

# THE HISTORY OF NGĀTI RUAWĀHIA TE IWI TUAONO O TE TAI TOKERAU

*'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium*

## **Ngāti Ruawāhia, the Sixth Tribe of Tai Tokerau Convenes at Aurere**

With the highest regard for our departed elders and a deep sense of loyalty and consideration for 30-plus years of promises and commitments, Ngāti Ruawāhia, the Sixth Tribe of Tai Tokerau convened as a formal entity on February 10, 2018 at a ceremonial gathering at the home of revered Māori master navigator and canoe-builder, Hector Hekenukumai Ngāiwi Puhipi Busby in Aurere, Aotearoa.

With photographs of departed elders looking on, the 85-year old Hector along with family members Gina and Michael Harding, John Panoho and visiting cousins joined Ngāti Ruawāhia leaders Nainoa Thompson, Bruce Blankenfeld and Randie Kamuela Fong, and other representatives to reaffirm promises and revitalize commitments made at the time of Hōkūle'a's first landfall at Te Tii, Waitangi, Aotearoa in 1985.<sup>1</sup> This Hawaiian tribal heritage has been nurtured and actively maintained for some three decades by two extended families whose shared histories trace back to the birth of the Hōkūle'a over 40 years ago: Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS) and Kamehameha Schools.

Prayers, chants and memories were shared as 'awa was strained and served from a special kānoa, Ka'apupaoamauiakalana (the fragrant 'awa cup of Maui son of Kalana),<sup>2</sup> which was gifted to Hector by Kamehameha Schools on the occasion of Hōkūle'a's departure from Aurere in 2015 for the Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage. Awed by Hector's large-scale star compass overlooking majestic Tokerau Beach, the group's attention turned to the elegant yet unfinished Kupe Waka Center standing silently alongside an extremely weathered and worn Te Aurere canoe. Words from Nainoa's late father to Hector decades ago resonated in that moment: "We are not here by chance."

### **Tribal Origins**

Hawaiian master navigator Nainoa Thompson, president of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, was a young emerging navigator back in 1983. With the goal of sailing to Aotearoa in a couple of years – on what would be known as the Voyage of Rediscovery from 1985–1987 – Nainoa had to find a way to study the stars of the Southern Hemisphere. Perhaps it was ancestral intervention that brought him face to face with the highly revered and esteemed Māori leader, John Rangihau, who happened to be at the University of Hawai'i at the time. That pivotal meeting opened up a path for Nainoa's pursuit of new knowledge and brought together the shared passion and drive of both Hawaiians and Māori to restore and revitalize the traditional navigational skills of their Polynesian ancestors. Invited to Aotearoa, Nainoa set his sights on the northernmost point, sacred Cape Reinga, for his celestial learning. But the spiritual

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<sup>1</sup> PVS – Billy Richards and Harry Ho, senior Hōkūle'a crew; Lehua Kamalu, Sail Plan manager; KS – Jamie Mililani Fong, Ka'iwakīloumoku Cultural Center manager, Lāiana Kānoa-Wong, kahu 'awa; Kilinahe Coleman, historian; Billy Pieper, Bishop Museum Board

<sup>2</sup> The special kānoa, 'awa bowl, was carved by Kamehameha Schools Ka'iwakīloumoku artist Kumulā'au Sing.

## THE HISTORY OF NGĀTI RUAWĀHIA TE IWĪ TUAONO O TE TAI TOKERAU

*'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium*

Rangihau, in his wisdom, quietly redirected Nainoa's plans, leading him instead to the Aurere doorstep of a curious and unprepared Hector Busby. Nainoa and Hector's initial meeting was awkward at first, but before long the two fell into a rhythm of friendship marked by curiosity, awareness and spirituality – hallmark traits of the navigator. On most nights, the vast Aurere night sky displayed its brilliant star-scape as both men observed, learned and internalized the ancestral knowledge being revealed to them at the most perfect spot on earth.

The enduring friendship between Nainoa and Hector is founded on their shared respect for specific elders to whom promises and commitments were made, and honors the monumental achievement of Hawaiians whose iconic canoe Hōkūle'a proved to the world – especially Western naysayers – that our Polynesian ancestors indeed had the intelligence and technology for purposeful long-distance voyaging and exploration. Inspired by Hōkūle'a, Hector built for his people their own waka, Te Aurere and Ngāhiraka Mai Tawhiti, and launched ancestral sails to Polynesian island groups across the Pacific including Tahiti, Nukuhiva, Hawai'i and Rapa Nui.

