

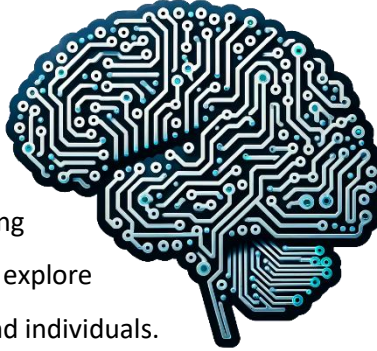
# Te Maa: Māori and Indigenous Economy and Enterprise Theme

*Te Maa's goal is to undertake research that contributes to the development of sustainable and equitable Māori and Indigenous economies and enterprises*

Ngahuru/Autumn 2025

## Taniwha or taonga: Artificial Intelligence & implications for Māori & Indigenous economies and enterprises

Artificial Intelligence has created buzz ever since ChatGPT burst into global prominence in 2022. While most people have been using algorithms and automated processes for many years [think predictive text], there is now increasing need to understand what AI is and isn't. Te Maa wants to explore how 'AI' might affect Māori and Indigenous organisations and individuals.



We're interested in understanding whether AI is, in the words of Pere Wihongi leader of Kapa Haka group Angitū, a ['taniwha'](#) or a ['taonga'](#). Is it hype or is it the way the world will be going?

We will be holding regular Whitiwhiti kōrero discussions online to explore this kaupapa.

Look out for the calendar invitations over the next few months.

In the meantime, NZ and Australian Indigenous scholars have been developing [communiques](#) and [publications](#) with their thoughts about AI.

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## Global Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS) conference Canberra

**Assoc. Prof. Katharina Ruckstuhl** (Ngāi Tahu, Rangitāne ki Wairau) recently attended the Global Indigenous Data Sovereignty conference in Canberra. The Conference marked ten years since the first Indigenous Data Sovereignty event hosted by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia where attendees discussed the implications of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for data. There were speakers and representatives from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the US, Philippines and Mexico. There were also speakers from NZ, US, Australian governments, primarily Departments of education and statistics.



A strong theme was that many tribal groups are demanding to have a say in how data – whether from government, local government, or less frequently, businesses – is being collected, stored, and then used for decision-making. Governance of data was a recurrent message – either *governance of data*, for example having a say in how government data is accessed and reported on, particularly when it comes to funding; or *data for governance* such as tribes using data to make decisions about their lands and people.

There were a range of IDS topics. These included:

- Issues around copyright, particularly in light of AI and some of the tools that Indigenous people might use such as protocols, IP and privacy laws and contracts
- Frameworks for embedding IDS at the tribal, institutional or government level. These included presentations about
  - [OCAP™](#) – Canada's almost 20-year IDS principles;
  - Using the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework
  - The approach of the iwi leader's data group, and how [Te Mana Raraunga](#) is working with iwi and government to embed IDS into government;
  - The [CARE principles](#) [Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, Ethics], and how these are being embedded in institutions;
  - How [MaiaM nayri Wingara](#) has been activating IDS frameworks into Australian government

Assoc. Prof. Ruckstuhl's presentation was on how local rūnaka, Kāti Huirapa ki Puketaraki is looking to use the [mauri-o-meter™](#), developed by Kēpa Morgan [Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Pīkiao], as a way to support monitoring of cultural values in water.

## Research Updates

### Otago Tourism Policy School

**Professor Anna Carr** [Ngāti Ruanui, Ngāpuhi (Mahurehure)], Ngāruahine] recently took part in the [Otago Tourism Policy School](#) in Tahuna/Queenstown. The School has become a regular fixture with national and international speakers, politicians and business people. As well as being HoD of the Tourism Dept., Professor Carr has recently edited *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism and Indigenous Peoples*, a comprehensive overview of established and emerging themes around Indigeneity and connections between Indigenous peoples and tourism development.

### HRC Research funding for mental health

**Dr Andrea Clark** secured an HRC Activation grant to undertake research to prototype a co-commissioning system for mental health services in the Waitaki region. The project involves an experienced team of Māori and Pacific Island Researchers including Te Maa members Prof Kirsten Roberston (Ngāi Tahu) and Associate Professor Jeff Foote. There is an urgent need for funding models that strengthen collaboration and support among all providers to deliver efficient, effective, and equitable mental health care.

### Post-graduate students

Congratulations to **Andre Poyser** and **Claire Dowsett** (Ngāti Raukawa) whose PhD theses have been submitted; and **Lachlan Williams** (Ngāi Tahu) for being awarded a University of Otago Masters Scholarship

PhD student and Teaching Fellow **Sequoia Short** (Ngāti Apakura, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Toa Rangatira) recently presented her Indigenous Data Sovereignty 'escape room' to researchers from the Johns Hopkin's Center for Indigenous Health [US]. The researchers were taking part in a wānanga at Kāti Huirapa ki Puketaraki marae as part of a [\\$27.8mil Lego Foundation](#) award to develop Indigenous-designed outdoor playspaces with Indigenous partners including NZ. The researchers also visited the Te Maa offices with the hope of being able to activate further collaborations.

