



ANZCA

FPM

Te Whare Tohu o Te Hau Whakaora

Media release

10 November 2023

ANZCA launches karakia for patients and whānau

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) has launched an ANZCA karakia, designed to provide pre-surgery comfort to patients and their whānau.

The karakia, written by tohunga (expert practitioner) Mark Kopua (Te Atianga a Hauiti), is being launched today at the Aotearoa NZ Anaesthesia ASM 2023, being held in Ōtepoti Dunedin.

Rotorua-based anaesthetist Dr Arihia Waaka (Te Arawa, Tainui), came up with the concept of the karakia and was able to make it a reality through a grant from ANZCA's Health Equity Projects Fund.

"Karakia is a very prominent part of Māori people's lives and of my life as well. If I was having surgery, I would be grateful for this sort of tool, and it's just another way to help whānau be involved in the healing of their family."

The karakia, in both English and te reo Māori, can be [downloaded from the ANZCA website](#) for use at hospital anaesthesia departments across New Zealand. It is designed to be recited by patients and their families before an operation.

The Health Equity Projects Fund is a funding stream that supports the college's work to improve the health and wellbeing of our community.

The launch of the karakia comes alongside the ANZCA Council approving the development of a comprehensive strategy to ensure the college meets its responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. A priority is fulfilling the recently introduced requirements of the Medical Council of New Zealand to ensure the curriculum and CPD activities ANZCA provides deliver culturally safe care and workplaces.

Dr Waaka said she was thrilled with the karakia.

"When I first read it, it brought tears to my eyes, I literally got goosebumps. These composers do amazing work. Every single word is very well thought out, we call them kura huna, little treasures within the writing – you can often take one word and write a whole story just about that one word."

She said there was growing understanding of the importance of spirituality in the healing process.

"We work in healing but it's not just about the physical. If your environment's not healthy you're more likely physically to be unhealthy, and I think the mainstream is starting to catch on that if you're not spiritually healthy, that can manifest in physical ways.

"There's been some rehabilitation programs that have looked at people's outlooks and how positivity can influence their outcomes – we can't really explain that right now. But Indigenous cultures have always recognised that there is a link between happiness, and positive outcomes."

Dr Waaka was grateful for the support of ANZCA to help bring the karakia to life, and hoped it might lead to other medical colleges or organisations creating their own.

“This is a key example of ANZCA being respectful, being supportive and doing the things they say they want to do, in supporting culturally appropriate care. I think it’s a huge step.

“I hope other organisations that might take this up see the process ANZCA has followed, it’s been really respectful. Quite often Māori experts’ expertise gets taken advantage of because people don’t realise how knowledgeable they are or how much time they have put in to their specialist area.”

For media queries, contact ANZCA Senior Communications Advisor – New Zealand, Reon Suddaby on +64 21 228 8072, or reon.suddaby@anzca.org.nz Follow us on X @ANZCA @NZ_ASM #ASM23