### *Hōkūle'a's Historic Landfall in 1985*

Reminiscent of the historic arrival of seafaring chief Kupe centuries ago, crimson bursts of Pohutukawa were in full bloom and painted the coastline when Hōkūle'a sailed into the Bay of Islands in December 1985, escorted by the impressive 80-man war canoe Ngātokimatawhaorua. On land, a delegation of PVS and Kamehameha Schools students and staff was on site working on logistical and ceremonial details with tribal officials, namely Tupi Puriri and Hilda Busby, Hector's wife. At the moment of landfall, hundreds of grimacing Māori lined the entire stretch of Te Tii Beach as Hōkūle'a crewmembers were carried to shore on the shoulders of local paddlers. Thunderous haka shook the earth and the high-pitched wail of the karanga resounded over the nearby river of Waitangi, "crying waters." The high point of the welcome which extended well into the evening was the soaring oratory of the Honorable Sir James Henare whose profound declaration launched an ocean of possibilities. Deeply inspired by Hōkūle'a's historical landfall he laid down a challenge for Māori to follow suit with their own waka which became a personal calling for Hector – one that would profoundly change the course of his life, and the face of Māori history forever.

Sir James concluded that because the Hōkūle'a was the first double-hulled voyaging canoe in centuries to arrive from the Hawaiki homeland, it surely must represent a new extended family lineage which he referred to as "the Sixth Tribe of Te Tai Tokerau." With strong advocacy from Sir Graham Latimer and other leaders, discussions continued about the Sixth Tribe's poupou (ancestral carved post), its tribal name, and the prospect of a marae.

The 1985 landfall in Waitangi and the evening reception at Te Tii Marae also marks the time and place of Pinky Thompson's initial vision for the construction of a Hawaiian cultural center. Inspired by the marae and seeing firsthand the power of cultural identity manifested in the strength and pride of Māori children and families, many of whom were of meager means, he wondered if such cultural spaces could have a positive impact in Hawai'i. Pinky would ponder this idea over the next several years.

## THE HISTORY OF NGĀTI RUAWĀHIA TE IWI TUAONO O TE TAI TOKERAU

*'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium*

### **Symbols of Tribal Pride**

In February of 1990, as special guests of the Waitangi Festival, a Sixth Tribe contingent of some 60 Kamehameha Schools students and staff and 15 PVS representatives created a special kāhili, a large feather standard denoting the presence of high chiefs. Named Kūkaha, meaning “to stand sideways to allow others to pass,”<sup>3</sup> the kāhili was gifted to Te Tii Marae in honor of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Waitangi Treaty. A pōhaku, a stone, brought by Hōkūle‘a in 1985 was enshrined in a rock monument along the wall of Te Tii Marae with bronze plaques recounting the historic arrival of the wa‘a in Te Reo Māori, ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i and English. Just prior to the festival, the Kamehameha Schools Board of Trustees led by Pinky Thompson, made a side visit to Aurere along with Nainoa and were graciously received by Hector and Hilda.

After consultation with tribal elders, Hector revealed the name of the Hawaiian tribe: Ngāti Ruawāhia – ngāti meaning “tribe” or “clan” and Ruawāhia, the Māori name for the star Arcturus which is Hōkūle‘a in Hawaiian. Shortly after, a mele inoa, a name song called “Ngāti Ruawāhia” was composed which became the first official ceremonial expression of the Sixth Tribe.<sup>4</sup>

In January 1992, a Hawaiian poupou<sup>5</sup> was created from ‘ōhi‘a wood and erected alongside the carved pantheon of Tai Tokerau tribal ancestors which stands in an open clearing nearby the Te Tii Marae. Lashed by Nainoa and dedicated by his father Pinky along with representatives of Kamehameha Schools and PVS, the poupou Māuipāmamao – Māui that touches the farthest extremities – was the first physical manifestation of Ngāti Ruawāhia, the Sixth Tribe of Tai Tokerau. In the days that followed, a gathering with food, music and dance took place at Aurere to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of Pacific master navigator, Pius Mau Piailug of Satawal, the father of traditional Pacific navigation and teacher and mentor of Nainoa and Hector.

### **The Voyaging Momentum of the 1990s**

Hector completed construction of Te Aurere between 1991–1992, which fulfilled the first part of the promise he made to Sir James Henare. With the support of Nainoa and PVS in training the crew, preparations were made for the epic sail to Rarotonga, Cook Islands for the 6<sup>th</sup> Festival of Pacific Arts in October of 1992. Nainoa had trained well over a dozen Polynesian navigators, captains and crew to sail canoes from various islands in the Cooks to Avanā Pass in Rarotonga as part of an arriving flotilla that would include Te Aurere and be led by Hōkūle‘a for the opening of the Pacific Arts Festival. Kamehameha Schools was appointed by the State of Hawai‘i to coordinate the participation of over a hundred Hawai‘i delegates to the Festival, and support the ceremonial welcoming of the historic fleet of Polynesian voyaging vessels.

