**Listening to the Voices of our Harbours AP Marama Muru-Lanning**

**Coastal Restoration Conference, Maketuu Marae, Kaawhia (March 2024)**

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**Slide Mahinarangi Window**

Mai Hawaikinui ki Whangaparaaoa, huri ki Taamaki, ki Whangaarei, ka hoki anoo ki Taamaki. Whiti atu ki te Maanukanuka o Hoturoa. Ka haere ki Mookau, ka taka te punga. Ka hoki ake ki Kaawhia kai, Kaawhia tangata, Kaawhia moana. Ka tuu, ko Haani raaua ko Puna.

This tauparapara composed by my late father, Hukiterangi Muru, for our research traces the harbour routes travelled by the Tainui waka, which is said to have been guided into the Kaawhia Harbour by Paneiraira, a taniwha and kaitiaki. The English translation is From Hawaiki to Whangaparaaoa, turn to Taamaki, to Whangaarei and returning to Taamaki, cross over to the Manukau Harbour. Continuing to Mookau, the anchor drops, turning to Kaawhia, Kaawhia the food basket, Kaawhia the people, Kaawhia the waters. The resting place of Haani and Puna, the taurapa and tauihu of the Tainui waka.

**Slide Map**

The James Henare Research Centre was awarded funding by the Royal Society Te Apārangi in 2020 for a project focussing on kaitiakitanga of harbour environments, based at four case sites: Kaawhia, Aotea, Manukau and Whaangaarei. The research investigates kaitiakitanga as an ethic and flaxroots politic, emphasising the work of community activists at multiple levels, from the shores and waters of their harbours to the steps of Parliament. The research includes kaitiaki representatives from Ngaati Hikairo, Ngaati Mahuta, Te Patu Poo, Te Kei o Te Waka on the Manukau Harbour, Patuharakeke, Te Parawhau, and Ngaatiwai who whakapapa to the case study harbours

**Slide Kaitiakitanga Term**

Our research project focuses on **kaitiakitanga** (guardianship responsibilities) and on **harbours**, stemming from the intersection of these in the Manukau Harbour claim which was led by the late, Dame Nganeko Minhinnick, a Ngaati Te Ata leader. Her work was central to kaitiakitanga becoming a key concept in New Zealand law.

The word kaitiaki is created from two Maaori words. Kai meaning someone who carries out an action, it can be a person or group or being while tiaki means to guard, foster and provides an ethic of conservation. Thus ‘kai-tiaki’ means to carry out the action of guarding and preserving. A literature review of the term reveals it is visible in texts from 1840 onward. *Te Mātāpunenga: A Compendium of References to the Concepts and Institutions of Māori Customary Law* by Benton, Frame and Meredith provides evidence of the term being used in early Native Land Court documents and translations of the bible. In the 1980s, the word was championed by Dame Naneko Minhinnick and Maori rights activists, in strategic campaigns to defend their lands and waters from various forms of environmental damage. For the Manukau Harbour, Dame Naneko mobilised an expansive team for a Waitangi Tribunal Claim that included: Tainui Trust Board Chair of the time and from this marae, Hori Forbes, a legal expert who became a Chief Judge Sian Elias, Professor David V Williams, Tuaiwa Rickard, who then was considered a rangatahi but was given the authority by her people to represent the views of Awhitu, Whaingaroa and Tainui Awhiro. Female scholars such as the late Waerete Norman, Del Wihongi, Carmen Kirkwood and Dr Mere Roberts (here today) published academic works to advance kaitiakitanga as a fundamental Maaori concept. All of the voices conveyed discontent at the desecration of the Manukau Harbour and its waahi tapu. From the extension of the Auckland Airport to the Glenbrook Steel Mill and Mangere sewerage treatment plant operations and discharge practices. The expansion of these industries occurred in the early 1980s during the Muldoon Government’s interventionist State era of Think Big.

One outcome of the Manukau Claim was the inclusion of the term kaitiakitanga in legislation (namely the RMA 1991) and policy in the 1990s. Yet over ensuing decades the term has been used and exploited within the context of increasing Third Way politics initiatives introduced by the fifth Labour government who sought to devolve many of their responsibilities to ‘stakeholders’. Now central and local government tend to use the term kaitiaki as a convenient Maaori shorthand for stakeholder, recognising Maaori ‘interests’ and requesting their labour without relinquishing power or offering reward. Our project provides a fuller description of kaitiakitanga, traversing debates about whether non-Māori and humans, including those with Māori whakapapa can ‘actually’ be kaitiaki.

Maketuu Marae in Kaawhia like many other coastal marae has to deal with the issue of rising sea level and other climate and societal issues such as extreme weather events of flooding, droughts, fires, landslides, water shortages, limited work opportunities and an ageing population.

My team and I recently published our preliminary research findings in the Pacific Histories Journal. Our study provides a deeper understanding of kaitiakitanga, including the terms origins from actions and events described in Maaori cosmology with Ranginui, Papatuānuku and their children recognised as our original kaitiaki.

