



Whakapapa

Knowing who you are
and where you belong

**He kākano ahau, i ruia mai i
Rangiātea e kore au e ngaro.**

I am a seed born of greatness and
I shall never be lost.

Dedication to Ann Dysart

*Ko Tinana te waka
Ko Te Rarawa te iwi
Ko Paparangi te tipuna
Ko Matihetihe te marae*

This booklet is dedicated to
the memory of Ann Dysart,
visionary kahukura
of E Tū Whānau.

Kupu Ruruku

Incantation

Ko te kawa nui, ko te
kawa roa

Ko te kawa nō Ranginui
e tū iho nei

Ko te kawa nō Papa e
takoto ake nei

Ko kāwai nō te Ira Atua,
Ko te kāwai nō te Ira Tangata

Ko te whakapapa o ngā
Ariki, o ngā Tauira

He putanga tēnei nō Rangi,
nō Papa, nō te Kāhui Atua

He putanga tēnei
nō 'Tiki

Whakaheke nei ki
te kaupapa tāngata e tū
nei e hai

Whano! Whano! Hara mai
te toki!

Haumi e! Hui e! Taiki e!

The grand order, the
ultimate order

Descends from the
universe itself

And evolves from out
of the earth

Creating genealogical
descent

Strengthening genealogical
breadth

For we descend from the
divine tree of life

For we descend from
the divine transformation
to humanity

For we are the manifestation
of consciousness

Go forth, engrave these
words for eternity

Unite! Let us be one! We
have united in conscious
thought!



Kupu Whakataki

Foreword

Ko Te Pū	The root, origin
Te More	The taproot
Te Weu	The rootlets
Te Aka	The creeper, vine
Te Rea	The growth
Te Wao-nui	The great wood
Te Kune	The conception, form
Te Whē	The sound
Te Kore	The void, absolute potential
Te Pō	The night
Ki ngā tāngata Māori na Rangi raua ko Papa	Then came the people through Rangi and Papa
Ko tēnei te timatanga o te Ao...	From them came the birth of the world...

“What is that waiata you are singing, Koro?”

“It’s the story of creation, the origins of life, the whakapapa of the world, our beginnings, telling the story of coming from the darkness, the void, into the light, moko. Life from here began with Ranginui the sky father and Papatūānuku the earth mother.”

“What is whakapapa, Koro?”

“It is the human cord, moko, that stretches and connects you all the way back to the beginning of time. All things have a whakapapa, a starting point, that allows them to be what they are. It is what connects you, moko, to everybody and everything around. It lists your identifying qualifications, your relationships, that allow you to be what and who you are within the bounds of tikanga moko. Whakapapa is very important, moko.”



“Why is whakapapa important, Koro?”

“To understand this, moko, we must understand the importance of connection. Connection is the energy that exists between everybody and everything when they feel seen, heard, and valued, moko. We are part of the natural world and have an obligation and responsibility to a common cause for the good of all. Connectivity is the lore of life, moko. And true connection with the world and each other can only come about when you have a connection with yourself, moko”.

Still curious, the moko went to seek out his Nana.

“What is whakapapa, Nana?”

“You are yesterday’s dream, moko, the gathering of many tūpuna dreams, a whakatauāki from your tūpuna. You inherit from your tūpuna the many gifts contained in and through the inheritance of whakapapa. You are the link between the ages, containing past and present expectations, and future promise. Knowing your past is important, moko, so you can understand your present and conceive your future”.

“Why is whakapapa important, Nana?”

“To understand this, moko, it is important we know the difference between need and want. What we ‘need’, moko, tells us who we are. What we ‘want’, tells us who we want to be. Too often we confuse ‘who we are’ with ‘who we want to be’. And when we commit to knowing who we are, that will take care of who we want to be.”

Many years later, the moko is a koroua himself.

“What is whakapapa, Koro?”

With that question I finally understand what my Nan and Koro meant when they said, “If you are not comfortable knowing yourself, moko, you will never be comfortable.”

