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, "Working in partnership with those who are most impacted by biodiversity loss will help us find the most cost-effective solutions."</p>	<p>→ Responsible management and pragmatism.</p> <p>→ More effective than leading with cost-effectiveness or cost is leading with values about responsibility, responsible management and pragmatism.</p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, "Responsible management of our environment means thinking long term for future generations. This means taking practical steps, relying on common sense and drawing on all the evidence and expertise we have to look after our surroundings and our communities."</p>

<sup>15</sup> PIRC, 350.org, and NEON, "Framing Climate Justice."

<sup>16</sup> Marianne Elliott and Jess Berentson-Shaw, "How to Talk About Climate Change: A Short Guide" (Wellington, New Zealand: The Workshop, 2019), <https://www.theworkshop.org.nz/publications/how-to-talk-about-climate-change-a-short-guide-2019>.

## Building block 4. Provide better explanations

Too often as advocates, researchers and knowledge holders, we describe a problem or a solution we are working on, skipping over the explanation that is needed for people to understand fully – why it matters, how it came about, who is responsible and what to do.

People think in stories. If they have the story wrong, they are going to need a new story, not just facts or declarations about what is. This is what better explanations are all about.

### In strategic communication, a good explanation:

- provides a complete new story about co-governance and why it matters
- avoids repackaging unhelpful thinking and narratives
- includes an intentional and helpful way of framing the issue
- is solutions driven
- uses facts as a character in a complete story about causes, effects and solutions.

We don't always have to slow people's thinking to better explain an issue. We can explain in ways that work with people's fast-thinking system (simplifying models).

These are three different techniques we can use as communicators to help people better understand our work and the changes we need them to support. The key simplifying explanatory strategies or tools are:

- frames
- metaphors
- explanatory chains.

### Frames

- Frames are pre-packaged explanations about how the world works.
- Frames surface particular ways of thinking about an issue. For example, health is often framed as an individual responsibility through the language, metaphors, and images we see.
- Frames are one of many cognitive shortcuts we take to make the mental effort of information processing easier.
- Frames are employed unconsciously and are often shared across a culture.
- We cannot avoid frames or negate or myth bust unhelpful ones, but we can replace them with better ones.



## Avoid

- Frames that set one group in opposition to another and suggest that the fates of different groups are separate from each other and reinforce 'us versus them' thinking.

**E.g.**, "People who live rurally are more impacted by biodiversity loss than those living in the city."

- Frames that position one group as the saviours of others or position certain groups as the givers or recipients of charity.

**E.g.**, "It is our responsibility to make sure that rural communities are protected from the impacts of invasive pests."

- Framing the natural environment in terms of its economic value and using market and commodity language to describe the environment.

This includes language like 'natural capital', 'environmental assets', 'return on investment', 'stocks' and 'low carbon-economy.'

**E.g.**, "Natural capital refers to all aspects of the natural environment. It includes individual assets such as land, soil, water, trees, plants and wildlife. It also includes broader ecosystems and the joint functioning of different environmental assets."

**E.g.**, "Ecosystem services flow from natural capital stocks and processes and translate to benefits that give rise to the things that societies value."

- These examples frame nature as a commodity that can be infinitely extracted from as long as environmental health remains at an equilibrium.

## Embrace

- Frames that invite the audience to see themselves and act in solidarity with others and focus on our shared humanity and fates.

- One way we see this being done is through a leadership frame reflecting iwi, hapū and rangatahi as leaders and innovators at the forefront of environmental protection and through caring for the environment, tangata whenua lead in caring for all of us.

**E.g.**, "Through co-governance partnerships, we can effectively care for our environment and protect our biodiverse ecosystems. To do this, we need to support the efforts of hapū and iwi who hold deep knowledge of their local environments and potential solutions. We need to ensure mana whenua lead in decisions that benefit our interconnected ecosystems."

- Draw connections between the collective values shared between some non-Pākehā tangata Tiriti communities and tangata whenua where applicable to your audiences.

- Talk about protecting something because it is important to us and something we care about.

**E.g.**, "We can support the leadership of iwi, hapū and tangata whenua at the forefront of environmental protection in order to best care for the environment and our collective wellbeing."

- A key recommendation for speaking about different groups working together is using frames that signal to the audience the shared interests between these groups. Then be specific about what these interests are.

**E.g.**, "Partnership between council and hapū can lead to the outcomes we are all working towards: healthy and thriving waterways."

