

Kōrero Pono

Improving the Mainstream News Media's Reporting on and for the Indigenous World

Robert Bell Travelling Scholarship Report
Alex Baird (2021)

Introduction

“No one ever said change is easy, change hurts” - Duncan McCue (CBC)

“Nō mātou te hē - We are sorry”. That mea culpa by Stuff Ltd as part of their 'Our Truth, Tā Mātou Pono' project 2020¹ is perhaps the most striking admission by New Zealand's mainstream media that we've not been doing well enough.

“We've been racist, contributing to stigma, marginalisation and stereotypes against Māori.”

The thirst for change is now at its strongest, but the next step is perhaps the most important, and the most challenging.

Moving forward from a mea culpa to an - 'ok, what next?'

As Lisa Tou-McNaughton says in her column responding to Stuff's moment of realisation, “self-reflection and encouraging honest feedback from others takes courage. However, I believe it takes more courage to act on that feedback.”²

That “courage to act” will take concerted effort.

The last time a survey was done of the demographic make-up of New Zealand's journalists was in 2015. That found that over 86% identified as Pākehā (New Zealand European) and just under 8% as Māori.³

Mihingārangi Forbes has worked in both Māori and mainstream media for nearly three decades.

She says that “Māori content is not given the same opportunities in the mainstream media, where Pākehā stories are prioritised, and a narrower view of Māori is presented.”

The University of Auckland's Sue Abel has also said that despite there being “goodwill” among Pākehā journalists towards Māori news coverage, it is grounded in Pākehā news values.

“Our mainstream media is so often monocultural without acknowledging this case, we have the dangerous situation where many viewers must think they are getting all the information they need to make decisions on issues to do with Māori.”⁴

Throughout his career, journalist Aaron Smale says he's also seen “newsrooms [that] do not reflect New Zealand”. He says, “media companies have made no significant efforts to either increase the diversity of their newsrooms or to raise standards when it comes to covering issues around race, whether that is Māori or other ethnicities.”⁵

“Pākehā journalists and editors are the ones that decide on the news value of a story about Māori and how to cover it and you're constantly wondering if you're being oversensitive or whether you should be speaking up and run the risk of being perceived as difficult.”

¹ <https://interactives.stuff.co.nz/2021/02/our-truth-history-aotearoa-new-zealand/#introduction>

² <https://www.stuff.co.nz/southland-times/opinion/123658437/a-time-of-welcome-assessment-positivity-creativity>

³ Hollings, J., Hanusch, F., Balasubramanian, R. & Lealand, G. (2016). Causes for concern; The State of New Zealand Journalism in 2015. *Pacific Journalism Review* 22 (2), 122-138.

⁴ Abel, S. (2016). Maori, Media and Politics. In B. Bahador, G. Kemp, K. McMillan, & C. Rudd (Eds.), *Politics and the media* (Second edition, pp. 310-325). Auckland University Press.

⁵ <https://thespinoff.co.nz/atea/30-03-2019/media-maori-and-me/>

Aotearoa is not alone in this.

Australia, Canada, Hawai'i, and the mainland United States also share similar colonial histories and many of the same struggles with their mainstream media's approaches to Indigenous communities. Although there are marked differences between each country - and even the regions within them - there is also an opportunity to learn and grow from the experiences of others who are working to bring about genuine change in the same field.

After speaking with journalists working across these countries, it's become clear that the thirst for change is in three key areas: education, language and style, and Indigenous approaches to journalism. That will guide how this report is structured. Each section of this report will breakdown and analyse what is being done outside of New Zealand in those key areas and will end with the recommendations our media industry can take home.

The question for me comes to: how can we do better?

That has been the kaupapa for this report.

This is by no means an exhaustive analysis, nor does it try to be, but I hope it is another step in the right direction.

Acknowledgement

I am a Pākehā journalist. I have been extremely grateful for the opportunity to learn te reo Māori and to spend significant time in te ao Māori, both in my personal and professional lives. I graduated from the University of Canterbury with a Graduate Diploma of Journalism in 2013 and moved to Auckland that same year to work in the MediaWorks' RadioLIVE newsroom. During that time, I started my reo journey at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa in the Te Ara Reo Māori programme. Over the coming years I moved to Wellington and started working in television as a reporter for Newshub Live at 6pm. In 2019, I was offered an opportunity at Al Jazeera English in Qatar where I still work at the time of writing.

