



Ngā Mahi a Ratana Potiki

Ngā Mahi a Ratana Potiki, known as Mahi, was a trailblazer who left a lasting mark on New Zealand's broadcasting and sports communities. Born into a large family of 14 siblings in rural Taranaki, Mahi attended Rahotu and Opunake schools before enrolling at New Plymouth Girls' High School from 1939 to mid-1941. Known for her distinctive, almost upper-class English accent, she later moved to Wellington and attended Wellington Technical College for two years as a commercial student. During her time there, she was a standout athlete, captaining the girls' top basketball team and excelling in athletics. In 1942, she was the senior girls' athletic champion, winning events such as the high jump, hurdles, and 100-yard sprint.

Mahi's athletic talent extended beyond school. She represented Wellington in athletics for several years until 1952. She also played cricket, first for the Kilbirnie club and then for the Wellington representative side, playing in three matches between 1951 and 1954. She was a determined middle-order batter and an athletic wicketkeeper.

Mahi began her broadcasting career on regional radio stations before returning to Wellington to work for 2ZB, where she became known as a shopping reporter. For over 30 years, her crisp tones were a staple on the airwaves. She was a pioneering figure in broadcasting, becoming the first Māori woman radio announcer and even providing sports commentary, notably for the 1969 women's cricket Test match between New Zealand and England at the Basin Reserve.

Beyond her broadcasting work, Mahi was a dedicated sports administrator. She served as the recording secretary for the New Zealand Women's Cricket Council (NZWCC) from 1959 to 1963 and was a member of the management committee for six years. In 1970, she was elected as Chair of the NZWCC, a position she held until 1974. During her tenure, she oversaw significant milestones, including the New Zealand women's team's tour of South Africa in 1972 and their participation in the inaugural Women's World Cup in England in 1973—two years before the first men's World Cup.

In her later years, Mahi's work shifted to the concert section, focusing on promotion and publicity for touring artists. She later worked in staff services at the newly named Radio New Zealand. She eventually retired, moving back to Wellington and becoming an avid bowls player with the Miramar Club for over 30 years. Mahi passed away in June 2009 at the age of 84.