

## The Pōwhiri – The Welcome

### The Marae Ātea – The Place of Welcome

If you are a visitor (manuhiri) for the first time to Ngā Wai ō Horotiu Marae, you should expect to be welcomed as an honoured guest and therefore you should be dressed appropriately. The protocol of welcome (pōwhiri) takes place on all such marae.

The pōwhiri recognises the coming together of two groups that are separated not only physically but also spiritually. It is a profound acknowledgement that we are all creatures of a spiritual realm. The marae ātea is a tapu (sacred) space and is often referred to as Te Tūranga-ō-Tu-te-ihiihi (the standing place of Tū Mātauenga, the God of War). Alternatively it is also known as Te Tūranga-ō-Tāne-i-te-wānanga (the standing place of Tāne Māhuta, God of Man).

### Karanga

Manuhiri (visitors) should congregate at the waharoa (gateway) of the marae and wait for the call of welcome (kāranga) from the kaikāranga. You enter the marae ātea as waewae tapu (sacred feet). It is usual for the kāranga to be answered by women (kai whakautu) in the visiting group. The kāranga is highly spiritual and is the first act by which manuhiri and tangata whenua (host) begin the act of union.

### Whakaeke

During the kāranga the group advance slowly towards the whareniui. Before reaching the whareniui manuhiri will pause and pay their respects in memory of those who have passed away.

Whaikōrero (speeches) takes place in the whareniui. After removing your shoes you will be seated to the right of the entrance with your speakers taking the front seats. While generally seen as a courtesy the principle of removing ones shoes is also a symbolic one. It represents the leaving of the dust of Tū Mātauenga (God of War) outside so that it does not soil the house of Rongo (God of Peace).

### Whaikōrero

The whaikōrero (formal speech) is followed by a mihimihi (traditional greeting) acknowledging, amongst other things, the land, whareniui, the dead, those present and the purpose of the gathering. Each speech is followed by a waiata. The waiata is an act of profound support for the speech and the orator.

After the formal speeches the manuhiri will be invited to physically greet the tangata whenua. The hongi removes the tapu that existed between the two groups and the two groups are now noa (free from tapu). The final act of the pōwhiri is the sharing of food. The process of pōwhiri lifts the tapu of the manuhiri and consequently they become tangata whenua for the period of their stay.

Nāu mai, hāere mai... Welcome, welcome, welcome...