*Taku ara raa, ko Tūrongo i wawaea ki te Tai Rawhiti.
Ko Mahinarangi ko te rua raa i moe ai a Raukawa.
He kawē tautika mai ki ahau.
Ko Rawiri Kiriona.*



Kupu Arataki Introduction

At a hui in 2011 Tamati Kruger had this to say:

“When whānau travel to places like Hawai‘i, Tuamotu or Tahiti, no matter the reason, they are most often excited and curious to travel back to where their ancestors came from. However, it is interesting to know that when Hawaiians, Tuamotuan or Tahitians come here to Aotearoa they are interested to find out where their ancestors ended up!”¹

Likewise, when you look at the whakairo and photos of your ancestors on the wall at the marae, or the faces of your parents and grandparents, you can see what went into your creation, for you are the sum result of all your ancestors before you. Furthermore, when you look into the faces of your tamariki and mokopuna, you can see what you have become.

It is a great feeling to know that whānau come from a history that spans the entire Pacific ocean and beyond. Your ancestors were voyaging across the vast waters of the Pacific as discoverers and astral navigators long before Galileo ‘discovered’ that the world was not flat after all.

Your ancestors were pioneers in new lands, inventors of new technologies as well as carriers of scientific knowledge, innovations and much more. They were the stuff of legends, myths carried in stories down through the generations to you, and to those that follow.

The waka that continues to carry this knowledge of all things Māori – past, present and future – is whakapapa.

When E Tū Whānau was being developed, a number of hui were held around the motu to find out what whānau thought would be seen and heard in strong thriving whānau. This booklet includes some of the stories that were told about whakapapa and the different ways that we express it. There are also ideas for exploring whakapapa with your whānau.

1. Tamati Kruger, He Taonga Te Mokopuna hui, Rotorua (2011)



Whakapapa

Key principles and practices

When whānau begin to explore their whakapapa, either with a kaumātua or through whakapapa books, we sometimes struggle to remember who married who, the names of tamariki and mokopuna, and so on. However, when we begin to explore the stories about one ancestor or another, we realise that whakapapa is more than the memorising of the whānau tree or the recording of the whānau history.

We come to understand that whakapapa is about connection to people, to the land, to the rivers and seas, to the mountains, and finally, to all of creation. This is confirmed by the term '*Whakapapatuanuku te Tangata*' which refers to how a person is tied to the land and its environment. It confirms that they belong there and have a place to stand, they have their Tūrangawaewae.

Whakapapa also has another purpose – it is a protection mechanism.

Every generation has the responsibility to ensure that all the taonga tuku iho – the knowledge, wisdoms, customs, language, lands and environment – are kept intact to be enhanced and passed on to the next generation.

As with all cultures, our culture and traditions are forever changing, improving and adapting to meet the needs of the people of the time. For whānau today, the urban drift that took place from the 1950s to the 1970s had a big impact on their ability to share their whakapapa and stay connected to their place of origin. The same goes for those of our whānau who have moved to Australia or further abroad.

Whakapapa is forever – it is with you wherever you are and wherever you go. Despite the fact that many whānau have lost contact with their ancestral whakapapa and whenua, many are creating new identities, new connections and new Tūrangawaewae.



Whakapapa

**You are the past, present and
future of your people, so be who
your tipuna intended you to be**

Be a great ancestor

Give your all to your bloodline. It's up
to them how the story unfolds

**You belong to the land, the mountains,
the rivers, the seas**

Return home often to be cleansed
and healed by them

**Your vision will come to fruition
in the generations to come**

Let it be bold. Let it be inspiring. Let it be known!

Your whakapapa is what it is

It may be forgotten but it can never be denied

***We are kaitiaki of our whakapapa.
What more could you do
to protect yours?***



Whānau Kōrero, Whānau Mahi

Stories and Activities

The following stories come from hui held all around Aoteaora where whānau shared stories of the values and actions that demonstrated whakapapa to them.

Whakapapa – they are all there for you

At a wānanga, the kaiako was talking about how colonisation and urbanisation had disconnected and isolated whānau from their roots and that many whānau had suffered the embarrassment of not knowing who they were. Then she said this: “We may have had our lands taken, we may be poor, we may have nothing, but there is one thing that can never be taken away from us and that is our whakapapa! It does not matter that you know it or not, the fact is, it still exists and your tūpuna know who you are and they are all there for you! Remember, like the whakataukī says ‘He kakano ahau, i ruia mai i Rangiatea e kore au e ngaro, I am a seed born of greatness and I shall never be lost.’”

