

Wiparera Te Kani Tertiary Excellence Award in 2005



Marama Lambert
Optometrist

It's been some time since the Trust awarded Marama with its first tertiary excellence award. We wanted to see how she is going and found a nice little write up about her progress on the Careers Services website.

Marama Lambert is the daughter of Mere Lambert (Te Kani) and Len Lambert and mokopuna of Turirangi and Hinerau Te Kani. She is one of three children who have all worked hard in their chosen careers and when she was successful as the excellence recipient, it was because she was pursuing a qualification that set her apart from others. That qualification was a post-graduate diploma in optometrists that enabled her to prescribe medicine to her clients. At the time that Marama was awarded this tohu, she was the only Maori in the country pursuing this additional qualification. She may well probably be the only Maori in the country with that qualification as well. The award is for a sum of \$5000.00.

The following excerpt from the *Careers Services korero*.

Marama Lambert says the best thing about being an optometrist is having a chance to make a difference. "It is the kind of job where you actually make an impact. If someone can walk out of here with the right glasses and say 'Wow, this is so amazing', you never get sick of it."

For Marama, every customer presents a new challenge. "Every eye test is like detective work. If a person can't see you have to ask why. Although with a lot of people you could correct the problem with glasses, there are others who you need to test to make sure that their eyes are healthy. There are sneaky things that you miss if you're not careful, like glaucoma. If you don't look for the signs, like pressure inside the eye, you could actually misdiagnose glaucoma."

As an optometrist, you need technical knowledge to get the right results, but Marama says you also need great people skills to communicate those results. "You've got to be a people person to do this job. I mean, every day that's all you ever do. Sure, you test their eyes and there is the technical aspect to it, but if you get all the right results and you don't portray those to the person and make them understand what they need, then they're going to walk out of here none the wiser."

As for the future, Marama would like to build up her skills in the speciality areas of optometry. At the moment she is taking a course that will allow her to move towards therapeutics, so that she can write prescriptions for eye-related problems, not just glasses and contact lenses. "This course has a mainly practical approach where I'll observe an eye surgeon. Then I have an oral examination and after that I can prescribe! It's very exciting."

Marama's career progress since 2005

- *Completed a postgraduate diploma in ocular therapeutics in 2006, after 18 months of part-time study and full-time employment.*
- *Is now qualified to prescribe eye medications such as antibiotics, antivirals, and anti-inflammatories.*
- *Marama's increased knowledge means she feels more confident making referrals to ophthalmologists (eye specialists) for more complex eye problems.*
- *Hopes to increase her knowledge in areas of interest, including behavioural optometry and complex contact lens fittings.*

- *Enjoys working in a profession that will continue to evolve as more drugs become available, and looks forward to people in her profession developing a closer tie with eye specialists.*

Marama says, "the best thing is being able to treat red-eye problems, a condition I see regularly in the practice. This can involve removing foreign objects from the eye, or treating more serious cases like inflammation inside the eye and corneal ulcers."

Marama's award was dedicated to remembering Wiparera Te Kani. He was a founding trustee of our Trust, and also a first cousin to Marama's grandfather, Turirangi Te Kani. Wiparera gave endlessly of his time to our community, our marae and to the hahi Ratana. Wiparera Te Kani passed away in 2003, and this award helped acknowledge the work that he did as a hapu and tribal leader. As well as receiving an award for pursuing a pathway in education that is a cut above others, the recipient is reminded to reflect upon the person and their traits in remembering what types of leaders we are hoping to develop in the future through our scholarship programme. Wiparera was survived by his wife Carol and his two adult sons, Neil and Louis.