- Framing the natural environment in ways that make it clear that ecosystems are interconnected and dynamic.

**E.g.**, "We have a reciprocal relationship with our environment, and how we care for the soil impacts the rest of our dynamic ecosystem."

**E.g.**, for Māori communicators, "Ki uta, ki tai – all aspects of our ecosystem are interconnected from the mountains through to the lakes, estuaries, rivers and all the way out to the ocean."

*Continued over page >>*

## Avoid

- Using resilience and sustainability framing to talk about environmental health.
- This frame leads to thinking of solutions as ‘nice to have’ and reactive rather than essential and proactive.

## Embrace

- Building environmental health.
  - E.g.**, “Enhancing the mauri of te taiao.”
  - E.g.**, “Proactive environmental management involves building environmental health to withstand challenges that may arise.”



### Champions’ reflections

Our champions wanted to see clear articulation of the specific and distinct ways in which environmental degradation harms Māori. The challenge is finding effective ways to communicate this while avoiding the unhelpful, dominant ‘us versus them’ frame. Some of the strategies outlined above (using the solidarity value and leadership frame) may be effective ways to avoid surfacing the ‘us versus them’ mindset when talking about the specific ways that Māori, as Indigenous people, experience the harm of environmental degradation. We recommend testing this in the next phase of this project.





## Metaphors

Metaphors are a simplifying model and narrative tool we can use to explain a complex thing and help our audience quickly grasp better, deeper understandings. A metaphor takes something we understand on a practical everyday level (like the weather or machines) and connects it to the abstract or complex issue to help explain how something works or a change we want to make – for example we *drive* the economy, or we *shift* the economic *settings*.

### Some general principles for using metaphors

- Check your communications for metaphors you have used unintentionally. Because they are so common in our language, we often use metaphors without realising.



**Tip:**

Images often contain metaphors – if possible, test images before use.

- Avoid untested metaphors where possible. If you don't have any tested metaphors to use, consider what ideas, beliefs and explanations any metaphors you use might surface.

## The fortress and the garden metaphors

An interesting metaphor to test with audiences in Aotearoa would be the fortress and garden metaphors described in research by Indigenous scientist Dr Robin Wall Kimmerer.<sup>17</sup> These metaphors may help highlight the importance of bridging knowledge systems and navigate away from unhelpful thinking about the superiority of ‘Western’ science.

The metaphor of a fortress is used to help people see unhelpful scientific superiority thinking – the “intellectual monoculture” of Western science institutions. Specifically, the author describes this fortress as “a huge, grey edifice of high walls and few windows ... the walls are thick and the doors are guarded”. This metaphor, while helpful to highlight scientific superiority thinking, might unintentionally lead to unhelpful thinking about the important work that does happen in academic settings, particularly by Māori working in these spaces. We suggest that this metaphor is used with care, perhaps where it is clear Māori are being shut out of such institutions, and explain the benefits of tearing down the walls.

The metaphor of the garden is used to surface more helpful thinking about how we are interconnected with the environment and ecosystems that we are trying to protect. In this case, the metaphor is a garden where corn, beans and squash crops are grown together. This surfaces thinking about symbiosis, ecosystems and building soil health. This is a garden where all parties can learn “from the earth, not about the earth” and where interconnected wellbeing stems from a balanced and nurtured polyculture. Within this garden metaphor, we all have a choice of how we are involved – we can be gatekeepers or we can be gardeners, growing and sharing knowledge.



### What does this sound like?

“We can realise the shared dreams of our ancestors in signing Te Tiriti through growing complementary knowledge and approaches together. Like in a garden, where different growing techniques are used, different types of soil and plants are tended, and as different gardeners working and sharing together, we learn more and create a richer, more flourishing garden.”



<sup>17</sup> Dr Robin W. Kimmerer, “The fortress, the river and the garden,” in *Contemporary Studies in Environmental and Indigenous Pedagogies: A Curricula of Stories and Place*, ed. Andrejs Kulnieks, Dan Roronhiakewen Longboat, and Kelly Young (Rotterdam: SensePublishers, 2013), 49–76, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-293-8\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-293-8_4).

---

## Upstream environments, downstream health metaphor

The upstream/downstream metaphor has been tested for its ability to help explain the importance of environmental health.<sup>18</sup> Researchers found this metaphor can help to surface helpful thinking about environmental health and redirect people away from unhelpful thinking.

