

News Release

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A journey back into Te Ao Māori (+ [video](#))

Eddie Mei wasn't allowed to speak te reo at school. From a Māori family, he grew up with people around him speaking te reo but he found it difficult to understand and respond.

Recently, at age 64, he took the first step to learning the language and culture he's longed to understand all his life.

Together with his wife Andrea, Eddie attended a five-week te reo course with more than 400 others at the ANZ Centre in Auckland.

In August, Andrea saw an ad promoting ANZ's free, five-week te reo Māori course in celebration of Māori Language Week and knew it would be a great introduction for her husband.

"We agreed we'd go and learn together," Eddie says. "And I'm so glad we did... it's given me confidence."

Inspired by the classes at ANZ, Eddie continues to learn te reo today. His goal: to one day speak te reo on his marae in front of whānau.

"My dream is that when I'm confident and able I'd like to speak on my marae ... I made a promise to myself to get there so that's what I'm going to do. I'm looking forward to the challenge."

Precious Clark, founder of Te Kaa, taught ANZ's te reo Māori lessons and says it's not uncommon for Māori to feel like Eddie.

"I have a lot of empathy for my whanaunga who haven't had the luxury of growing up with their reo... There's an expectation that they should know it but we all know knowledge doesn't fall on our heads," Precious says.

"It's never too late to learn and it's encouraging for us all to see people like Eddie picking it up now."

Māori cultural awareness in New Zealand

ANZ Managing Director Retail and Business Banking Antonia Watson says it's a collective effort to grow awareness of te reo and the Māori world in New Zealand.

"Change isn't always made through one big event – it can happen through lots of small steps," Antonia says.

"It was encouraging to see the range of New Zealand businesses celebrating te wiki o te reo Māori this year.

“Eddie’s experience tells us there is a hunger to learn and understand more about the Māori world.

“If we all use our resources to grow awareness and respect, I believe we can make a difference together.”

About ANZ’s Māori Language Mondays

To celebrate Māori Language Week 2018 ANZ hosted a series of te reo Māori classes for ANZ staff and the public to attend.

More than 400 people attended the Monday-night classes over five-weeks, learning pronunciation, place names and karakia.

The course was hosted by Precious Clark, founder of Te Kaa, a Māori cultural competency programme.

Download a video of Eddie’s story [here](#).

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