



MANU AO
Academy

Seminar Series 10 August 2011



Nin Tomas

Ngā Tikanga Mate Research Project

This is a 3 year project which is now coming to an end. It examined the principles and protocols that govern death and burial in Māori society and compares it with the English laws that have been introduced into New Zealand and which regulate burial. The research takes a three-pronged approach to the subject of burial as viewed from within the disciplines of History, Anthropology, and Law. History asks: how has the tangi process changed over time and what are the major influences that have brought about change? Anthropology asks: What is the current tikanga that Māori use to govern tangi and where a person is buried?; Law asks: what are the rules, principles and processes that govern decision making about where a person is buried?

The catalyst for the research was the Takamore Case which raised the issue of whether the collective rights of the Māori whānau, under tikanga Māori, would prevail over English-based New Zealand common law which favoured the individual rights of the spouse. What is the solution?

Nin Tomas is an Associate Professor at The University of Auckland. She is tangata whenua, being a member of the Tai Tokerau confederation of iwi and a graduate of Auckland University. Nin has studied English, Māori, French, Spanish and Hrvatska languages in order to achieve a broader understanding of the linguistic nature of "law" and how it operates in different societies. She often teaches and researches with academics from other Faculties. Nin's research interests include Indigenous legal issues; comparative law; Māori land law; public/constitutional law; Treaty of Waitangi; law relating to property and ownership; jurisprudence; and developing legal systems.