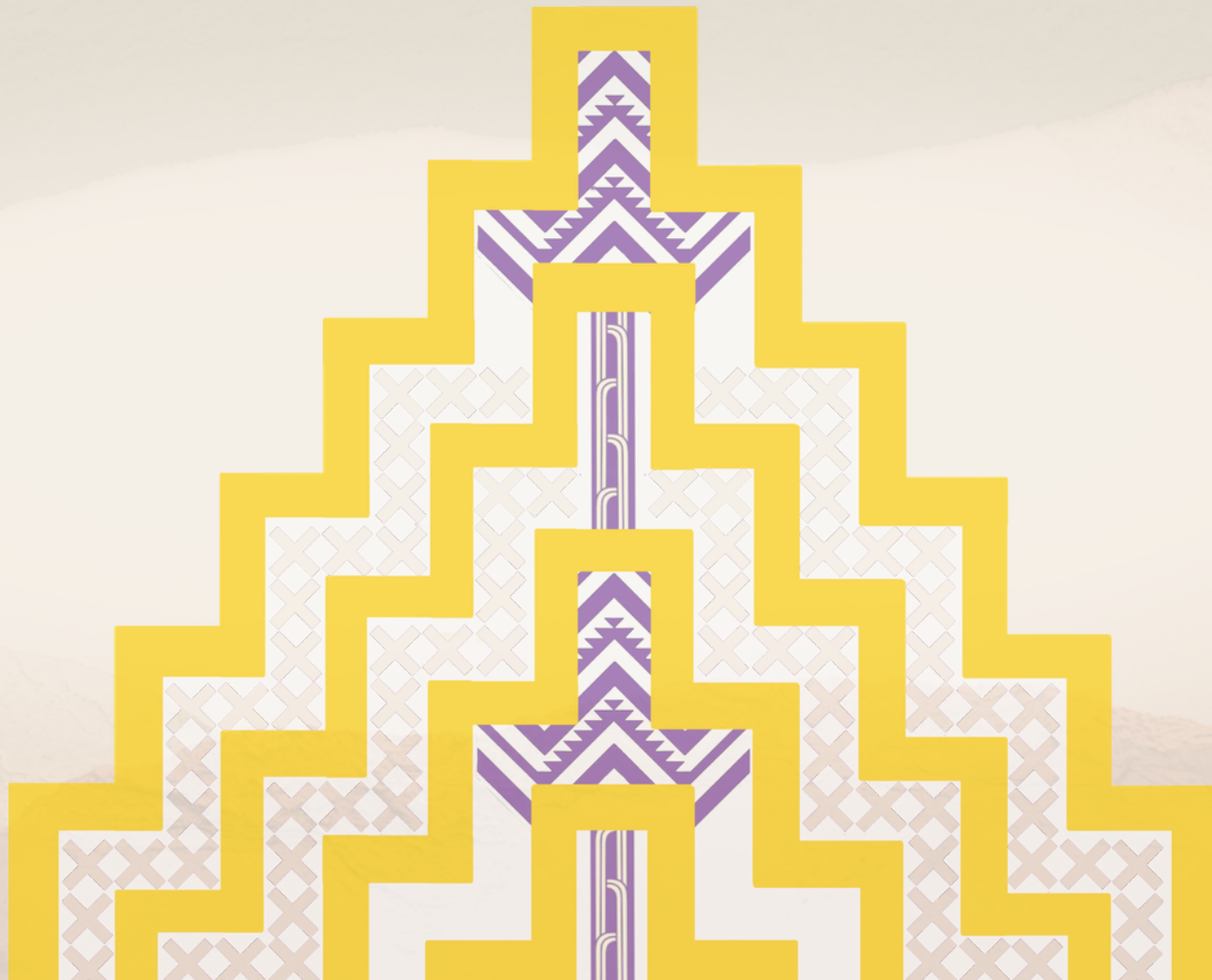


KA PUTA KI TE WHAI ĀO

FROM VISIBILITY TO SOVEREIGNTY

Reclaiming Intersex Lives, Data and Power

Tu Chapman | Intersex Social Cohesion Wānanga | Auckland | 10–11 June 2026



Ko Wai Au?