Spending most of the 2010s working in New Zealand's mainstream media, it became clear to me that we weren't doing well enough. The problem wasn't Māori journalists, it was Pākehā journalists like me. Despite many of us being well intentioned, we weren't equipped, educated well enough or aware as to how to adequately engage in and report on te ao Māori. That's despite many of us often finding ourselves in positions where we were reporting on it. It's become clear to me that this is a problem for Pākehā journalists to address themselves. It isn't the responsibility of Māori journalists to up-skill their non-Māori colleagues ad hoc, while trying to work themselves. It is, however, the responsibility of Pākehā journalists and mainstream media to find ways in which they can improve, while respectfully partnering with and working in te ao Māori.

I would therefore like to thank the University of Canterbury's journalism programme, Senior Lecturer Tara Ross, and the Robert Bell Travelling Scholarship in Journalism for the opportunity to undertake this research project.

Education

“This may be uncomfortable and new and it’s not necessarily your fault” - Hannah Clifford and Rebecca Lyons - Journalists for Human Rights

The resounding answer to where change needs to happen first, has been in education. There has been an acknowledgement that we need to do an about-turn in how we educate in journalism schools and how we continue to educate working journalists in newsrooms. The need for change doesn’t just come down to improving journalism practice, but also signifies for many - such as the CBC’s Duncan McCue - an important part of reconciliation.

"Media need to be part of reconciliation, they’re not at arm’s length, they have been actively part of the colonial agenda and they need to be part of reconciliation and that means change within the newsrooms, within the journalism schools."

Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) is based in Toronto, Canada and has been doing a huge amount of work in this space, both in the classroom and in the newsroom. JHR is a non-profit organisation and is Canada's largest media development organisation.⁶ It works on several projects across international news outlets with a mission of empowering journalists to cover human rights stories objectively and effectively.⁷ It has operated in 29 countries, trained nearly 16,000 journalists across its numerous projects, and worked with 400 media partners and organisations. JHR describes its approach as being one based on “genuine partnerships and effective, sustainable sharing of skills and expertise. JHR works with partners to leverage existing knowledge and momentum, building coalitions of support for media freedom within local authorities and networks”.

In 2014, JHR launched its ‘Indigenous Reporters Program’, with the aim of increasing “the quality and quantity of Indigenous stories and voices in Canadian media”. While preparing the programme, JHR approached and interviewed hundreds of Indigenous people, journalists, and academics for their views on how Indigenous stories were being presented in Canadian media. Two clear criticisms emerged; “Indigenous stories [were] underrepresented in media and, when they [were] reported on, tend to be problem-based”. JHR has sought to challenge that through scholarships, paid internships, networking for Indigenous journalists, curriculum development and design, community-based training, and workshops for non-Indigenous journalists.

The programme has taken a three-pronged approach.

The first focuses on in-community journalism and media literacy training. ‘Journalism trainers’ have been sent to live and work in Indigenous communities (25 in Ontario and one in Manitoba at the time of writing) to train community members on how to produce stories, get work published and to support existing community storytelling and media initiatives. This part of the programme has resulted in hundreds of people being trained in the basics of freelance journalism and producing their own content for local and national media outlets.

The second pillar of the programme supports Indigenous reporters through internships, scholarships, and professional development workshops.

The third is where some of the most exciting work being done - capacity building in mainstream media newsrooms and journalism schools. JHR has rolled out workshops in newsrooms across the province of Ontario to up-skill working reporters on best practice for reporting on Indigenous communities. The programme sends out ‘journalism trainers’ who teach a condensed version of

⁶ <https://jhr.ca/donate/donors-and-partners>

⁷ <https://jhr.ca/about>

history and cover, for example, the correct use of language and identifiers, cultural norms and offer alternatives to established practices such as the ‘helicoptering in’ approach that is often used in daily news but can be inappropriate in Indigenous communities. Journalism trainers are paid for by JHR and are effectively employed on a full-time or part-time by the organisation. They also maintain newsroom partnerships in their specific area of the country and continue to support journalists to fulfil the objectives of the ‘Indigenous Reporters Program’ - and other associated programmes.

Here is an example of the job description from JHR for a regional trainer, which covers the full scope of the position:

“Day to day responsibilities:

- Working closely with JHR’s full-time Project Manager.
- Helping to develop concise training materials and to train media partners and news organizations.
- Assisting, training and mentoring news organizations in solutions journalism as a practice.
- Ability to work remotely.

