

Embedding Indigenous Values into Cancer Control

Erana Rattray, **Project Manager Equity**

Mihimihi

E rere ngā mihi ki Te Arikinui Kuini Nga wai hono i te po, tēnā koe

We send our acknowledgements to the Queen Nga wai hono i te po

Ki a koutou e te haukāinga o te rohe nei, Te Ākitai Waiohua, Ngāti Te Ata Waiohua, me Ngāti Tamaoho

To the people of this land Te Ākitai Waiohua, Ngāti Te Ata Waiohua, and Ngāti Tamaoho

Ki te apārangi World Indigenous Cancer Network

To the World Indigenous Cancer Network

Me Hei Āhuru Mōwai, nā koutou te karanga o te rā, tēnā rā koutou katoa

And to Hei Āhuru Mōwai, whose call brings us here today, greetings to you all

Ko Te Tiriti o Waitangi he taonga ka noho hei pou arataki i a mātou mahi katoa.

The Treaty of Waitangi is a treasure that stands as a guiding pillar in all that we do.

Our Purpose: Weaving Indigenous principles into cancer control

Transforming cancer outcomes for Indigenous peoples requires more than technical solutions; it requires centring Indigenous principles as the foundation of cancer control.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Aho o Te Kahu Cancer Control Agency has sought to reflect Māori principles across national strategy, policy, and practice.

A foundation for how we work together

Āta is a living philosophy grounded in mātauranga (Māori knowledge). It centres reflection, presence, and respectful relationships.

Āta guides our projects, partnerships and ways of working, embedding care, respect and intention.

Working in the spirit of Āta



Āta Noho

Be present and grounded

Āta Whakarongo

Active listening

Āta Whakaaro

Think with intention

Āta Kōrero

Speak with care and respect

Āta Haere

Move with purpose

Āta Noho – Be Present and Grounded

Āta Noho invites us to arrive fully, physically, mentally and emotionally. This presence creates space for meaningful connection, and for whānau voice, diverse perspectives and lived experience to be shared openly alongside evidence.

Cancer Control Application: Āta Noho shapes how we design projects and work together.

Āta Whakarongo – Active Listening

Āta Whakarongo calls us to listen with reflective intent, being open to be changed by what we hear, and move from listening to action.

Cancer Control Application: We actively listen to diverse voices including people with lived experience, health and community experts and data. We act on what we hear to reimagine decision-making and redesign cancer care outcomes.

Āta Whakaaro – Think with Intention

Āta Whakaaro invites intentional, reflective thinking before action. It calls us to pause, reflect and consider who benefits, who is impacted and why.

Cancer Control Application: Āta Whakaaro challenges us to choose mana-enhancing (protecting or lifting a person's dignity, status or power) responses grounded in equity and collective wellbeing.

Āta Kōrero – Speak with Care

Our words have power. They can reinforce advantage or carry the wisdom of lived experience. Āta Kōrero calls us to communicate in mana-enhancing ways, especially when the kōrero (conversation) is difficult and power is not held evenly.

Cancer Control Application: We use language that amplifies whānau voice and holds lived experience with respect.

Ask yourself: Whose voice do your words uplift?

Āta Haere – Move with Purpose

Āta Haere cautions us not to rush through our mahi (work) or our relationships. Moving too quickly can unintentionally reinforce advantage, while those most impacted are left behind.

Cancer Control Application: Āta Haere guides us to pace our mahi (work) and relationships, so decisions are shaped to support those with the greatest unmet need, reducing rather than reinforcing inequities.

A framework you can adapt

Āta has been applied across Te Aho o Te Kahu:

- project planning and implementation
- decision-making processes
- everyday ways of working.

This framework guides how we engage, decide and act together, strengthening relational excellence.

91% of our kaimahi (staff) told us that Āta supports a respectful, deliberate and connected workplace culture.

Āta is a daily commitment

Āta is not just for today, Āta is a commitment to how we work, relate and lead every day.

When Indigenous principles guide everyday practice, cancer control is transformed. Relationships are nurtured, trust deepens and systems become more relational, more equitable and more responsive to whānau and communities.

This is a framework you can adapt to your own contexts.

Self reflection



What does **Āta mean** to you in your mahi (work) or relationships?

Where in your mahi (work) could **Āta** be more **intentionally applied**?

Which **Āta** principle **resonates** most with your current mahi (work), and why?

What is **one action** you will take to embed **Āta** more deeply in your mahi (work)?

Pātai Mai - Questions Please

Ngā mihi maioha, thanks with appreciation

Erana Rattray

Project Manager Equity

Te Aho o Te Kahu Cancer Control Agency

erana.rattray@teaho.govt.nz