The upstream/downstream metaphor gets people to think more helpfully about the connections between environmental factors and human health and wellbeing and the need for intervention and prevention.

**\*Note:** Because of the literal aspect of this metaphor for those working in water health, experiment with it in situations and with audiences where you feel it will be most helpful.



### ***What does this sound like?***

“We all live downstream from environmental factors such as biodiversity loss that negatively affect our health. We need to work together upstream to create positive environmental conditions for human health. This will make sure that what flows downstream builds a healthy and safe environment for all of us.”

---

**18** Eric Lindland, Andrew Volmert, and Abigail Haydon, “We Need a Ground Crew for Environmental Health Working Upstream: Using Explanatory Metaphors to Improve Public Understanding of Environmental Health and Its Workforce” (FrameWorks Institute & American Public Health Association, May 2014), <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/publication/we-need-a-ground-crew-for-environmental-health-working-upstream-using-explanatory-metaphors-to-improve-public-understanding-of-environmental-health-and-its-workforce/>.

---

## Locking and unlocking

The unlocking metaphor has been used to frame bioheritage research in Aotearoa<sup>19</sup> but has not been tested in this context. We have tested the unlocking metaphor as a way to help people think about poverty, where it helped redirect the thinking of persuadable people away from shallow ideas about personal responsibility and helped people see structural drivers of poverty.

We see the potential for this metaphor helping to talk about co-governance in two ways. The first is to communicate how, despite the significant efforts of hapū and iwi in protecting their whenua and in leading legal/constitutional change, tangata whenua have been and continue to be *locked out* of decision making by central government and the processes of colonisation.

The second way is to recognise the additive potential of *unlocking* complementary knowledge and approaches while acknowledging that mātauranga is taonga, locally specific, ever evolving and both held and protected by tangata whenua. Using this unlocking metaphor carefully might help to communicate that all knowledge is equally valid and provides meaningful ways of understanding the world around us and that, together, when holders of different knowledge are strongly resourced and have decision-making power to implement this knowledge themselves, we can collectively realise an enhanced understanding and strategy to address the environmental challenges we face.



### What does this sound like?

“Centralised environmental management strategies have *locked* hapū and iwi out of decision making. To recognise the strengths Māori bring to this work, to honour Māori knowledge and centuries of localised observations and experience, people in government and policy makers need to *unlock* complementary knowledge approaches by devolving the decision-making power to hapū and iwi and ensuring they are strongly resourced to continue to lead in environmental management.”



### Champions' reflections

.....  
This metaphor should be used with care to avoid extractive thinking surrounding mātauranga as something that can be taken without permission and used by non-Māori, and it should be recognised that some knowledge, such as mātauranga, is not for everyone

---

<sup>19</sup> James Ataria et al., “Whakamanahia te mātauranga o Te Māori: Empowering Māori knowledge to support Aotearoa’s aquatic biological heritage,” *New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research* 52, no. 4 (October 2, 2018): 467–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00288330.2018.1517097>.

## Avoid

- Metaphors that inadvertently depict mātauranga as a resource that can be taken out of context and used within non-Māori frameworks.

**E.g.**, “Mātauranga is one of many tools in our collective toolkit.”

- Partnership/relationship metaphors that inadvertently create separate fates between two parties.

**E.g.**, “We are on separate paths.”

- Metaphors that evoke war and fighting imagery.

**E.g.**, “Fighting off pests”, “war against climate change.”

- Complex metaphors and co-governance models that require an explanation to understand.

- Assuming all metaphors will work with all audiences.

## Embrace

- Metaphors like unlocking complementary ways of knowing and enhanced understanding<sup>20</sup> – those that have an explicit link between the validity of mātauranga-based environmental management and the self-determination of hapū and iwi Māori.

- This metaphor has worked well in other contexts as it is able to be used to clearly articulate who the agents are that have done the locking and who is able to do the unlocking. Where possible, get as close as you are able to naming the specific agents responsible.

- Journey metaphors that connect the shared contributions and aspirations of different parties.<sup>21</sup>

**E.g.**, multiple people in one canoe, a waka and fishing boat bridged by a deck, interwoven awa.



### Champions’ reflections

When using these metaphors, it is important to honour the distinctiveness of all included and avoid unhelpful thinking of homogeneity within tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti parties and identities.

- Clear and effective metaphors that are culturally appropriate to the audience you want to communicate with.