Specifically, the Regional Trainer will:

- Identify and maintain relationships with journalists and news organizations that show a high potential for integrating new practices, including solutions reporting, into their coverage.
- Conduct staff workshops (virtually, and when possible, physically) that introduce and advance solutions journalism with a human rights focus using the project’s training resources.
- Manage newsrooms as needed through the life of their projects, supporting high-impact solutions stories on human rights issues, and helping to shift journalistic practices.
- Actively steward the highest-leverage relationships, yielding high-performing “beacons” that will influence the practice of other journalists and newsrooms in the region.
- Identify and support community-based activities that will advance the impact of solutions reporting and help create more constructive public discourse, especially on human rights topics.
- Identify newsrooms that serve Indigenous communities or cover Indigenous issues to form a newsroom Collaborative.
- Manage the Collaborative on a day-to-day basis and work with Collaborative members to create engagement activities among Indigenous and other communities.”⁸

JHR has now trained well over one thousand non-Indigenous students and journalists in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and Yukon.

Much of the force behind the change in Canada comes from the final report of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) in 2015. The TRC made 94 Calls to Action to address the lasting impact of the residential school system. Among those were three which directly addressed the media sector. The first (Number 84) called on increased funding for state broadcasters, CBC, and Radio-Canada, to enable them to support reconciliation. The second (Number 85) called upon the Aboriginal People’s Television Network - which is an independent non-profit broadcaster in Canada - to continue to provide leadership and develop media initiatives that inform and educate the public. The third (Number 86) called upon Canadian journalism programmes and schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations.

⁸ https://jhr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/V2_JHR-Regional-Trainer-Job-Posting-Sep-2021-1.pdf

The CBC created its own body called 'Beyond 94' to monitor how well Canada had progressed on its calls to action.⁹ In 2018 it declared that Calls to Action 84 and 85 had been completed, while the 86th - the call to action on education - was still in progress. It has acknowledged the work being done by JHR but has also analysed what is being done by Canada's journalism schools.¹⁰ It found that, "while some journalism schools in Canada offer courses on Indigenous history, not all are mandatory, and not all include all the criteria cited in Call to Action #86." The analysis found that the Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario and Kwantlen Polytechnic University in British Columbia had done the most to incorporate Indigenous education into their courses. The Wilfrid Laurier University has made an Introduction to Indigenous Studies course compulsory for all journalism students. It has also revamped various 200 and 300 level courses to include research into topics such as the "Canadian state and Indigenous communities and how Indigenous Peoples are represented in the media". The University's Brantford campus also established an 'Elder-in-Residence'. Like Wilfrid Laurier, the Kwantlen Polytechnic University has also made an Introduction to Indigenous Studies course compulsory for new entrants of its journalism programme.

Duncan McCue is a reporter and host for the CBC across radio and television. For several years he has been giving internal training to primarily non-Indigenous staff at the CBC. "The thing to do is not to give them a history lesson... that's not terribly helpful... what I need to teach you is how to adapt your journalism practice to work in an Indigenous community and to understand some of the cultural protocols that will allow you to have a more respectful relationship with your Indigenous subject. That will allow you to operate with more accountability and transparency when you go out there, to better understand concepts like Indian time." He says history is still an important part of that education, but the training that needs to be given to working journalists must expand beyond that. "It's about adapting our current journalism practice to understand why it's important to bring tobacco to a native subject when you go to interview them".

For McCue, the current lack of education has led to an "average Canadian reporter in [an] average Canadian newsroom... [who] despite all of our attempts to tell the truth, has all the same kind of stereotypical biases about Indigenous people that every other Canadian has. So, despite their best efforts to be balanced and fair and all of those things, they may be coming from a place of ignorance and in some very small cases a place of racism. But the overall impact has been that the press in Canada has been... this constant repetition of these stereotypical tropes like the warrior, like the pitiful drunken Indian, like the victimised woman." McCue has coined the so-called W4D rule in Canada, in which Indigenous stories only make it to the mainstream media when the subjects are framed as warriors, drunk, dancing, drumming or dead.

Paul Barnsley at Canada's Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) has also identified the same stereotypical framings of Indigenous stories. He characterises them as "troublemaker, beads and feathers, poverty and dysfunction". He says those stereotypes arise from an oversimplification of complex issues which journalists have little understanding of, due to a lack of education.

