



The New Zealand Herald
150 YEARS

Waitangi: What it means to you **A16-19**

Celebrating NZ's day



Neil Finn
on his new music
+ 7-day TV listings



**Actor's death:
4 arrested** **A3. A36-37**



Stephen Versalko
spent \$3.4m of his
stolen wealth on
prostitutes.

\$18m fraudster wins freedom, loses wife

The ASB banker who stole \$18 million in one of NZ's biggest fraud cases has been granted parole, after serving four years in jail

Stephen Versalko says he's "deeply remorseful and ashamed" of his brazen crime – and he faces the future without his wife, who has moved on with another man



Former wife Megan Versalko

Full report A5



**Schapelle Corby's freedom
may be just days away** **A32**



**White knights: It's
cricket test time** **Sport B20**



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Special report Meaning of Waitangi Day

Golriz Ghahraman (right)

Aged 33, barrister and policy co-ordinator. Iranian. Arrived in New Zealand as a refugee in 1990.

Waitangi Day is about celebrating the Treaty as a living constitutional document. To me, the special self-governance and other rights of Maori as the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand are in fact human rights. Practically speaking, respect for Treaty principles of shared decision-making and shared guardianship of our natural and cultural heritage are also essential for harmonious race relations and so benefit us all. I also love the amazing results we get when Maori kaupapa [principles] and tikanga [customs] are kept alive and incorporated into the justice system. One example is our marae-based — Rangatahi — youth courts, where young people and their whanau report that the tikanga-based process engenders feelings of respect and legitimacy of the courts, and in turn makes discussions about accountability for offending and compliance with orders easier.

I think this is proof that the key to better outcomes for Maori lies in ongoing discussion and incorporation of Treaty principles into modern policy, involved in advocacy and reporting on all matters related to the rights of children and young people.

● Golriz is policy manager for Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Our day, our way

For many New Zealanders, Waitangi Day is a chance to reflect on our history and culture, for others it's just a day off work. Reporter **Sarah Illingworth** speaks to eight Kiwis from different backgrounds about what the Treaty and our national day mean to them



nzherald.co.nz
Visit tinyurl.com/heraldwaitangi for video and photo galleries

Tobias Kraus

Aged 40, photographer. German. Moved to New Zealand in 2007.

Our daughter is being raised bilingually. She's loving Auckland now, and I'm sure she'll love Berlin and Munich just the same when the time comes. Or other places, who knows. If there's one thing I'd love to encourage in her it's good old wanderlust. Aside from the jandals, fishing and rugby stereotypes, the people who surround me here are not all that different from my folks back home. As far as Maori heritage goes — and it's really just an outsider's observation — there seem to be many people who do their best to preserve Maori heritage, culture and language. If you listen to programmes on Radio NZ, you do get the feeling of a great effort throughout the country. I'm sure I've only gotten a little glimpse of it over the years. The important thing [regarding Waitangi] is probably the continued acknowledgement of the Treaty. And, along with it, the acknowledgment by Pakeha of all injustices committed against Maori, while their ancestors blatantly ignored the Treaty. Especially since the roots of the alarming inequality in the country today go all the way back to what we like to call colonisation; I don't see how it could be any more relevant.

● Tobias is married to New Zealander Anna Jackson and they've just had their first child, Francesca.



Picture / Natalie Slade

Bobby Brazuka

Aged 35, DJ, producer and event co-ordinator. Brazilian/Japanese roots. Citizen since 2006.

Because New Zealand is so new and so young, I think people are a bit more pure. In Brazil [and] cities like London or New York, there's much more hustling. Here, everything just works better. Everybody just is more clean, and straight-up. How we should be towards each other. We've got so many different nationalities, and different cultures, together in this small, beautiful place. A lot of this kindness, and friendliness of Kiwis to each other has actually come from the Maori perspective, I think. Maori are all cousins, that's something South Americans have in common with Maori. Family is everything. [When it comes to the Treaty], even though I'm a New Zealand citizen, and I've been here for more than 15 years, sometimes I just feel it's not my business. When I first came here, to high school, I learned the Treaty wasn't properly written — that it wasn't really fair. Everybody has the right to protest, and complain, if it's something peaceful. I do a lot of work for Latin culture to be spread here. But when I get into Maori and into Pakeha, I try to just watch and learn more. I don't want to take sides.

● Bobby has just launched the Kiwi-Brazilian record label Mucho Aroha Music and will be touring Sydney and New Zealand starting tomorrow.



Picture / Natalie Slade



Picture / Richard Robinson

Michelle Ang

Aged 30, actor. Malaysian Chinese Kiwi. Born in New Zealand.

I remember feeling different and slightly ostracised, and being the subject of racially pointed taunts like “Ching chong Chinaman”. But instead of ethnicity, young me put my difference down to things like my parents not knowing how to do things “right” — like the weird hybrid Malaysian-Kiwi sandwich fillings we had, instead of ham and lettuce inside like all the other Kiwi kids. By the time I was in intermediate and college, I’d got enough hobbies and friends that I felt more secure. In fact, I was pretty lucky because I was part of a much-loved national TV show. Again, I never realised that I was THE Kiwi-Asian in the [*McDonald’s Young Entertainers*] Super Troupe. But then, it never was brought up. The times have shifted to where the population of New Zealand is a sea of mixed cultures. New Zealand, I feel, was quite ahead of the curve when it came to casting ethnic actors in main roles. I don’t feel like I have been forced to play any overly stereotyped character in New Zealand. That said, I do feel there is still plenty of scope to improve and to also talk about experiences that may relate more to that demographic, in the way my film *My Wedding and Other Secrets* explored. I am proud of how New Zealand still talks about and strives to address the grievances [of the Treaty]. Compared to other colonial countries, we really are very transparent and active in this. I also think we should look toward the future — and in that future we should be as one. Distinct populations are feathering, through a mixing of blood, and we should all carry the duty and be considered guardians of this amazing land.