- Māori
- Survivor of state care
- Advocate, leader and system challenger
- Descendant of resilient tūpuna
- 'Before I could define myself, others sought to define me.'

Growing Up Between Worlds

- **Born with a Difference in Sex Development (DSD)**
- **Suffered a medical process that involved surgery as a baby**
- **Suffered extreme medical and psychological conditions**
- **Suffered severe sexual and physical abuse by whānau**
- **Entered into State Care**
- **Disconnection from whakapapa through state care**
- **Searching for belonging while carrying difference**
- **Misgendered**

The Cost of Silence

- **Medicalised bodies**
- **Invisible identities**
- **Isolation and stigma**
- **Being spoken about rather than spoken with**
- **Visibility matters because silence causes harm.**



The Politics of Our Existence

- **Renewed debates about sex, gender and identity**
- **Legislative efforts to narrowly define humanity**
- **Intersex people erased from public conversations**
- **Communities expected to justify their existence**

Social Cohesion or Social Exclusion?




- Social cohesion is not achieved through conformity.
- It is achieved when every person can participate with dignity, safety and belonging.

Te Ao Māori and Human Diversity

- Whakapapa before categories
- Manaakitanga before judgement
- Collective responsibility for wellbeing
- Returning home to ourselves
- Our tūpuna understood complexity.



From Visibility to Sovereignty

A stylized illustration of a person with short dark hair, wearing glasses and a grey top. They have a prominent Māori facial tattoo (moko) on their chin. The background features a red and white geometric pattern with traditional Māori motifs.

“What is good for
Māori is good for
New Zealand”