Australia is tackling many of the same challenges in its mainstream news media. Bridget Brennan is the Indigenous Affairs Editor at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and says for there to be change, "[it] has to be someone's responsibility at the end of the day, rather than just a vague wish or hope." For Brennan, the change needs to come from the top-down, with managers and producers driving any newsroom-based education programme. She believes that with that kind of support, changes in education "wouldn't be that hard at all".

Brennan has a particular vision for how newsroom-based education could look.

⁹ <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94>

¹⁰ <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?cta=86>

“There needs to be journalist specific [training] for the newsroom you’re in so that you can say, ‘alright you’re in Melbourne, these are the traditional owners, this is the history in this state, this is what’s going on in the communities at the moment, here are some key organisations’. I mean, it would probably only take a few hours, it would be great if it was a whole day thing. Perhaps you’d get an elder to come in and do a ‘Welcome to Country’, you might get some people to come in to speak about the impact of media on their lives and really look at the local areas, because I think if it’s homogenised it’s not that helpful. It’s not helpful to say to a reporter in Melbourne, ‘this is what you’re going to encounter,’ when the training’s based on what people in the Northern Territory might experience because it’s totally different... you’re dealing with different communities, with different concerns.”

Anders Bals is a Sámi politician, former journalist and works at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Kautokeino, Norway. The University offers one of the world’s few Bachelor’s programmes in journalism from an Indigenous perspective. He says Norwegian media depict Sámi people in three different ways; as something exotic, as a “problem” to be solved and more realistically in the larger media outlets. He says the only way to combat this is to educate journalists so they “won’t be blind or afraid” and can break out of tropes and stereotypes. For Bals, there is no quick fix, and he says it is not the responsibility of Sámi media and journalists to teach their non-Indigenous colleagues as, “it gets tiring”. However, he does suggest that Norwegian journalists could be sent to short courses with the Sámi University College to up-skill and better report on Sámi communities.

Kyle Edwards is now the Managing Editor of Native News Online and previously wrote for Maclean’s Magazine and ProPublica from Canada. He says any improvement in the industry must start with education and getting Indigenous instructors into newsrooms. He says that a lack of education is a double-edged sword; it’s not just a driver behind poor reporting but also encourages journalists to avoid covering stories they don’t understand, thereby reducing the number of Indigenous stories in the mainstream media.


The Native American Journalists Association (NAJA) also holds workshops and tutorials for those covering the Indigenous world in the United States - although not to the same extent as what is being done in Canada. One example is its annual Native Media Conference which, in its own words, “facilitate[s] conference program sessions about best practices in Indigenous media through training and workshops to support and enhance the knowledge and skills of journalists covering Indian Country.” It has also produced several resources to help reporters and editors avoid the mistakes that are routinely made in American media when reporting in ‘Indian country’. NAJA even created its own version of bingo, based around the stereotypes which often creep into American news coverage, so journalists can check their work before it is published/broadcast to make sure it is not falling into “clichéd storytelling”. It has also made itself available to develop

custom training for any newsrooms wanting “to better understand and articulate the complexity and depth of Native peoples and communities.”

BINGO

REPORTING IN INDIAN COUNTRY EDITION

EACH TIME ONE OF THESE IDEAS APPEARS IN YOUR STORY, MARK YOUR BOARD. MORE MARKS MAY SIGNAL CLICHÉD STORYTELLING, A HEAVY RELIANCE ON STEREOTYPES OR A LACK OF EXPERIENCE REPORTING IN INDIAN COUNTRY. IF YOU SCORE A "BINGO," CONSIDER KILLING YOUR STORY AND CONTACT A CONSULTANT AT THE NATIVE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION FOR ADVICE ON WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR STORYTELLING IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES.

ALCOHOL	DANCING	A WARRIOR	SEXUAL ASSAULT	VANISHING CULTURE
REFERENCE TO THE ANCESTORS	DRUGS	A CASINO	SOMETHING "SACRED"	UNEMPLOYMENT
HORSES	SPIRITS OR GHOSTS		DIABETES	ADDICTION
DRUMMING	BROKEN FAMILIES	"PLIGHT"	POVERTY	VIOLENCE
DYING LANGUAGE	A RESERVATION	SINGING	POOR EDUCATION	SUICIDE

This best practices guide was produced in partnership between the Native American Journalists Association and High Country News. If your media organization has questions about this guide or would like to facilitate a newsroom discussion on these points, please contact us at naja.com.