- Metaphors developed for Māori audiences or drawing from mātauranga, designed by Māori.



### Champions’ reflections

The champions highlighted that care and consideration needs to be exercised when using Māori metaphors with tangata Tiriti audiences or when used by tangata Tiriti Māori communicators. There have been many instances where Māori metaphors, names and stories have been appropriated and used poorly. This should be avoided by those who are not confident in the appropriateness of the context that Māori narratives are used in.

**20, 21** These metaphors have been drawn from Aotearoa-based research but need to be tested and used with care. Give them a go and see how they work with your audiences.

---

## Using facts

→ Facts are a character in the story you want to tell about what the problem is, who it affects and how, the need to act, who made it happen and who can change it and how.

People's mental models about issues are constructed in a chain (like a story), so we need to replace that chain.

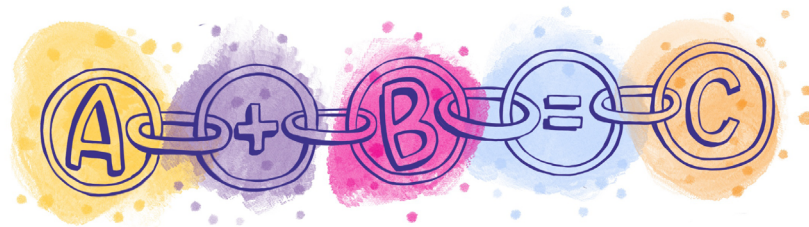
→ Facts are not the entire story. To help talk about facts more effectively, use explanatory chains.

→ Metaphors such as the ones above can help do some of the heavy lifting when used in an explanatory chain.

---

### Putting facts into a story: Using explanatory chains

Explanatory chains are a tool to help us explain an issue and solutions using your facts.



#### Explanatory chain:

1. foreground the issue positively (for example, a short vision, values or why it matters)
2. identify the cause of the problem upfront
3. provide general conceptual accounts of the indirect and direct impacts
4. end with solutions.

## An example explanatory chain for co-governance and environmental health

<p><b>Foreground the issue</b></p>	<p>Protecting our country’s unique biological heritage will ensure a healthy and flourishing taiao. At the local level, there are many leaders who are doing this important work.</p>
<p><b>Identify the cause of the problem</b></p>	<p>However, those on the ground, including mana whenua who have knowledge and skills essential to this work, are locked out by people in central government who are making decisions on how myrtle rust should be managed without including the existing efforts and expertise of local communities.</p>
<p><b>Accounts of the indirect and direct impacts, provide a few facts</b></p>	<p>This exclusion of important people like mana whenua and their extensive knowledge, the values of mātauranga Māori and failure to share resources has downstream effects. Myrtle rust in the Raukumara Range will cause localised ramarama shrub extinction. As one of the only fruiting berries in the winter for birds to feed on, its extinction will create an imbalance in the ngahere ecosystem, leaving birds without food, which in turn affects the insect, soil and plant ecosystem.<sup>22</sup> Local kaitiaki are eager to help protect the shrub and develop strategies but are locked out and under-resourced.</p>
<p><b>Solutions</b></p>	<p>People in central and local government can recognise the leadership, knowledge and strengths of mana whenua in this work and drive proactive co-governance partnership agreements with them. They can draw on the aspirations and expertise of all parties to identify together the challenges and changes that will have the biggest impact. They can strongly resource local communities, including mana whenua, to continue to lead environmental research and management. In this way, local ecosystems can be monitored and cared for by those who are surrounded by them every day and know them best.</p>

<sup>22</sup> Kate Nicol-Williams, “Government’s Myrtle Rust Response Failing to Genuinely Involve Iwi, Ngāti Porou Kaitiaki Says,” TVNZ, 2021, <https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/governments-myrtle-rust-response-failing-genuinely-involve-iwi-ng-ti-porou-kaitiaki-says>.

---

## Choose language that serves your narrative

---

## Use simple, clear language. Avoid technical language and jargon.

Even when your audience has technical expertise, using clear and concrete language is more likely to serve the narrative strategies set out above. Jargon, technical and abstract language can obscure your meaning.

