

Air New Zealand celebrates 50 years of Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori inflight



Celebrating 50 years of Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori onboard Air New Zealand

Araraurangi [Air New Zealand](#) marked 50 years of Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori with a special flight between Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and Tāhuna Queenstown, celebrating the milestone and the airline's deep pride in its use of te reo Māori.

From check-in to touchdown, passengers on flights NZ635 and NZ616 were immersed in te reo Māori. Greetings, announcements and waiata filled the journey, creating an atmosphere of celebration, connection and manaakitanga, Air New Zealand said in its press release.

Chief Sustainability and Corporate Affairs Officer, Kiri Hannifin, said the service captured the airline's passion for championing the language.

"Our crew carry te reo Māori with them all over the world, making it part of the journey wherever we fly. This special flight was our way of celebrating both the language itself and 50 years of Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori, a milestone for Aotearoa that we are incredibly proud to honour," she said.

Senior Specialist – Māori Development, Bari Mio (Ngāti Awa, Tūhoe, Te Whānau ā Apanui), said, "As an airline, we are proud to bring te reo Māori to life in ways that connect with both our people and our customers. This celebration was about creating a journey that honoured the past 50 years while looking to the future, a chance for everyone on board to feel part of something special."

Among those leading the celebration was Inflight Service Manager Te Aorere Redmond, proudly wearing his Tohu Reo pin, a symbol of fluency and an invitation for customers to kōrero Māori.

"For me, it is the pride in who we are, as a country, as an airline and as Māori. By using te reo in meaningful ways, we create opportunities for it to grow and inspire others. Whiua ki te Ao – cast it out to the world."

Short haul cabin crew member, Kiaani Witana, said taking part was a privilege: "I'm proud to represent my whānau, my hāpori and te iwi Māori not only on this flight but on every flight, in every country. Especially our own."

Seats on both services were filled with passengers eager to be part of the milestone celebration, many reflecting on the journey of te reo Māori over five decades and its bright future ahead.

Hannifin said the anniversary gave the service special significance.

"For Araraurangi Air New Zealand, the celebration is part of a much bigger journey. It has been 11 years since our customer-facing crew first began greeting customers with 'kia ora', and today te reo Māori is woven throughout the inflight experience. Crew who can kōrero wear the Tohu Reo pin so customers can identify them, our international flights feature a dedicated 'Te Ao Māori' category on inflight entertainment, and our values are expressed through whakataukī (Māori proverbs)," she commented.