



HUI Ā ROHE REPORT

Te Tai Rāwhiti Hui ā Rohe

Abstract

A Karanga Aotearoa summary report of the hui held at Toihoukura Tairāwhiti Polytechnic, Gisborne, on Wednesday 19 May 2010, 1 – 3 pm.

Introduction

On Wednesday 19 May 2020 Karanga Aotearoa facilitated a Hui for Iwi, hapu, and whanau representatives within Te Tai Rāwhiti. The Hui was hosted at Toihoukura Tairāwhiti Polytechnic and attendees included representatives from Tairāwhiti Museum, Te Puni Kōkiri, Te Runanga o Turanganui a Kiwa, Rongowhakaata, Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Ngāti Konohi, and Gisborne District Council. Te Papa and Karanga Aotearoa were represented at the Hui by Whāea Hokimoana Te Rika-Hekerangi (RAP), Derek Lardelli (RAP), Te Herekiele Herewini (Manager Repatriation) and Te Arikirangi Mamaku (Coordinator Repatriation).

Overview of the Hui

The Hui a Rohe covered the following three kaupapa:

1. Trade of kōiwi tangata and Toi moko;
2. Background information about the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation programme, and an update about the work carried out by the programme since its establishment in 2003;
3. Appropriate options regarding a final resting place for unprovenanced kōiwi tangata held by Te Papa.

Te Herekiele provided an historical background to the programme by initially speaking about the trade of Toi moko and kōiwi tangata from 1769 (Captain Cook Voyages to the early 1920s, highlighting some of the key Māori and European figures involved in both trade and repatriation.

One of the questions raised was whether or not the trade of Toi moko during the early 1800s was driven by the demand of Māori chiefs for muskets. Te Herekiele responded by noting that it could be argued that part of the trade was due to a demand for Māori to arm themselves with muskets, however, the trade could only exist if there was a market and demand for such items (i.e. Maori human remains) in Australia, Europe and the Americas.

Repatriation Advisory Panel

Derek and Hokimoana discussed appropriate options regarding a final resting place for unprovenanced kōiwi tangata. There was significant interest from the group re: provenance research and whether Te Papa utilised scientific methods such as DNA testing and spiritual methods such as matakite.

Scientific Methods

Te Herekiele explained that scientific methods such as DNA and Isotopic testing were not conducted by Te Papa. Isotopic testing on plant fibres (i.e. supplejack collars on Toi moko) can provide inaccurate results as water content in plant fibres can be altered by preparation process. On the other hand DNA testing to be effective needs to have a comparative population base as part of the process, therefore a substantial number of Maori would need to be part of the DNA testing process. This is not a practical avenue to follow at this stage.

Matakite

On the matter of engaging the expertise of matakite, there are a number of risks involved as it has been said “that different matakite may access different results.”

The research conducted by Te Papa is based on a comprehensive research strategy utilising historical records such as journals, shipping records, museum accession records, research wānanga, and a robust traditional knowledge base provided by the Repatriation Advisory Panel.

Tairāwhiti Rohe

The group indicated that within the Tairāwhiti region there still exists whānau, that continue to care for ancestral kōiwi tangata, and that these tūpuna continue to be considered as an integral part of their respective tribal communities.

On that thought it was urged that while Te Papa is taking the time to investigate options for a final resting place for unprovenanced kōiwi tangata, that upmost consideration be put in the conservation and the best possible care for our collective tūpuna.

The sentiment that was shared amongst those in attendance is that kōiwi tangata and Toi moko serve as valuable cultural expressions of our collective past, and require the upmost respect as in their care and their final resting place.

Takoto me te Nehu

The principles laid out re: a final resting place were supported by those in attendance, and although a particular preference of option was not put forward, it was urged that regardless of what option is determined, that the legacy and integrity of the tūpuna is of the upmost priority, and that ‘takoto means takoto’.

It is of great significance that we afford those tūpuna an appropriate burial. Ko te mea nui, me nehutia ngā tūpuna.

At the time when these tūpuna are put to rest, it is critical that appropriate ceremonies and karakia are conducted.

The work of Karanga Aotearoa and the people involved should be acknowledged.

Other questions and answers

Where do the Toi moko and kōiwi tangata sit on flights?

They are placed in their own separate container within the cargo area of the plane.

Who makes up the repatriation team?

The roopu is made up of people with appropriate skills to ensure the care and safety of the tupuna while they are on their journey home. This includes kaumatua and Te Papa staff.

Is the final resting place only for unprovenanced kōiwi tangata?

Yes this discussion is only about unprovenanced kōiwi tangata, as those tupuna with provenance will be returned to their iwi or rohe.

How many kōiwi tangata are being stored in Wahi tapu, and what sort of space is being used (size)?

101 Toi moko, and approximately 500 kōiwi tangata.

Attendees

Wiremu Ruru	Te Rūnanga o Tūrangānui a Kiwa
Jody Wylie	Tairāwhiti Museum
David Butts	Tairāwhiti Museum
Hera Ngata-Gibson	Te Aitanga a Hauiti
TD Hekerangi	Te Urewera
Hokimoana Te Rika-Hekerangi	Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Advisory Panel
Derek Lardelli	Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Advisory Panel
Wayne Ngata	Toi Hauiti
Belinda Southern	Toihoukura
Mark Kōpua	Te Aitanga a Hauiti / Ngāti Ira
Tāwera Tahuri	Toihoukura
Henare Tahuri	Gisborne District Council
Alison Waru	Toihoukura
Marsha Wylie	Te Puni Kōkiri