### Example: Avoid technical human rights and legal language

#### One example of technical language is the way we talk about human rights.

- As advocates, we want to talk about legal rights and the instruments that protect them because we understand the importance of human rights mechanisms as tools for achieving things that matter, like dignity, self-determination and equity.
- Persuadable people may care deeply about those outcomes but not see the relevance of constitutional law or how Te Tiriti o Waitangi relates to achieving those outcomes in everyday contexts.
- This may be particularly true of persuadable people who do not have a firsthand experience of what it is like to have your basic rights neglected or violated.

#### Instead of using the technical language of human rights, we recommend that you:

- talk about the values that underpin those rights, like human dignity, self-determination, broadmindedness, equity and justice (why human rights matter)
- talk in concrete terms about the things people need in order to live with dignity and self-determination
- name the agents who are responsible for protecting and enabling those concrete things, the existing barriers to that protection and enjoyment and who needs to act differently to remove those barriers.



#### Key insight:

Talk about the things that people need in order to live a good life. This certainly does not preclude you from voicing injustice or naming the barriers faced in ensuring Te Tiriti rights are honoured.





**Example: Avoid technical human rights and legal language *continued***

In the campaign for marriage equality in Australia, the use of a human rights frame was not as effective as advocates hoped as a way to surface helpful thinking and build support for change. What worked better was naming the reason marriage equality mattered to the people who were most affected by it. That reason or value was love and their ability to express that love and have it be recognised and honoured by the world.



**Champions’ reflections**

Narrative research tells us that many general audiences don’t have a clear understanding of human rights. What might be more effective for building public support is to talk about the things that people need in order to live well and with dignity. Based on our champions’ reflections, we want to ensure we recognise the tension in this undertaking. The advice in this section certainly does not preclude you from speaking about violations of rights as Māori or in specifically using the word ‘rights’ if you feel it cannot be omitted. As a part of the tools we humbly offer in this guide, a good place to expand on this could be in one or multiple explanatory chains across different communications.

Avoid	Embrace
<p>→ Technical, legal human rights language</p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “The government has failed to honour Treaty rights.”</p>	<p>→ Naming the concrete things people need in order to live with dignity and why that matters (values).</p> <p>→ Naming the barriers, the changes needed to remove those barriers and who is responsible for those changes (agents).</p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “People in iwi and hapū have a deep connection with and responsibility for their local ecosystems. In order to honour that responsibility, people in power can recognise their rangatiratanga and knowledge and work with them to protect those ecosystems.”</p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “In honouring their responsibility as Te Tiriti partners, people in government can meet the needs of everyone in our country.”</p>

---

## Use agentic language

We want people to understand that there are things they can do that will help make the biggest differences to fix issues.

- Headlines such as “Myrtle rust finds its way into the Waitākere Ranges” fail to name a person or agent involved in the problem.
- This makes it hard for people to see who needs to act and what needs to be done.
- One way to help people lift their gaze and see what needs to happen is to name the specific agents of change within the system.


For example, we can talk about members of a ‘bioheritage ground crew’ that includes iwi and hapū and biosecurity experts as well as people in government who can make decisions that have a positive effect on systems and structures.

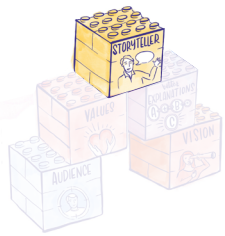
- What this may sound like: “I can help protect taonga like pōhutukawa if people in government make changes to ensure iwi and hapū are strongly resourced in this work.”
- This helps to draw people’s focus to aspects of our bioheritage that people do have control over and gives them a sense of competence.



### Tip:

When naming agents, it is important to label the bad behaviour instead of implying that people or groups of people are bad. This is especially important when, for example, we want people in government to be seen as the solution (even when their behaviour is currently a problem).