NAJA High Country News

Tristan Ahtone was NAJA’s president at the time of writing and has a rather bleak view of the situation in the United States. He says the US is an outlier when it comes to doing “any sort of meaningful reporting” on the Indigenous world and that it has taken very little stock of its colonial history. He wants to see wholesale educational change across the US on all levels, so Americans have some sort of basic understanding of their country’s colonial history. Although there are some clear and simple changes that could be made in newsrooms, he says systemic change must start with education. He says hiring Indigenous people in mainstream newsrooms is an obvious fix, but diversity won’t achieve anything if news organisations are unwilling to focus on these issues and editors are ignorant about the communities they cover.

There has been agreement across the board that the key to educating journalists is to focus on building cultural

competency, as primarily non-Indigenous journalists continue to cover communities, they may have had very little contact within their own lives. Ann Auman was a Professor of Journalism at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa at the time of writing and says everything - the good and the bad - comes back to cultural competence. “Non-Indigenous journalists need to have tools to effectively, respectfully and frequently report on Indigenous stories.” She says educating non-Indigenous journalists on how to cover Indigenous communities is the only way to bring about change.

“It’s about being better reporters”.

For Duncan McCue, it’s the importance of knowing why to bring tobacco to an interview with a “native subject” as a form of gift. A non-Indigenous journalist can only know that it’s important - and adapt their journalistic practices accordingly - if they have been properly educated and are thereby culturally competent.

This report will also look at changing the language and style we use, as well as adopting Indigenous approaches to journalism; but these changes are only possible once journalists have been better educated. That is why this report has started with education as its bedrock.

This is best summed up by Liv Inger Somby who is a Sámi educator and journalist at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Kautokeino, Norway.

“If you don’t have the knowledge, how do you know?”

Key Recommendations:

- Make education on New Zealand's colonial history, te ao Māori and the history of our news media's reporting on Māori compulsory in New Zealand journalism schools.
- Set up and fund (be it by industry, donation, public funding, or a combination) an organisation - like JHR's 'Indigenous Reporters Program' - to lead the New Zealand news media's effort to improve reporting on and for te ao Māori.
- Give organisation a mandate to:
 - Engage and partner with, and be co-led by: Iwi, Māori media and Māori journalists.
 - Issue Calls to Action - such as those made by Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission - to hold the industry to account.
 - Develop a programme of workshops, newsroom support and resources to up-skill working reporters on best practices for reporting on te ao Māori.
 - Employ 'journalism trainers' to coordinate workshops and training in newsrooms.
 - Publicly monitor how well newsrooms and journalism schools are performing - like the CBC's 'Beyond 94' initiative.
- Continue to support and provide internships, scholarships, and professional development to Māori journalism students.

Language and Style

“A journalist who thinks they know, but doesn’t, is dangerous.” - Anders Bals - Sámi University of Applied Sciences

Beyond education, several newsrooms and news organisations have also seen a need for change in the language and style the mainstream media uses when covering Indigenous communities.

The Hawai’i based organisation Pacific Islanders in Communication (PIC) has been developing a Style and Resource guide for reporting on Hawaiian communities. The organisation has several goals for this: the correct pronunciation and spelling of ‘Ōlelo Hawai’i (Hawaiian language), the correct, consistent, and accurate use of diacritical marks and the appropriate use of terminology and identifiers such as Hawaiian. It also wants to build cultural competency in journalists and address the use of stereotypes when reporting on Hawaiian communities.

PIC has identified the key principles and values it wants to shape any guide, to overhaul the way in which journalists approach reporting on Hawaiian communities and affairs:

- ‘Imi ‘oe i ka ‘oia’i’o, a laila mahele ‘oe i ka ‘ike - Seeking truth and sharing knowledge.
- Ha‘aha‘a - Being humble and culturally sensitive by walking lightly. Considering cultural differences and learning how to enter Hawaiian spaces.
- Ho‘ohanohano - Honouring the dignity of others and avoiding stereotyping. Taking the time to find out who you should be talking to.
- Ho‘okipa - The Hospitality of giving. Knowing when to give gifts and when to accept them.
- Mālama - Demonstrating care.
- Ala ka‘ina - Showing leadership and giving guidance.
- Pono - Being righteous and fair.
- Kuleana - Acting responsibly, respectfully, being accurate and being accountable for your work.
- Aniani - Being transparent.
- Kū‘oko‘a - Being independent and making sure the motives of journalists are in the best interests of the public.
- Waiwai - Seeing the value or importance of a story.
- Kōkoua - Helping each other and working together as journalists, rather than competing.