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<sup>3</sup> The kāhili Kūkaha was a KS-PVS group project led by feather work master Mary Lou Kekuewa, her husband Paul, and protégé daughter Paulette Kahalepuna, all of whom were part of the contingent to Waitangi in 1990.

<sup>4</sup> “Ngāti Ruawāhia” was composed in 1992 by Randie Kamuela Fong, currently the Executive Cultural Officer at Kamehameha Schools. The mele features insights and anecdotes shared by Hector and Hilda Busby.

<sup>5</sup> Māuipāmamao was created by carver William Puou of Hōnaunau, Kona.

## THE HISTORY OF NGĀTI RUAWĀHIA TE IWI TUAONO O TE TAI TOKERAU

*'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium*

Following the close of the Festival, a deeply inspired Pinky Thompson recalled his earlier vision to create a physical space devoted to Hawaiian cultural living and learning, a place to receive guests especially our Polynesian kin. In late October of 1992, he called a meeting with Randie and Jamie Fong of Kamehameha Schools and asked them to take his dream of a cultural center and move it forward. Mentored by Pinky since the Waitangi landfall in 1985, both wholeheartedly accepted the charge and promised they would see his vision through to fruition.

In 1995, Te Aurere would join the Hōkūle'a, Hawai'iloa and other canoes for the Nā 'Ohana Holomoana Voyage. Starting with a historical pilgrimage to Taputapuātea Marae in Ra'iātea, French Polynesia, the flotilla then gathered at Tautira, Hōkūle'a's home in Tahiti before heading eastward to Nukuhiva in the Marquesas, which is held to be one of the direct homelands of the Hawaiian people and other Polynesians. Eventually Te Aurere would make its way northward into Hawaiian waters for a historic landfall in Hawai'i. Representing Aotearoa at the southern apex of the Polynesian Triangle, and making landfall in Hawai'i at the northern apex fulfilled in grand form the promise Hector made to Sir James a decade earlier. This further strengthened the ties between Hector, Nainoa and Ngāti Ruawāhia, and the bonds of kinship between Hawaiians and Māori.

In 1998, on behalf of Ngāti Ruawāhia, a 60-member delegation from Kamehameha Schools returned to Aurere to visit Hector and his family and to dedicate a public concert in his honor at Kaitaia. A few days later, Lady Rose Henare, the widow of Sir James Henare, was presented gifts and celebrated at a concert held at the Copthorne Hotel in Waitangi.

Between 1998 and 2008, Kamehameha Schools administrators and faculty returned to Aotearoa on five occasions to uphold the Ngāti Ruawāhia heritage and to engage in research to support plans for the then-proposed Hawaiian Cultural Center. During those visits, there were multiple engagements with Hector and the family to nurture relationships even though there were no plans at the time for a return sail to Aotearoa.

After some 20 years of community-wide planning and political challenges, Pinky Thompson's vision finally came to be: On September 26, 2012, the Ka'iwakīloumoku Hawaiian Cultural Center located at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama in Honolulu opened its doors to hundreds of supporters and well-wishers who attended the ceremonial cutting of the piko, the symbolic umbilical cords of each of the facilities, and enjoyed a feast of celebration and humble gratitude. Designed as a culture-based intergenerational community gathering space, Ka'iwakīloumoku<sup>6</sup> is dedicated to Nohona Hawai'i – Hawaiian ways of living and learning, and is the venue of choice for Kamehameha Schools Kapālama for receiving visitors, especially members of our Polynesian family. The Center is anchored in the wayfinding heritage of the Hōkūle'a, and its administrative facility referred to as the *hale mana*, is named Myron Pinky Thompson Hale. It features a navigational star compass about 20 feet in diameter and houses the original steering sweep of the Hōkūle'a from its historic maiden voyage to Tahiti in 1976.

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<sup>6</sup> Ka'iwakīloumoku means, "The 'iwa bird that hooks together the islands," a poetic reference to revered warrior-king, Kamehameha I.

## THE HISTORY OF NGĀTI RUAWĀHIA TE IWI TUAONO O TE TAI TOKERAU

*'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium*

### Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage

#### *A New Generation: Returning to the Source*

When Hōkūleʻa made its historic return to Waitangi in 2014 with its companion waʻa Hikianalia as part of the Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage, the passing of generations was profound: Those who had greeted Hōkūleʻa in their youth had become the community organizers, and the former workers and planners now stood in the place of those towering elders who first greeted Hōkūleʻa in 1985. Re-enacting the first landfall, local paddlers once again lifted crew members on their shoulders and carried them to shore. The aggressive haka and melodic waiata set the stage for the high oratory of the day, as the some 80-plus members of the Ngāti Ruawāhia delegation from Hawaiʻi responded just as it had over the decades, with words of humility and gratitude, as well as traditional mele and hula. The families of the late Sir James Henare and the late Tupi Puriri were invited to a reception in the whare kai, the dining facility at Te Tii Marae where they shared family reflections and affirmed the meaning and intent of the Sixth Tribe designation. Hector received many Ngāti Ruawāhia tributes that afternoon from the PVS leadership and crew, and Kamehameha students and staff in the form of songs, dances, remarks and cultural treasures.