Avoid	Embrace
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Passive language without an agent named such as “Tiriti/Treaty rights”.</li> <li>→ Naming ambiguous government and tangata whenua groups: “Māori and the Crown.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Be as specific as possible when naming agents and their responsibilities.</li> <li>→ In order to make change seem possible, it is important to highlight who holds the power to enact change, such as the Minister for the Environment.</li> <li>→ It is also important to name the distinctiveness of local mana whenua groups, for example, Ngāti Kahukuraawhitia.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Using jargon such a ‘co-governance’ or ‘constitutional change’.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Use simple and concrete language drawing from existing understanding around partnership and “the changes that will make the biggest difference”.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Describing the problem with a lot of historical detail about colonisation.</li> <li>→ Assuming people have an awareness of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and distinctions between the two documents and their relevance in contemporary life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Explanatory chains that start with cause, lead people through effects and a few impactful historical details, ending with solutions.</li> </ul> <div style="border: 1px dashed orange; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p> <b>Champions’ reflections</b></p> <p>Based on our champions’ reflections, we recognise that this is incredibly difficult work to summarise a long and painful history, and we want to ensure that the important context of these issues and impacts are not oversimplified. Where possible, it can be helpful to narrow down your explanation to some key details. Multiple explanatory chains can be used to unpack the historical contexts of different issues and barriers to realising change.</p> </div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Labelling politicians or institutions as corrupt, evil or broken. It enacts a sense of fatalism and thinking that government solutions will not work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ If we are going to propose co-governance with local and central government, we need audiences to be able to trust in government solutions.</li> <li>→ Advocates can and should address this mistrust. One productive way of doing this is through naming the problematic behaviour and/or naming the new behaviour required.</li> </ul>



# 5

## Building block 5. Storytellers and messengers

- We all use credibility and trust as one mental shortcut – it's less work to take a trusted person's advice than assess all the information ourselves (credibility mental shortcut).
- We also use mental shortcuts in deciding who to trust or who is credible – how someone looks, the institutions they come from, past experience with similar people or institutions.
- Expertise is about perception, not technical expertise.

---

### Three principles on Storytellers:

#### 1. Use trusted others to provide positive social proof and improve credibility of a message

- » We move to accept beliefs and positions that we see frequently repeated in order to fit in.
- » Repetition from trusted others confers credibility to the information you are trying to get across.
- » This cuts both ways – repeating unhelpful information gives it credibility.

#### 2. Use messengers with shared values

- » It is important to find messengers that people can see represent their values.
- » Use surprising messengers – for example, people seen as conservative talking about climate action.

#### 3. Pair the right messenger with the right message

- » Pair effective narratives with a messenger that is trusted/credible to your audience.
- » Choose messengers who will bring with them trust and credibility for your persuadable audience and who are in a position to transition/slide your audience into your helpful message.

---

### What is social proof?

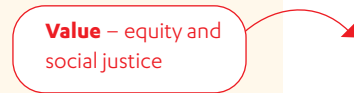
Showing people that others who they consider trustworthy support changes and are engaging in action to do so is a more effective strategy to build support for things like co-governance than presenting people with negative facts about the problem.

## Drawing on positive examples of co-governance

In order to build support for co-governance partnerships in environmental management, we as communicators need specific examples of what positive co-governance can look like.

- Compelling stories can be drawn from the experiences and voices of local communities and hearing from multiple parties working together on a common interest.
- It would be good to draw on a few of these examples that have been identified by the National Science Challenge or local hapū/iwi/organisations it works with – a set of mutually beneficial instances of co-governance partnerships to draw on as a way into complex and locally specific challenges.

# Putting it all together – an example message for a healthy taiao



## Steps 1 & 2: Articulate a positive and inclusive vision and identify helpful intrinsic values: the why

“Across our communities, urban and rural, we all want to contribute to a healthy and flourishing taiao. Where all people have access to being in relationship with and protecting te taiao and where our water is clean and our awa are abundant with fish and plants that can teach and sustain us and our future generations. Regardless of where we may live, healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are vital to our collective wellbeing.”

## Step 3: What is preventing the realisation of this vision? (Here is the opportunity to provide better explanations about co-governance and effective environmental management: the who, the how, the where.)

“Yet across places in Aotearoa, hapū and iwi are not having their knowledge and values recognised or their voices heard. People in government designing centralised environmental management strategies have locked hapū and iwi out of decision making. These arrangements prevent us from realising the benefits that come from honouring Māori knowledge and the many ways of knowing and caring for te taiao.”

## Steps 4: Present solutions

Attribute better outcomes (honouring Te Tiriti and improved bioheritage protection) based on evidence of the cause.

“When people in government engage in reciprocal and balanced relationships with iwi, hapū and local communities deciding together, and resource them to do the work they are already leading on, they unlock the opportunity to better protect the bird, plant and aquatic life and to overcome harmful practices that have created these problems.”

## Steps 5: Present action/resolution (the what now?)

“We have an opportunity to build the health of communities and ecosystems. Together we can tell people in politics at the local and national level that we need them to support co-governance arrangements and the benefits for our environment we all care for that come with mana whenua led-environmental management.”