Our work also focuses on the critically important and threatened environments of harbours. When the first voyagers arrived in Aotearoa they sought sheltered bays in which to draw up their canoes and come to land. Hundreds of years later, the first Europeans did the same. Our harbours are and have always been coveted and contested sites for navigation, industry, fishing, recreation and settlement. Historically they are important places of meeting, negotiation and exchange. They are where land, sea and people come together.

Our project arose from conversations with flaxroots Māori. Despite the prevalence of kaitiaki koorero in the literature, the voices of those with daily responsibilities for harbours are seldom heard. Our case study approach, building from established relationships with Māori communities in Waikato, Taamaki and Tai Tokerau, is necessary to explore the diverse local expressions of kaitiakitanga. Over the past three years we have supported community initiatives and listened to, and gathered, koorero of the Kaawhia, Aotea, Manukau and Whangārei Harbours. These harbours cover a representative range of ecological states and threats, economic uses, and inter-iwi relationships.

The narrow bureaucratic space in which central and local government allows for kaitiakitanga often hinders its full exercise, and fails to cater for the wider obligations, rights and spiritual dimensions that are fundamental to it. The first coastal kaitiaki were atua or supreme beings, taniwha, pona-turi and other natural phenomena. Through our collaborations with tangata whenua from the harbours, we are investigating ways in which Mātauranga Māori, tikanga and related Māori terms such as mana, whakapapa, rāhui and mauri provide meaning to the term kaitiakitanga. An important term overlooked by the policy and law makers in relation to kaitiaki is ariā. Ariā indicates the physical representation of a god or that which reveal itself to guide humans to act and to protect.

Kaitiakitanga today takes various forms, from upholding tikanga in interactions with the environment and passing knowledge on to future generations, to political work in conversation and contest with the state, such as letter writing, submission writing, legal action and protest. Our study has gone beyond the dominant voices of iwi spokespeople who are given preference by the Crown, central and local government and iwi authorities. We are committed to including the full range of community voices, including the kōrero of kaumātua, rangatahi and wāhine Māori. The historical record shows that Māori women’s leadership is especially important in the harbours and moana space though female authority is underrepresented in the existing literature.

**Slide Rangiaho Waitai & Tuupuna Wahine**

Strong women such as the late Dame Nganeko Minhinnick, Tuaiwa (Eva) Rickard, Angeline Greensill, Carmen Kirkwood, Dayle Takitimu and others have played a fundamental role in the activation of kaitiakitanga in relation to harbours. Furthermore, there is a rich history of tūpuna wahine associated with harbours, including Whakaotirangi, Marama-kiko-hura and Ruaputahanga at Kāwhia and Aotea; Puhihuia and Te Ata-i-Rehia at Manukau; and Kuiawai, Reitū and Reipae at Whangarei. Our research is timely given harbours and oceans are under accelerating environmental pressure and Maaori communities living on harbours are increasingly being affected by climate change issuessuch as rising sea level, loss of bio-diversity and marine species and temperature increase effects. In relation to Māori, harbours around the country are the subject of multiple claims under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, and Waitangi Tribunal claims over harbours are yet to be settled and are at the forefront of the next wave of Treaty settlements.

We will complete the project next year. However the research extends our expertise and lays the foundation for a new research project titled Kurawaka o Hine-Ahu-One: The Sacred Sands of Hine-Ahu-One which an extended team is working on with Kaawhia kaumaatua and kuia, Tai Hauaauru Maatauranga and Reo experts and Tainui landscape architects, archaeologists, anthropologist, ecologists, engineers geologists and legal experts. This project has been lead by the Waikato Tainui Endowed College with an application submitted to MBIE’s: He Tipu Ka Hua fund in July 2023. The research project is a community-led, transdisciplinary project based in Kaawhia, and Aotea, these are tuupuna places with significant waahi tapu and taonga. The project will collect and collate maatauranga onepuu (sand) within the Tainui Waka rohe. The project, has been shortlisted as one of six organisations from 84 applications in Aotearoa. The research team presented to the MBIE assessment panel on December 4, 2023. Presented by a mix of ten Tainui kaumātua, kuia and scholars our cohesive presentation showcased a proposed five-year research programme. An announcement on this funding was expected in February 2024, however, the Director of Maaori Science, Innovation and Technology, Dr Willy-John Martin has indicated that there is a delay with this announcement due the new Minister of Science Innovation and Technology requesting a review of all MBIE’s funding portfolios . Unfortunately, the Honourable Judith Collins has conveyed that there is little value in Maatauranga Maaori and citizen and social science so we are returning to a less inclusive knowledge landscape.

In one of her dozens of letters and submissions written in defence of the Manukau Harbour, Dame Nganeko Minhinnick stated: “Rarely are we, the Maori people recognised as being of any worth, of having any values, of having any marine knowledge, conservation knowledge or of making any real contribution to our country”. Our research hears her call, and we will continue to champion Mātauranga Māori that exists in our harbours and within kaitiaki communities.