



Prime Minister's Supreme Award and

Sustained Excellence
in Tertiary Teaching
Kaupapa Māori Category

Dr Rhys Jones

(Ngāti Kahungunu)

Ko Tākitimu te waka

Ko Whakapūnake te maunga

Ko Wairoa te awa

Ko Ngāti Kahungunu te iwi

Ko Ngāi Te Apatu te hapū

Ko Rhys Jones tōku ingoa.

Tihei mauri ora!

Senior Lecturer

Te Kupenga Hauora Māori (TKHM)

The University of Auckland

"We need to go beyond the concept of transformative learning within a Kaupapa Māori framework, and seek to transform educational curricula, educational institutions and the society in which they are embedded."

Rhys is a Māori public health physician and a Senior Lecturer in The University of Auckland's Te Kupenga Hauora Māori (TKHM/Department of Māori Health). He has taught at the University since 2006 and, from 2011, has been TKHM's Director of Teaching – Hauora Māori. This role involves leadership of Māori Health teaching and learning across the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences (FMHS). He leads strategic planning, Māori health curriculum development and implementation; and oversees broader curricula in FMHS programmes and capability building for Māori Health teaching and learning. His work extends into clinical programmes including Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy.

Rhys's teaching and learning Kaupapa originates in the values and practices of Te Ao Māori, with core commitments to te reo and tikanga Māori. He sees teaching and learning within a Kaupapa Māori framework as inherently part of a wider struggle for decolonisation, Indigenous rights and social justice. He believes it must foster transformation, not just among learners, but ultimately within institutions, systems and structures. He says this requires educational environments that support dialogue, critique, empowerment and connection. Also, he believes that genuinely transformative education inspires learners to engage in the critical thinking and self-reflection that is vital for reforming organisations and systems in service of social justice.

"Transforming students' learning experiences is an essential precursor to improving Māori health and achieving health equity."

Rhys believes that, given Aotearoa New Zealand's colonial history and the many contemporary challenges faced by Māori seeking full expression of their human rights, a critical orientation is imperative. In Māori health, this means examining the root causes of social and health inequities through an Indigenous lens. To create a safe and effective learning environment, Rhys situates these discussions in the context of the wider sociological processes that shape individual beliefs and patterns of privilege and disadvantage. He believes that what students learn in the Māori health curriculum matters, and should be reinforced in the whole educational environment and beyond.

Rhys has developed and taught many undergraduate and postgraduate Māori Health courses and makes significant contributions to Māori Health components in other courses and programmes. His teaching style is collaborative and he deliberately positions himself as a learning facilitator rather than an information provider. He encourages open and uncensored engagement as he believes strongly in collective responsibility for learning and development.

He believes a primary goal of Kaupapa Māori health professional education is for learners to become 'agents of change', requiring critical awareness of systemic and structural factors perpetuating discrimination and intolerance. In his *Becoming an agent of change in Māori health* session for postgraduate Māori Health students, classes discuss tools for identifying their own biases and stereotypes, and for deconstructing problematic narratives.

In health professional education, students are frequently presented with information about the demography of disease with little, if any, attention given to factors such as racism, unequal distribution of social and economic resources, and health-care inequities. To counter this, Rhys has developed teaching and learning components that examine the complex factors contributing to ethnic health inequality. He is the academic lead for Māori Health Intensive, an interactive, four-day teaching and learning initiative involving over 500 students from five health professional programmes. This learning challenges superficial explanations for health inequities, and instead helps students understand how historical, social, political and structural factors powerfully shape Māori health outcomes.

Building a culturally safe health-sector workforce with a strong Māori presence is important to Rhys. In his advocacy role, he lectures at other universities, including the University of Otago, Massey University, and Auckland University of Technology. He has presented on the University's curriculum innovations at: Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA); Tuia Te Ako; the Australia & New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators (ANZAHPE); the Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education (LIME) network; the Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors' Congress (PRIDoC); the Association for the Study of Medical Education (ASME); and the Association of Medical Education in Europe (AMEE). He is also frequently invited to give conference presentations on Indigenous health teaching and learning, such as keynote addresses for the LIME network, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and ANZAHPE.

Rhys led the development of Te Ara, the common graduate profile in Hauora Māori, working with the directors of the Faculty's four major undergraduate programmes to agree on a common set of learning outcomes - and saw it adopted in 2009. Prior to this, dedicated Māori Health learning in the medical programme consisted of two isolated blocks of teaching over the six-year programme, with no summative assessment of students' achievement in the Hauora Māori domain. One of Rhys's most significant achievements has been the development of a comprehensive assessment framework for the Hauora Māori domain, which is being phased in between 2017 and 2021. Now, medical students are required to demonstrate achievement of Māori Health learning outcomes in each year of the programme, independent of performance in other domains of learning.

Rhys is recognised nationally and internationally as a leader in Indigenous health education and research. In 2005-06, he was a Harkness Fellow in Health Care Policy based at Harvard Medical School in Boston, USA. In 2018, he received the FMHS Butland Award for Leadership in Teaching and, in 2019, the University of Auckland Teaching Excellence Award for Leadership in Teaching and Learning. He received the LIMELight Award for Leading Innovation in Curriculum Implementation in 2011 and for Excellence in Indigenous Health Education Research in 2019. He was International Lead Investigator of *Educating for Equity*, a multi-centre collaborative research project, resulting in *Educating for Indigenous Health Equity: An International Consensus Statement*, which was published in *Academic Medicine*, the world's leading medical education journal (Jones *et al*, 2019).