# Glossary

---

<b>Agents</b>	Our fast thinking system makes it difficult for people to see the actors or human agents who make decisions and affect outcomes in complex systems like the economy or environmental health system. The solution is to show the humans that made this problem and the humans that can fix this problem. This is called naming agents.
<b>Extrinsic/individual values</b>	Extrinsic values are when what matters most, or the principles that guide our decisions are centered on external approval or rewards and losses. For example, social power, money, or concern about image.
<b>Frames</b>	Frames are both a) 'prepackaged' mental models or mindsets that help us to make sense of ideas and b) communication tools that evoke these mindsets. Frames act as guides directing people where to look and interpret what they see. Every message or communication is presented through a frame.
<b>Intrinsic/collective values</b>	Intrinsic values are when what matters most, or the principles that guide our decisions, are centered on internal or collective rewards and losses, for example, care for others or connection with nature.
<b>Mana whenua</b>	Māori iwi and hapū who have customary authority and rights over particular land and its management.
<b>Metaphors</b>	Metaphors are a simplifying explanatory strategy that connects an abstract concept to a concrete or known concept. They help people quickly grasp a better, deeper explanation for complex issues. For example "unlocking poverty".
<b>Narratives</b>	Narratives are stories found across our culture and communications that capture preexisting or shared understandings about the world and influence our thinking. For example Individualism is a narrative that is embedded in many different communications that explains problems as resulting from a lack of individual effort and solutions as about individual effort or choice.
<b>Surfacing</b>	The process by which mindsets, helpful/unhelpful thinking, or values are brought to the fore of people's thinking.

---



<b>Tangata Tiriti</b>	The descendants of those people who arrived in Aotearoa from many places after Māori and signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi and those who have since migrated as the Treaty allowed (including Pākehā/white people and people of colour who also have different histories of marginalisation to consider within this identity).
<b>Te taiao</b>	The environment, the natural world.
<b>Values</b>	Values are what matters most to us in life, guiding principles. They are at the heart of our human motivations. They guide our behaviours, attitudes and how we understand the world.
<b>Zero-sum game</b>	This is a narrative in which people understand, often at a subconscious level, that more for one group means less for me and mine.

---

## Bioheritage champions advisory group

Many thanks for the contributions of the following members of our bioheritage champions advisory group:

- ➔ Joanne Waitoa
- ➔ Nakia Randle
- ➔ Darryn Ooi
- ➔ Tamatha Paul
- ➔ Tasman Gillies
- ➔ Tyson Grootjans

# Appendix 1:

## A checklist for your communications about co-governance partnership

Use this checklist to write and check your communications.

---

**Step 1:** Understand how people think about co-governance and environmental health

**Identify the unhelpful thinking you need to avoid and the helpful thinking you want to surface.**

- See pages 4 and 15 for current thinking about co-governance to avoid and embrace.

---

**Step 2:** Decide who to talk to and about

**Identify your persuadable audience**

- **Check.** Don't construct communications for those already convinced or the noisy opposition.

**Identify your agents. Be clear on who needs to do what**

- **Check.** Focus on agents with the most influence. Emphasise collective action, avoid individual behaviour.

---

**Step 3:** Build the structure of your communications using vision, values, barriers, solutions formula

**First >> Articulate the better world we want. Flip the problem to an inclusive vision**

- **Check.** Your vision is not the removal of something bad.
- **Check.** Your vision uses concrete language and is about people's lives not processes or policies.

**Then >> Identify the helpful collective values to connect with your audience**

- **Check.** pp. 24–29 for helpful values to embrace and unhelpful values to avoid.

**Then >> Name the barriers and problems that are in the way of the vision and solutions**

- **Check.** You have named the agents responsible for removing these barrier.

**Finally >> Present solutions. Include an action proportionate to the problem**

---

## Step 4: Use language that deepens people's understanding

### Identify helpful frames to use. See pp. 30–32

→ **Check.** Avoid market and emergency frames.

### Plan your metaphors

→ **Check.** Do not use complex models or metaphors. Use relational and 'upstream environments, downstream health' metaphors. See pages 33–37 for more on helpful metaphors to embrace and unhelpful metaphors to avoid.

### Use clear and concrete language

→ **Check.** Can you draw a picture of this? Local ecosystems that are cared for by the people immersed in them every day and who know them best.