● Michelle is based in Los Angeles.



Priya Sami

Aged 26, musician. Irish/Indian Kiwi. Born in New Zealand.

The tough question for me [at school] was always which cultural club to go in. You should be able to pick more than one! It’s not fair! My heart is “kivi” but it’s not made up of pavlova, silver ferns, jandals and rugby — maybe a few Warriors though. “Kiwi-ness” to me is more than food and shoes, it’s our distinctive Maori culture — it’s only in New Zealand you guys! Maori tikanga has always made me feel a part of something bigger, its song is warm and welcoming and mixes all our amazing cultures together. Like, in a melting pot? The Treaty of Waitangi was breached as bro and heaps of Kiwis don’t know that. I can’t believe the Government thought they could get away with the confiscation of land, the banning of te reo AND the pepper-potting — please look it up. I’ve met too many Kiwis that think we should just forget about it and that Maori should move on, and it’s exhausting explaining why that’s a really stink way to think . . . could everyone read a goddamn book this Waitangi Day please? You’ve got the day off. It’s our history and we should know it.

● Priya performs with sisters Madeleine and Anji as the Sami Sisters.

Meaning of Waitangi Day continued on **A19**



Picture / Natalie Slade

Special report Meaning of Waitangi Day continued

Sriwhana Spong

Aged 32, student. Indonesian New Zealander. Born in New Zealand.

When I was at high school there was a huge move towards political correctness, which I think was necessary, but I had a knee-jerk reaction to the assumption that culture was an immutable heritage that I somehow had to represent in a strong and specific way. My relationship to my own cultural heritage was very complex, and I wondered very early on what I could claim and what I could reject and if I had any rights to do either. It became a playful inquiry and it was important for me to treat the issue with humour. I was in a band called the Pussies, where each member was of mixed ethnicity. Pritika is half Fijian Indian, Mel half Maori and Jess half Samoan. We played on this ethnic melange, writing songs such

as *Halfbreed*. I still love the line Jess wrote: "I'm a halfbreed baby and I mean what I say / I ain't full blown nothing, but I'll blow you away." A continued dialogue around the Treaty will always be important. The birth of contemporary NZ started under colonial rule that brought with it all the [problems] of colonisation. Continued conversation, debate and dialogue keep questions of power and exploitation alive, relevant and evolving and hopefully make us as a community more aware of the respect that is owed every human being and the land we inhabit. Studying away from New Zealand makes me aware of how privileged we are to live amid such beauty, and we must vote in a government that serves to protect it.

● Sriwhana is studying for a master of fine art degree at the Piet Zwart Institute in the Netherlands.



Renee Coulter

Aged 36, restaurateur. Maori/Pakeha. Born in New Zealand.

I don't have to mention that I'm Pakeha because it's obvious just by looking at me. I do tell people straight up that I'm Maori, though, because it's important to me and I'm proud of it. I don't think Maori is a colour thing. It's not a brown or white thing, it's a way of thinking and being. If I'm honest, Waitangi is a welcome day off. We close the restaurant, round up friends and whanau and head to the beach or have a barbecue. I was about 15 when a friend innocently asked: "What are you guys doing [for] Waitangi Day?"

I replied in typical teenage fashion: "Don't know . . . probably going to the beach." She said, "But aren't you celebrating?" "Celebrating what?" I said. "Well, you're Maori, don't you celebrate?" I said, "No we don't celebrate." Maybe even a little hotly. My feelings haven't changed. How can you celebrate something that was formed in good faith, where promises were made — a document to bring two peoples together — but never adhered to? Today's statistics, from prison rates to child poverty, directly link back to a loss of land, language and identity that the Treaty, if adhered to, would have



protected. Many Kiwis think we need to move on, but for me there is still so much work to do around the Treaty and race relations that it's way too early to start celebrating. I want NZ to be a country that is world-renowned for its equality. Where it is a priority, not just a soundbite or media tag, but written into our constitution so any and all governments can be held to this one core value: equality. The information and research is there; sort out inequality and the rest will fall into place.

● Renee co-owns and runs Auckland bistro Coco's Cantina with her sister Damaris.



Matariki Whatarau

Aged 27, actor. Maori. Born in New Zealand.

[Waitangi Day] always makes me reflect on our country's history. It's a time to look back to the past — and also to look to the future, and the present — and go, so as a nation, in terms of the people here, the people who occupy this land, how have the relationships changed, and what can happen in the future? In the late '70s through to the '80s, through the Maori revival, especially with the language, we were doing good things and taking steps in the right direction, and that's progressively improved. I hear the word Waitangi, I straight away think of the Waitangi Tribunal, and Government settlements due to the Treaty. It saddens me that the land is brought back to a monetary value [but] I also look to the other side of the coin and go, the government can't just straight give that land back to the people — there'd have to be some kind of retribution that's not just doing what [was done] in the past, you know, take away someone's land. People belong to that land now. Hopefully the iwi getting settlements use that money to better the iwi, the tribe.

● Whatarau stars alongside Francis Kora in *The Pa Boys*, out today. See 12 Questions on A60 for an interview with producer Ainsley Gardiner.



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