Whakapapa – you belong to someone and you fit somewhere

A kuia said that whakapapa is probably one of the most important things, because it means you are never alone, it gives you pride in who you are on your Māori side, your Island side, your Scottish side, it doesn't matter. Whether you can go back three generations or fifty generations, it doesn't matter either because all you need to know is that you belong to someone and that you fit somewhere.



Whakapapa – who you are; no more, no less

At a Whare Wānanga, a student asked the lecturer about whakapapa. After some discussion the lecturer said that some people believe that they have a better whakapapa than others. But the thing to remember is that wherever you are and whoever you are with, your whakapapa could be 'better' than some and 'lesser' than others. At the end of the day all whakapapa does is tell you who you are – no more, no less.

Whakapapa – past, present and future

A wahine said, "Whakapapa to me is when my mother speaks to me. It's like with her comes all her ancestors and they are with me too. So it's not just the person in front of me talking, it's also all those who have gone on before and it's really great because I am connected to all of that. The same goes for my father. And when I speak to other people, I know that I am speaking with their ancestors as well.

Whakapapa for me is to look back, and to look forward, and to know that I am here and I am a part of that."

The stories above show how whakapapa strengthens your identity and understanding about who you are and where you belong.

So what are the things that you do in your whānau to strengthen your identity?

Whakapapa – a little bird told me

At a whānau hui, a kuia told this story to her mokopuna to show them how the decisions made by the ancestors are sometimes put into action. "Once a hui was held to determine where the new marae would be built. For many years the hapū had been debating, with one faction wanting it to be built in the area that had been set aside by the ancestors, and the other wanting it somewhere else. Each group had valid reasons and evidence to back their stance and the debate went on all day. But in the end it was decided when a kuia





stood to speak and reminded the hapū that all things to do with the marae – all the tikanga, all the kōrero, all the whenua that it stood on, even the waters of the lake, the rivers and finally, the mountains – were taonga that had been passed down to them by the ancestors! They finally agreed to build the marae in the place chosen by their ancestors so long ago. When challenged and asked how she knew this, she answered, ‘Ko te manu au i kī mai – a little bird told me!’”

This story talks about how the knowledge that has been passed down can help people to make clear decisions and the wisdom to take action.

What examples do you have in your whānau where decisions today were influenced by what your ancestors did or said? It is just amazing how much they left behind for us to learn from.

Whakapapa – it’s about who’s who?

When asked about whakapapa, a young man told the story of his aunty. “My whānau come from a small country town where my aunty and cousins live. My aunty believed it was her duty to make sure that my cousins grew up knowing who they were and where they belonged. Her way of teaching them was to make sure that they were introduced to each visitor that came to their home and then she would tell them how they were related. Today my cousins are all very confident and self assured.”

Another man said, “Whakapapa for me is about who I am and where I come from and so if you know where you come from, you know who you are. When I was a boy, I was taken to hui and tangi and I





was introduced to different whānau members who were there – “This is your father’s great aunt, your nanny, and this is your aunty’ – and so on. You learned your whakapapa through that. Then you were told to sit and listen.”

Through the simple act of introductions, we can see that whakapapa is an everyday thing that helps to strengthen our relationships in the whānau.

What other things could you do to build strong relationships and identity within your whānau?

Whakapapa – searching, searching, searching

A man said, “Whakapapa is very important to me because I could only trace about four or five generations and so I was trying to find out more but had left it a bit late because most of the old people had passed on. So I was looking on the internet for some more information. I also went to hui in the general area and asked questions of the people there. I am putting together the puzzle bit by bit and hopefully I will find everything, and a whole lot more.”

Whakapapa – what more can a man ask for?

At one hui a man had this to say, “Whakapapa is important and our young people gotta know where they come from. It wasn’t until I cleaned up my act around drugs and alcohol, I went back to school and took up te reo – that was when I started to learn my whakapapa. To me it was very important that I knew where my foundation was in terms of who my tūpuna were and, having done that, my daughters became kapa haka tutors. So now I have four daughters that sing and a son that whistles. What more can a man ask for?”