### Use an explanatory chain where you need to explain historical context or cause and effects – see pages 38–39

---

## Step 5: Check for common errors that surface unhelpful thinking

- Lead with the cake, not ingredients. Do not lead with facts, problems or policy solutions.
- Tell your story, not theirs. Don't myth bust or negate. Avoid phrases like "you may have heard" or "it is NOT true that".
- People and planet, over money and fear. Don't use money, safety or fear as the 'why'. Avoid phrases like "how can we afford not to", "it will cost more in the long run if we don't".
- People do things. Turn passive language into agentive language, and check you have the correct agents. Use "people in government have an obligation as Te Tiriti partners" not "Treaty rights".

---

## Step 6: Test your communications

- **Check.** Test with your persuadable audience, not the convinced or the opposition.

# Appendix 2:

## Cognitive bias, public narratives and mental models – understanding how and why the public thinks as they do on complex issues

---

Co-governance and other social and structural determinants of health are mostly unseen by the general public. They may hold shallow ideas about environmental management and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (mental models). These mental models can make it very difficult to communicate some of the complexities of tino rangatiratanga, mana whenua kaitiakitanga and actions that need to be taken to honour Te Tiriti in environmental management.

We may assume that, when we lead with technical details, evidence or corrections of misunderstandings, people will develop a deeper understanding of the issues (new mental models) and make decisions in the context of this new information. This is the information deficit model of information assimilation – people will support a solution when they are filled up with sufficient detail and facts. Unfortunately, this strategy has been shown by scientists to be ineffective for building deeper understandings of complex issues, especially when working with the wider public.

---

### Where do these shallow or incorrect mental models come from and why do they endure?

- Daniel Kahneman coined the term “thinking fast” to explain the many mental shortcuts we use to reduce the work of assessing the vast amount of information we are exposed to. These mental shortcuts:
  - » protect our existing beliefs and knowledge
  - » encourage us to grasp the concrete (what we see, touch, smell and hear) and shy away from the abstract (unseen systems and structures that impact our day-to-day lives).
- At the same time, many stories or explanations about the world and how it works exist in our culture. These can be shallow and dominant or more productive and recessive. The digital age has brought new, faster and more targeted ways for us to be exposed to unproductive and shallow explanations.
- People acquire mental models that both inform the stories we tell and are informed by the dominant stories in our culture. If thinking and stories that are dominant are too shallow, our fast-thinking system defaults to protect unhelpful thinking. This makes it hard to have productive public conversations about complex issues.

- As knowledge holders and communicators on co-governance and bioheritage, we also play our part:
  - » We draw on the information deficit model of communication or we focus on compelling personal stories.
  - » In doing so, we can inadvertently surface existing unproductive narratives instead of navigating around them and developing new narratives.

---

### **What shall we do?**

People process, think and make meaning from information in narratives and stories. To replace shallow or incorrect thinking about co-governance partnerships not only requires new facts but also new stories to help develop deeper understandings on tino rangatiratanga, the interconnections between human and environmental health and how partnerships might improve environmental management.

We also need to avoid existing problematic or unproductive stories that we are surrounded by in our culture. Stories that come from traditional media, social media, advertising, our friends, our families and politicians inform and reinforce unhelpful mental models about Te Tiriti and Māori leadership so we use tested communication strategies to navigate around the problematic understandings and tell new, more accurate and complex ones that deepen understanding and improve decision making.

---

### **What does this mean for building public understanding about the importance of co-governance and Te Tiriti partnerships**

- Building understanding and support for rights and justice-based issues involves dealing with often invisible public narratives and mental models.
- While dominant narratives in our culture and the mental models they feed into may be unhelpful, other narratives and mental models exist (or can be developed) that can be built upon with well-researched strategies.
- Rebalancing public narratives and the mental models they inform has been proven to deepen people's understandings on complex issues.
- This change happens over time when strategic communication is used across a field of practice.



NEW ZEALAND'S  
BIOLOGICAL  
HERITAGE

Ngā Koiora  
Tuku Iho

National  
**SCIENCE**  
Challenges



**This guide has been prepared by:** Jordan Green (Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti Porou), Dr Sharon Bell, Marianne Elliott and Dr Jess Berentson-Shaw of The Workshop – a tangata Tiriti, narrative research organisation.

**Graphic Design:** Catherine Adam  
Wonderbird Photography & Design Studio  
[www.wonderbird.nz](http://www.wonderbird.nz)

**Illustrations:** Megan Salole  
[www.salole.co.nz](http://www.salole.co.nz)



The  
Workshop