This guide is intended to be distributed to the various media outlets operating in Hawai’i to bring about some uniformity in the way they report on Hawaiians. At the time of writing, there is still little uniformity in the way various outlets in Hawai’i are using diacritical marks or macrons, or in the way ‘Ōlelo Hawai’i is being spelt. As an example, the term Hawaiian is still being used by many to refer to anyone living on the islands of Hawai’i, that’s despite widespread agreement that best practice is to use the term Hawaiian to only refer to Indigenous Hawaiians.

The tightening of style and language is an aspiration echoed across the journalism sector.

Daniel Ikaika Ito is a journalist, editor and works in communications in Hawai'i. He says the industry there is caught in a "state of mediocrity" and that a set of ethics and rules is needed to bring about change. This works hand in hand with better education and building cultural competency amongst journalists.

Ann Auman sees the need for a Code of Ethics for journalists, although admits that this is difficult to implement as it is contingent on receptive editors.

Rebecca Lyons and Hannah Clifford from JHR also back the need for "tangible resources in newsrooms". Foundational education for journalists is all well and good, but there needs to be a framework to ensure good quality coverage is maintained and that there is continued learning beyond workshops and curriculum-based education.

These are discussions which need to be had across the board both in New Zealand and overseas. Mainstream newsrooms need to standardise the terminology they are using and ensure that they are being accurate and respectful. The development of style guides by newsrooms in consultation with Indigenous communities is the only way this will be possible.

Key Recommendations:

- Form an industry body in partnership with Iwi and Māori language experts to develop a style guide.
 - Standardise the spelling of te reo Māori and the use of macrons in news reporting.
 - Standardise the use of te reo Māori and terminology when referring to te ao Māori.
 - Standardise and agree on the correct spelling and use of place names when used in both regional and national news reporting.
 - Standardise and agree on the correct pronunciation of place names and common words for broadcast news reporting.
- Hold workshops and regular training to ensure any style guide is applied correctly and accurately. This could easily be rolled out as part of the larger industry body recommended earlier.

Engaging with Indigenous Approaches to Journalism

“If it bleeds, it leads - shouldn’t be a goal” - Arlyssa Becenti - Navajo Times (Diné bi Naltsoos)

“Jesus Christ, if there’d been an Indigenous reporter in the room it’d be totally different.” - Tristan Ahtone - Native American Journalists Association

Western journalism practices and ethics can often come into conflict with what is best practice in Indigenous communities. Most journalists are familiar with the adage used by Arlyssa Becenti. The more conflict and trauma, the more likely a news story will make it into the paper, a breaking news alert on a cellphone, the front page of a news website or be the lead story on television or radio. Sadly, in the coverage of Indigenous communities, these stories are often most likely to receive the lion’s share of news attention.

It’s the “warrior, drumming, dancing, drunk or dead” rule mentioned by Duncan McCue and Paul Barnsley, which often shapes Indigenous coverage and presents a narrow image of Indigenous communities. Journalists from mainstream newsrooms are already fairly absent from those communities and lack cultural competency, meaning that news coverage is skewed.

Kyle Edwards says one of the reasons he entered journalism was to address this lack of quality news coverage. Stories which are centred around conflict have left a deep sense of distrust of the news media within Indigenous communities. “There’s a feeling that these institutions have betrayed them over and over again.” It’s clear that this approach is not working and is a huge part of the problem.

Nils-Johan Heatta has been a journalist for Norway’s public broadcaster Norwegian Norsk rikskringkasting AS (NRK) and works at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences. He says the western point of view in journalism looks for conflict and “that doesn’t serve Indigenous peoples best, because [for instance] for Sámi it’s about finding common solutions”. He stresses the need to find alternatives to western narratives in journalism.

But what is the solution? Besides education, Duncan McCue touches on one of the most important changes that needs to be made in our mainstream newsrooms.

“Newsrooms are struggling with being told ‘yeah you may be trying, but you’re still chasing after the same old tragedy stories’, [the problem is] you’re not making the connections with the community to expand your coverage.”