Whakapapa – sometimes the journey is more important than the destination

A tāne said, “Unfortunately for us we didn’t get to go back to the marae and share in things like whakapapa. My mum and dad shared



some things with me, but I went out on my journey and found out for myself, that's how I learned. You see, my father died when I was young and I hadn't spent a lot of time with him. I joined the army at a very young age and because I didn't know much about my whānau and whakapapa, I used my time in the military to do some searching. It led me up to the Far North where I stayed a while, and then the journey took me to the Waikato where another part of my whakapapa came from. It was a trying time, but also a loving time, finding out and I thank everyone that helped me on that journey. It was fantastic!"

Whakapapa – born of greatness

A woman talked about growing up in the city in the 1960s and going to a school where she was the only Māori child. She was from a poor family and was bullied and felt confused about why the other children could be so mean; naturally she thought something was wrong with her. She remembered feeling ashamed but did not know why. That all changed one day when a new teacher came to her school and asked if she was Māori and where she was from. The girl told her and then her whole world changed when the teacher replied with the following words: "You come from a people with great chiefs and great mountains and rivers". The girl looked at her teacher with wonder and could hear her heart beating so fast, as if she had just run the hardest race of her life. For a lonely little Māori girl living in the middle of the city, these few words were life changing. They filled her with such pride and joy.

| All of our tamariki and mokopuna descend from greatness.

| *What stories could you tell your tamariki and mokopuna, and what could you do to grow their confidence and pride in who they are and where they are from?*





Whakapapa – it has been done before to protect whakapapa

At a hui, the whānau from the marae were meeting to put together a COVID isolation plan for their whānau and marae. They discussed those who were for and against vaccinations as it was the big issue of the day. It was clear that the two 'sides' were staunch in their stance. A quietly spoken kuia carefully reminded the whānau that whanaungatanga and manaaki must overcome all else and as whānau, we are all responsible to ensure that the whakapapa is safe and protected to which all agreed.

As the hui progressed, they asked what had happened in the flu pandemic of the early 1900s as this might provide a clue as to what they could do to isolate whānau who had COVID. Some said that the whānau went 'bush' until it was over (their version of lockdown), others said that the tikanga was changed for a time and manuhiri called their whaikōrero and waiata from the road and drove off for the next to then call their whaikōrero and waiata (social distancing). They shared how the tūpuna would leave kai at the back door so that the whānau could feed themselves (non contact). It was from there that whānau put their COVID isolation plan together using the examples their tūpuna had left for them.

Whakapapa – taonga tuku iho

So here is a story that came from a community worker about a weaver of korowai/kākahu. She ran online training for a group of wāhine who had to not only deal with the COVID lockdown, but also with their own issues around addictions.

Even though the 'wānanga' was online, the wāhine learned to be in that peaceful and 'tau' space as they were weaving. They all learned how to really focus, which was very difficult for them. But the most important thing for them was that they are now well on the way to completing a precious treasure that will be handed down from generation to generation as a taonga tuku iho. The healing and mana they feel now is just incredible!



Whakapapa – back to the future

A kuia was at a wānanga where the whānau were talking about whakapapa and she stood to give some kōrero about something that had happened when she was a little girl some eighty years before. With a far away look in her eyes, she began to talk. “One time, I was returning home in the dead of night with my koroua who raised me. We were riding our horse, and my koroua had given the reins over to the horse because he could see in the dark and knew the way home. It must have been winter because it was so bitterly cold. It felt like we had been riding for hours on end. All of a sudden my koroua saw a flickering light in the distance and he uttered with relief ‘Aa, ko te ahikaa mai tawhiti’. We were instantly filled with renewed hope, relief and warmth as we were nearly home and knew that we would be treated to a warm whare and a hot kai. The kuia then shared that her koroua often used his whakatauāki in whaikōrero after that to refer to the hope that the younger generations give; that they are the beacons of light shining back to us from the future”.

The whakatauāki in this story encourages us to be the best that we can be so that we can also shine like a beacon to inspire and guide our descendants.

What stories do you have in your whānau, hapū and iwi that inspire people to greatness?





