

ASRA Award 2020

**2020 - Piripi Walker – (Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga): A
Champion of Māori radio, Māori language and oral history**

**Kāore te kūmara e korero mō tōna ake reka The kumara
(sweet potato) does not speak of its own sweetness**

This Māori whakataukī aptly describes the recipient of the ASRA award 2020 – Piripi Walker (Ngāti Kikopiri hapū of Ngāti Raukawa Te Au ki te Tonga).

Each year ASRA deliberates about who in Australasia has made a significant impact upon sound recording. In early 2020 we selected Piripi Walker in recognition of his life-long passion and promotion of Te Reo Māori (Māori language), contribution to broadcasting and work with Te Puna

Mātauranga o Aotearoa The National Library of New Zealand on the Te Upoko o Te Ika — Māori radio collection 1983-1994. Of note is his work with iwi and community to secure agreed terms for public access to the many radio stories, interviews and conversations preserved at the Library.

Early in his career, Piripi's dedication to the promotion of Te Reo Māori was shaped by his training as a producer and his work at Te Reo

Image - Piripi Walker (right) and Tama Te Huki in the Te Upoko o Te Ika studio on its first day of broadcast in 1987. Alexander Turnbull Library: EP/1987/2071/8-F



Irirangi o Aotearoa Radio New Zealand from 1982-1987. From 1987-1991 he founded and managed the Te Upoko o Te Ika Wellington Māori Language Radio Station and was the trustee and secretary of the station's trust board from 1994 - 2016.

Piripi was secretary of Ngā Kaiwhakapūmau i te Reo Wellington Māori Language Board for many Waitangi Tribunal and court cases relating to Te Reo Māori and deputy chair in 2016. A claim was made against successive New Zealand Governments that they had failed to protect, promote and foster the Māori language. In 1986 the Waitangi Tribunal found in favour of the claim, which led to the passing of the Māori Language Act 1987, thus enshrining Māori as an official language. This success was followed by a further 14 years of continuous litigation against the Government to establish

access to frequencies and funding for a national Māori broadcasting system, including a national television channel. The success of these actions is due to Piripi and the efforts of many others.

He is passionate about people and what they have to say, all the while playing down his own efforts in preserving their work and their words. He has spent many hours of his own time researching, writing, annotating, translating and talking to people and encouraging others to do this mahi (work).

Piripi also brings knowledge to the technical work of preserving the Māori radio collection 1983-1994. The collection covers a time that saw the rise in the number of hours of Māori language content on the NZ airwaves and the recognition of Māori as an official language.

He brings much knowledge and expertise to his work with the collection. He remembers who made the recordings, what equipment they used, what the circumstances and common practices were – invaluable metadata

for archival work. He gives generously and with good humour. He has been associated with the Library, especially Oral History and Sound with curator Linda Evans, for many years.

He has the foresight to understand the need for preserving audiovisual material and as he has been inspired by others, he inspires us all to see how Te Reo Māori should be “enjoyed, spoken, laughed and lived”.

A champion of Māori radio, Māori language and Oral History and a worthy recipient of the ASRA Award 2020.

Ka rawe tō mahi e hoa

Author: Bronwyn Officer
Contributor: Melinda Barrie

References

Officer, Bronwyn. 'Piripi Walker', <https://www.asra.asn.au/blog/blog-post-title-one-dcbyc>, sourced 19 April 2022

Te Upoko o Te Ika — Māori radio collection, EP/1987/2071/8-F, National Library of New Zealand