Antonia Gonzales from National Native News and the Koahnic Broadcast Corporation in the United States says this was especially evident in the stories arising around the Dakota Access Pipeline. “[The] mainstream only come once things get violent... tribal media have been there the whole time”. “The bigger issue was that it took violence, or something sensational, to get the mainstream media there”. She, and most other journalists I spoke with, raised the need for mainstream newsrooms to invest more time and more resources into reporting from Indigenous communities.

Relationships need to be built in Indigenous communities before stories break. The helicopter approach of journalism - where journalists parachute into communities - often doesn’t work and burns bridges.

Bridget Brennan at the ABC says Aboriginal Australian communities are often left with more questions than answers when journalists report on them.

“I think communities sometimes have felt like a white crew comes in, then they leave, and then what else? And then what? Is there any impact? have they been portrayed the right way? Have they been given a proper chance to tell their story?”

Brennan says producers need to understand that Indigenous stories take time and resources. She would like to see resources permanently dedicated to reporting on Indigenous communities. This is particularly important in Australia where many Indigenous communities are geographically remote and therefore expensive to report from.

Aryssa Becenti says she’s used to seeing journalists ‘parachute’ into Navajo Nation with an expectation that people will talk to them with no prior relationship building.

“You don’t push your way into the stories... it’s a slow process and you need to be grateful”.

The Gallup Independent is a daily newspaper in Gallup, New Mexico which is on the border of the Navajo Nation reservation. Managing Editor Barry Heifner claims it is the only paper in the US with daily coverage of life on the ‘Reservation’. He says that journalists need to stay committed when reporting on Native Americans and sit down with an Indigenous adviser and take the time to understand the subject matter they are covering. He says, “the good ones come with ears and eyes open”, but he says that is so incredibly rare that there is now an expectation that the mainstream media will “get it wrong” when reporting on Indigenous communities in the United States.

NAJA President Tristan Ahtone says he doesn’t remember a single American media outlet talking about consultation or seeking to engage in “three-dimensional reporting” on Indigenous communities.

Seattle Times investigative reporter - and former AP journalist - Mary Hudetz is from Apsáalooke (The Crow Tribe) and at the time we spoke, she said she didn’t know of any other native reporters at mainstream news outlets in the US. That points to the marked absence - particularly in the US - of Indigenous voices and journalists in mainstream newsrooms. She supports non-Indigenous reporters covering Indigenous stories as there is a total lack of Indigenous reporters. Hudetz says that is why there needs to be cultural exposure and reporters must build ties to communities.

Part of building these ties, is around understanding how to adapt journalism practices to suit Indigenous settings.

Daniel Ikaika Ito says that, despite conflicting with the “American journalism ethic” of not accepting gifts on the job, it is important to understand why you should always accept a glass of water during an interview in Hawai’i. Likewise in Canada, Cheryl McKeznie - who is the Director of News and Current Affairs for APTN - says it’s common practice to give tobacco to elders when they come into the newsroom for an interview. It’s an understanding of these cultural norms and a willingness to adapt to them, which is a key part of improving how non-Indigenous reporters in mainstream newsrooms cover Indigenous communities and build long-term relationships.

But Ahtone says there is also another simple fix, hire Indigenous reporters. This is another sentiment which was echoed across nearly interview completed as part of this research.

The CBC’s Duncan McCue says he would ask newsroom bosses; how many Indigenous staff have you hired? Have you set aside specific resources to hire Indigenous staff? Is your newsroom a safe space for young Indigenous reporters?

McCue says the CBC listened to his critique and agreed there needed to be a robust Indigenous unit at the broadcaster. This initially launched as a digital programme with the equivalent of 1.5

full-time staff. But McCue says the analytics online were so overwhelming that within six months, the online hits the unit was receiving on its coverage were higher than that of many of the Canadian provinces. Once the CBC saw that there was a thirst for Indigenous coverage, resources were increased and at the time of writing the unit now has at least 10 Indigenous reporters and a senior producer.

One of the most promising ways in which mainstream newsrooms have been showing their willingness to improve and grow, has been the increased frequency of partnerships with Indigenous media outlets and organisations.

The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network has been collaborating with several Canada's public and private broadcasters to increase Indigenous coverage. For instance, APTN worked with the CBC and Canadian private television broadcasters CTV and Global News to broadcast portions of the trial for the murder of 21-year-old Indigenous man Colten Boushie. Cheryl McKenzie says this is just one of many partnerships that APTN has had with mainstream news outlets in Canada, which is furthering their mandate to take a lead on Indigenous coverage.