Whānau kete

Have a look at this checklist of some of the things that whānau do to connect or reconnect with their whakapapa. Without doubt, you are already doing many of these things. Think and talk about what you can do more of, or what things you could start doing.

- Share the stories of your parents, grandparents and ancestors with your tamariki and mokopuna
- Talk often about where you come from and where you belong
- Lead by example so that your children and grandchildren have great role models in their lives
- Put together your whānau plan for the next 100 years, it isn't that long
- Be a great ancestor so you have a positive influence on your descendants
- Take the whānau home often so they can reconnect with their whenua, their ahikaa, the place where they belong
- Talk about the 'old people' and hand down their kōrero to the next generations
- Look after the environment so it is intact for those yet to come
- Tell the stories of whānau taonga that have been passed down through the generations
- Remember that who you are is more important than what you are
- Teach the children that they descend from greatness
- Ensure our children know who they are and encourage them to grow the best attributes found in our whānau
- Make time to celebrate whānau achievements, no matter how small
- Start a family tree. Write down your whakapapa and kōrero tuku iho
- Be the best that you can be so that you can also shine like a beacon to inspire and guide your descendants.



Whakatauki

He kākano āhau
I ruia mai i Rangiātea
And I shall never be lost
I am a seed, born of greatness
Descended from a line of chiefs,
He kākano āhau

Ki hea rā āu e hītekiteki ana
Ka mau tonu i ahau ōku tikanga
Tōku reo, tōku ohoooho,
Tōku reo, tōku māpihi maurea
Tōku whakakai marihi
My language is my strength,
An ornament of grace,
An ornament of grace

Ka tū ana ahau,
Ka ūhia au e ōku tīpuna
My pride I will show
That you may know who I am
I am a warrior, a survivor
He mōrehu ahau

I am a seed
Borne from the Heavenly Realm
And I shall never be lost
I am a seed, born of greatness
Descended from a line of chiefs,
I am a seed

Wherever I may roam
I will hold fast to my traditions
My language is my cherished possession
My language is the object of my affection
My precious adornment
My language is my strength,
An ornament of grace,
An ornament of grace

Whenever I stand
I am clothed by my ancestors
My pride I will show
That you may know who I am
I am a warrior, a survivor
I am a remnant

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Whakatauki *continued*

Ki hea rā āu e hītekiteki ana	Wherever I may roam
Ka mau tonu i ahau ōku tikanga	I will hold fast to my traditions
Tōku reo, tōku ohoooho,	My language is my cherished possession,
Tōku reo, tōku māpihi maurea	My language is the object of my affection
Tōku whakakai marihi	My treasured tiger shell
My language is my strength,	My language is my strength,
An ornament of grace,	An ornament of grace,
An ornament of grace,	An ornament of grace,
An ornament of grace,	An ornament of grace,
An ornament of grace,	An ornament of grace.

This waiata, composed by Dr Hohepa Tamehana, explains how whakapapa ensures that we know who we are and that we are descended from a long line of chiefs, therefore we shall never be lost.

‘He kākano ahau, i ruia mai i Rangiātea’



Karakia

To begin or end a hui

Tū te kawa, tū te ora
He kāwai nō ngā atua
He whakapapa nō ngā ariki
He māramatanga mō te ngākau
ā-tāngata

Let universal order reign
To confirm our divine descent
To proclaim our legitimacy on Earth
To affirm our understanding
of life

Haumi e! Hui e!
Tāiki e!

Unite, let us be one!
We have united in conscious thought!





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Che Wilson – *Ruruku and Karakia* composer

Te Kahutoi Kahurangi – *Tohu* artist

Barbara More – *Whānau* interviews



Tohu

At the very centre of the tohu we see the rauru (the space) where the two lines of genealogy meet. This is the space where the absolute potential for life is present. The whiore (tail) of the kiore (native rat) illustrate that whakapapa is ancient, having its genesis in the beginnings of time itself. The kape (the gradual unfolding of the koru) illustrates the development and growth of the whakapapa from conception to birth.





Pitopito Kōrero

Notes

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WHAKAPAPA

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our-values/whakapapa/](https://etuwhanau.org.nz/our-values/whakapapa/)



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