

# HE RIPOATA



Wānanga Wahakura ki Tapu-i-hikitia Marae

16-18 May, 2008

## Te Rā Tuatahi (Day 1)

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Weavers and health promoters from across the motu travelled long distances to meet at Tapuihikitia marae. The hau kāinga of Tapuihikitia gathered to welcome us to their marae.

David Tipene-Leach spoke on our behalf. His waiata of choice was “Pine pine te kura”. Not only a beautiful mōteatea but also appropriate. Part of the name of the Wahakura derives from this waiata.

We met and embraced our hosts. Then enjoyed their hospitality in Te Tumanako – the Wharekai! However, this was short lived as it was straight to work.

The whānau were taken to the local pā harakeke where flax was harvested and brought back to the marae. This included stripping, splitting and boiling the flax. Everyone worked well into the night to get a head start for weaving to begin in the morning.



Mā te mahi tahi te mahi e oti ai!

The following weavers and health promoters attended to learn about making and distributing wahakura:

Tracy Johnson, Christine Tai (Te Manu Toroa, Tauranga)

Makere Herbert, Evelyn Tai (Korowai Aroha, Rotorua)

Rita Baker (Kawerau Weavers Group)

Dallas Ratu, Susan Luke (Te Runanganui o Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika a Māui Inc, Wellington)

Isaac & Josh Hughs (Nukutere weavers)

Rebecca Hapuku-Rutene (Gisborne weaver)

Dawn Kereru (Kaiako Matua) was responsible for overseeing the teaching and making of wahakura. She was supported by the Nukutere network of weavers trained by Whaipooti Hitchner.

In attendance also were Dr David Tipene-Leach, Sally Abel (Research), Victor Main (Networks) the Māori SIDS team and the Pallisade film production crew who filmed the entire weekend.

## Te Rā Tuarua (Day 2)

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Everyone was up early. The weavers, keen to get weaving, gathered under the māhau. The health promoters met in the whareniui to learn about using wahakura. Their session was led by David Tipene-Leach and Pauline Hopa. This included the first public screening of a DVD developed to introduce the wahakura project.

Kuia Whaipooti Hitchner was due to arrive. Everyone gathered under the māhau to meet her. Despite recent sickness she was ever-present to give guidance and advice to the weavers. She even lent a hand to make one of the wahakura.

Every weaver worked diligently to complete their first wahakura. In theory the design of the wahakura was simple. Working the larger number of flax in comparison to making kete and joining the base together proved to be the most challenging aspect. The trick being to have the corners meet up correctly at the time of building the sides.

No sweat to this roopū! Remarkably, one of the weavers, Christine Tauī, incorporated a new twist into the wahakura design. Not only did it look good but served a practical purpose, strengthening the sides of the wahakura.



Christine Tauī adds some Ngāti Hine bling!

Once again, the weavers worked well into the night to successfully complete the task at hand. All the weavers finished their wahakura – from harvesting to preparation to weaving to the final tidy-up snips. Rita Baker took the challenge further and completed 2 within 24 hours. Everybody went to bed exhausted but happy.



Rita Baker – made 2 wahakura in 24hrs (Ngāti Tiamana, Tāmaki Makaurau & Kawerau weavers)

## Day 3

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The light of the new day accentuated the beauty of the individual pieces that had been crafted over the last 24hrs. Many poignant moments were shared with one another as we appreciated the journey thus far. There was the mental and physical challenge of the weaving task, but also appreciating the life-promoting potential of each given wahakura.

Every person felt uplifted and motivated to take the wahakura message back to their people. The poroporoaki took place in the Wharekai. The hau kāinga shared that they were inspired to run their own wahakura programme for their mokopuna.

The wānanga formally drew to a close and the whānau bid one another farewell.

Nō reira, e te whānau, he mihi aroha ki a koutou katoa. Kia kaha, kia māia, kia manawanui!



Rebecca Hapuku-Rutene showcases her innovative design.



Isaac & Josh Hughes (Nukutere weavers)



Evelyn Tai



Susan Luke