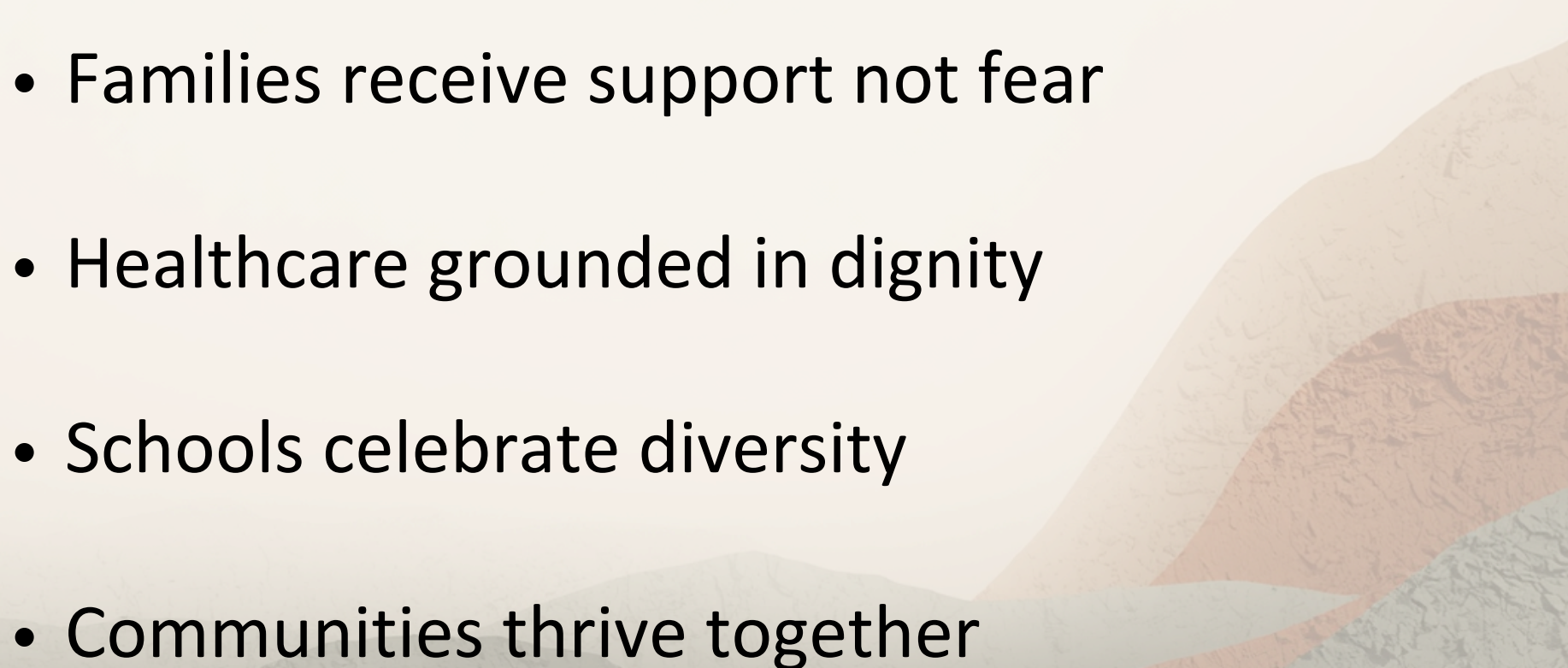
TU CHAPMAN | HE KURA MŌREHU

- **Visibility asks to be seen.**
- **Sovereignty demands power, agency, representation and self-determination.**

What Intersex Sovereignty Looks Like

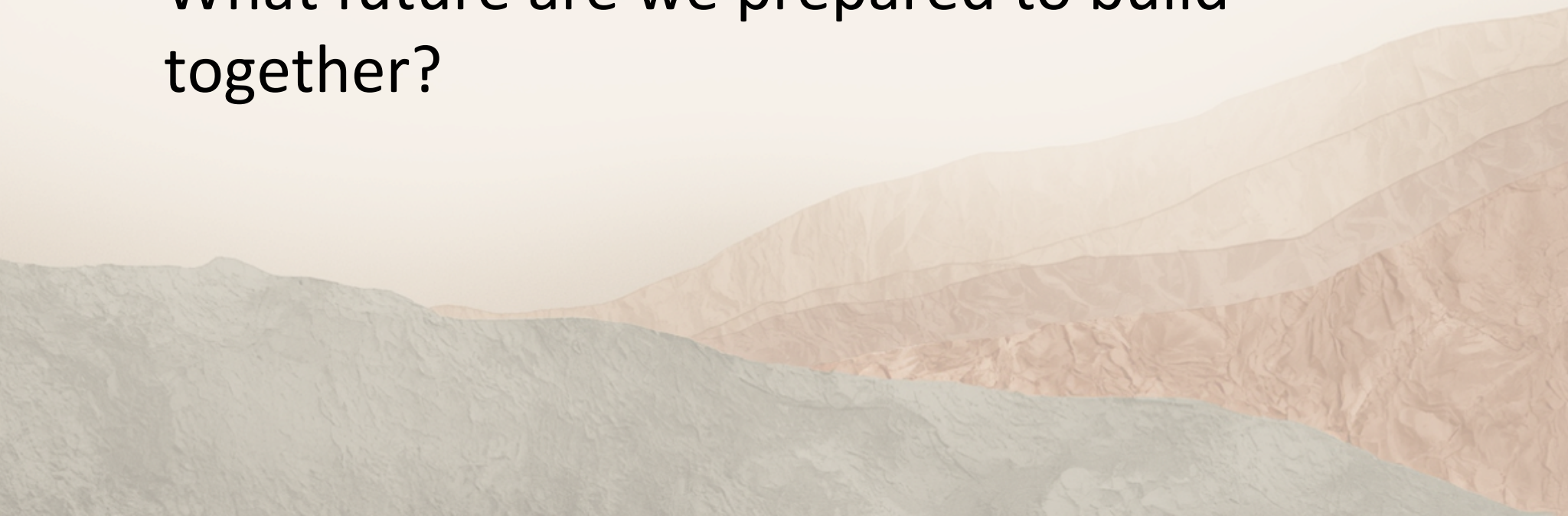
- ✓ Intersex leadership
- ✓ Data sovereignty
- ✓ Bodily autonomy
- ✓ Safe schools and workplaces
- ✓ Health systems that do no harm
- ✓ Representation in decision-making

The Aotearoa We Could Build

- Intersex children grow up knowing they belong
 - Families receive support not fear
 - Healthcare grounded in dignity
 - Schools celebrate diversity
 - Communities thrive together
- 

A Challenge for Us All

- Who is still missing from the conversation?
- What systems still require transformation?
- What future are we prepared to build together?



He Kākano Ahau

- He kākano ahau i ruia mai i Rangiātea.
- Intersex people have always existed.
- We belong.
- We lead.
- We will shape the future.