### Te Maa Research Online & In the News

- ◆ [He Kitenqa](#) research publication featuring **Michelle Thompson-Fawcett** (Ngāti Whatua) on 'Toitū He Kāinga; **Sebastian Gehricke** and **Sara Walton** on climate-related disclosure rules; and **Kirsten Robertson** (Ngāi Tahu), **Diane Ruwhiu** (Ngā Pūhi) **Katharina Ruckstuhl** on research from Te Maa.
- ◆ [Olivier Jutel, TikTok ban would be 'Cold War hysteria'](#).
- ◆ **Anaru Eketone** (Manaiapoto, Waikato), [Understanding haka: More than just a 'war dance' in New Zealand culture; 'Woke' used to silence, dismiss validity of views.](#)
- ◆ **Sara Walton**, [Scanning the horizons of our future; Plan to reduce climate risk reporting criticised.](#)
- ◆ **Māwera Karetai** (Ngāi Tahu), [Blowing Bubbles Podcast](#) [chat with interesting and positive people around the world].

## Researcher Profiles

Each edition we profile researchers whose work is contributing to Te Maae’s goal. This edition, as we kick off our 2025 focus on AI, Drs Olivier Jutel and Brendon Woodford tell us a little about themselves.



**Dr Olivier Jutel**  
Lecturer, Media, Film & Communication

### Research Interests

- ◆ Venture capital
- ◆ AI, blockchain
- ◆ Web3
- ◆ Crypto
- ◆ Platform imperialism

### Why is your research Important?

Emerging technologies continue to be dominated by colonial logics of abundance and ‘blue ocean’ dreams of endless territory. From the VCs backing start-up to founders we remain within the predominant logic of American techno-colonialism. These fantasies are not simply eccentric musings of geeks but at the heart of value creation in our economy. New concepts such as “The Network State” drive investment decisions and government policy. Gizmodo has cited my on-going research into the Network State movement as the “Worst New Trend of 2024”.

### How can your research impact on Māori and Indigenous communities?

Māori and indigenous communities continue to be marginalized in this possessive-individualist, techno-colonial view of the world. A critical perspective on the political economy of tech is crucial in order to encode ‘fit-for-purpose’ data and alternative values into tech.

### Recent Publications

- ◆ Jutel, O., & Salter, L. A. (2025). Platform imperialism and disinformation in Aotearoa-New Zealand. *Platforms & Society*, 2, 29768624251325128.
- ◆ Howson, P., Rosales, A., Jutel, O., Gloerich, I., Llorens, M. G., de Vries, A., ... & Dolan, P. (2024). Crypto/Space: Computational parasitism, virtual land grabs, and the production of Web3 Exit zones. *Political Geography*, 115, 103210.
- ◆ Jutel, O. (2023). Platform governance and the hybrid war industrial complex. In *Russiagate revisited: The aftermath of a hoax* (pp. 271-293). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- ◆ Jutel, O. (2023). Blockchain financialization, neo-colonialism, and Binance. *Frontiers in blockchain*, 6, 1160257.
- ◆ Jutel, O. (2023). The horror of communication. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*, 28(1), 53-71.



**Dr Brendon J. Woodford**  
Senior Lecturer, School of Computing

### Research Interests

- ◆ Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on society
- ◆ Developing machine learning models for prediction of wildfire risk and other natural disasters
- ◆ Data analytics for horticulture.

### Why is your research Important?

In the recent times AI has become so pervasive that it has the potential to positively impact our daily lives. For example, using machine learning models generate more accurate predictions of forest fire risk in New Zealand, Australia, and California. However, there are major issues with AI regarding bias, privacy, ethical use, trust, and transparency which need to be addressed especially with the advent of Large Language Models such as ChatGPT. Given these concerns one area I conduct research in is to better understand the potential for these AI technologies and how the risks of AI can be mitigated.

### How can your research impact on Māori and Indigenous communities?

By identifying what barriers currently exist for AI adoption, identify opportunities where AI can benefit these communities, and provide guidance on how communities can manage AI technology adoption effectively.

### Recent Publications

- ◆ Ismail N., Woodford, B.J. & Licorish, S.A. Atmospheric Modeling for Wildfire Prediction. *Agriculture* (2025). Accepted for publication.
- ◆ Ismail N., Woodford, B.J., Licorish, S.A. & Miller, A.D. An Assessment of Existing Wildfire Danger Indices in Comparison to One-class Machine Learning Models. *Natural Hazards*, (2024). doi:10.1007/s11069-024-06738-3
- ◆ Ghandour A., Woodford, B.J., & Abusaimh, H. Ethical Considerations in the Use of ChatGPT: An Exploration of Rights, Obligations, and Quality Measures (five moral dimensions). *IEEE Access*, (2024). doi:10.1109/ACCESS.2024.3394243.
- ◆ Ghandour A. & Woodford, B.J. Guidelines to Develop a Cybersecurity Policy in Schools. Perspectives Informed from Jordanian Cybercrime Law. In the 25th International Arab Conference on Information Technology (ACIT’2024), Dec 10–12, Zarqa University, Jordan (2024).
- ◆ Shahi, A., Yousefi, M., Woodford, B.J., Mirza, F. & Tapabrata, R.C. CAGE: Conformal Adversarial Generative Ensemble. In the 31 Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (ICONIP’2024), 2–6 Dec, Auckland, New Zealand. Accepted for publication.