Across the border in the United States, Antonia Gonzales says the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) approached National Native News in 2016 to collaborate on a solution journalism approach to Indigenous coverage. Although this is a move in the right direction, Gonzales says there needs to be true collaboration and investment in partnerships between Indigenous news outlets and mainstream newsrooms, rather than one-off projects.

In Norway, Nils-Johan Heatta says he would like to see an exchange type programme be developed where journalists from public broadcaster NRK's newsroom would be embedded with NRK Sápmi for a week to learn how and Sámi politics and society work. The journalists could then use their experiences to better report on Sámi in mainstream news media and help up-skill their non-Indigenous colleagues. This approach could be quite successful as it doesn't require any additional funding from already cash-strapped newsrooms.

Lorena Allam is the Indigenous affairs editor at the Guardian Australia. She says collaboration between mainstream news media and Indigenous media is "fundamental".

The Guardian Australia has been partnering with the Indigenous owned and operated media, consultancy, and training organisation IndigenousX. One example of this long-term collaboration is on Australia's 'National Sorry Day'. The Guardian brought in IndigenousX editors Luke Pearson and Jack Latimore to curate the outlet's opinion section and commission articles from Indigenous voices. The columns tackled topics related to "Indigenous history and injustice, including the grief and suffering of the stolen generations and Australia's unwillingness to recognise history, the demonisation of Indigenous parents and First Nations protest."

This sort of collaboration and eagerness to embrace Indigenous approaches in mainstream news media comes back to the phrase I heard multiple times during this research.

"Nothing about us, without us!"

Key Recommendations:

- Mainstream media outlets invest dedicated financial resources and journalistic time into reporting on te ao Māori.
- Journalists adapt their practices and approaches to incorporate Māori approaches to journalism and te ao Māori.
- Mainstream and Māori news media engage in exchange programmes between newsrooms so journalists can gain meaningful experience and develop cultural competence.
- Mainstream and Māori news media collaborate on coverage and projects. This has already been happening to a point between various mainstream outlets in New Zealand, with many partnering to publish content on multiple platforms.

Conclusion

The kaupapa of this report was how can we do better?

Although the challenges being faced by New Zealand's mainstream media are as individual as any other country, I hope it's become clear that we can learn a lot from our international colleagues.

There are huge opportunities to change the way in which we educate journalists and journalism students. That process of building cultural competency in non-Indigenous journalists and supporting Indigenous colleagues, will lead to better coverage and better journalism in Aotearoa New Zealand.

If there is any legitimate barrier to this, it is simply a question of time and money. If we work together as an industry 'time and money' are by no means insurmountable. The first step must be to come together as an industry and work out how we can institute changes in New Zealand. I believe the formation of an industry wide body - such as that suggested in the first 'Key Recommendations' box and inspired by what is being done in Canada - would be the best place to start and could be a 'watershed moment' for our mainstream news media.

We can then pursue changes in the language and style we use in our reporting. We can also more frequently engage with Indigenous approaches to journalism and adapt our practices to better suit the stories and communities we cover.

These changes are all possible and I believe it is our obligation as an industry to investigate them.

As the CBC's Duncan McCue says, "no one ever said change is easy".

Special thanks to

New Zealand

Donald Matheson

Gary Wilson

Mihingārangi Forbes

Tara Ross

Willie Jackson

Mainland United States

Aryssa Becenti

Antonia Gonzales

Barry Heifner

Duane Beyal

Jenni Monet

Jourdan Bennett-Begaye

Mark Trahant

Mary Hudetz

Tristan Ahtone

Australia

Bridget Brennan

Kerry McCallum

Lorena Allam

Stephen Fitzpatrick

Hawai'i

Ann Auman

Daniel Ikaika Ito

Kamaka Pili

Keala Kelly

Ku'uwehi Hiraishi

Pacific Islanders in Communication

Norway

Anders Bals

Liv Inger Somby

Nils-Johan Heatta

Inga Marja Steinfjell

Inker-Anni Sara

Canada

Cheryl McKenzie

Connie Walker

Duncan McCue

Hannah Clifford

Karyn Pugliese

Kyle Edwards

Paul Barnsley

Rebecca Lyons