#### *Leaving Polynesia*

In May 2015, after a 6-month sail plan that took the waʻa to multiple communities around the North Island, and a quick visit to South Island, Hōkūleʻa headed to the Far North, to Mangōnui, the traditional berthing spot of the waka, Te Aurere. Ngāti Ruawāhia – which included over a dozen student leaders of Hawaiian-focused charter schools sponsored by Kamehameha Schools – gathered at Aurere, this time to prepare for Hōkūleʻa's departure from our Polynesian home waters. This historic event was marked by ceremonial ʻawa prepared in a specially designed kānoa that was gifted to Hector for use in the Kupe Waka Center during future visits by Ngāti Ruawāhia. Also in the series of departure events at Aurere was the official release and book signing for the long anticipated biography on Hector's life, *Heke-nuku-mai-ngā-iwi Busby: Not Here By Chance*. Pinky Thompson's premonition of over three decades ago aptly became the title of Hector's book, and that haunting reminder continues to resound today. Just prior to the actual departure of the Hōkūleʻa, Hector offered a special karakia, a traditional prayer that would protect the crew during the voyage around the world and bring them home safely.

#### *Hawaiʻi Homecoming*

In June of 2017, after an historic and storied three-year sail around the world, Hōkūleʻa returned home to Hawaiʻi where tens of thousands of people came to greet her at Magic Island in Honolulu. As soon as Nainoa, Bruce Blankenfeld and the rest of the crew disembarked and climbed up onto the landing, they saw standing before them a pensive, father-like Hector Busby. He was quietly preparing to offer a traditional karakia to bring closure to the prayer of protection he invoked when Hōkūleʻa first departed Polynesian waters from Aurere in 2015. Notwithstanding a number of health challenges and serious questions about his medical fitness

## THE HISTORY OF NGĀTI RUAWĀHIA TE IWI TUAONO O TE TAI TOKERAU

*'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium*

to travel the distance from Aotearoa, Hector insisted that he come to Hawai'i in person to fulfill his responsibility if it was the last thing he'd ever do – a profound expression of his aloha and commitment to Hōkūle'a, Nainoa and the Ngāti Ruawāhia family.

### **Reconnection: Strengthening our Pilina in Aotearoa**

Members of Ngāti Ruawāhia sought to move the legacy of the Hawaiian tribe forward by reconnecting and strengthening relationships in the communities that have historically fed/fostered our tribe.

#### *Waitangi*

In May of 2018, Hector accompanied a group of Ngāti Ruawāhia representatives to Waitangi, to renew the historical ties with Te Tii Marae that had lapsed over the years. Members of the mārae formally welcomed the contingent with a pōwhiri. Waiata and oratory in Māori and Hawaiian were given in the whare, recollecting our shared history and honoring Hector, Hōkūle'a, and the voyaging history with Hawaiians. Members of the mārae gifted Ngāti Ruawāhia with a flag of the United Tribes of New Zealand. Celebrations were moved to the whare kai, where gifts were ceremonially presented to Te Tii and an 'awa ceremony and hula were conducted. This meeting became the first formal meeting between Te Tii Marae and Ngāti Ruawāhia.

#### *Aurere, Kaitia*

In Aurere, we were welcomed by the students and leadership of Taipā Area School with a hangi. We shared the history of Ngāti Ruawāhia. We continue to nurture this relationship, anticipating that one day shared learning and student exchanges will occur.

### **The Kupe Waka Centre Opening**

In December of 2018, leadership of Ngāti Ruawāhia and members of 'Aha Moananuiākea flew to Aotearoa and travelled to Aurere, to help Hector with preparations for the auspicious opening of the whare wānanga of the Kupe Waka Centre. Preparations for the celebration included cleaning the grounds and preparing the whare complex, as well as the plaiting of a twenty-foot long lei piko using pohutukawa, karetu (grass), harakeke (flax), ferns, and other plants that were at once familiar and strange to the Hawaiians which grew along the path to Hector's home and the Centre. The building was ritually sealed and the lei piko was hung from the lintel of the entryway. The ceremonies were to be held on December 6, one day before the anniversary of Hōkūle'a making landfall in Waitangi in 1985.

#### *Māui Pāmaomao Iki*

In honor of the opening of the whare, 'Aha Moananuiākea presented Hector with a poupou in the likeness of Māui Pāmaomao at Waitangi. Māui Pāmaomao Iki is a 6 foot tall poupou carved from

## THE HISTORY OF NGĀTI RUAWĀHIA TE IWI TUAONO O TE TAI TOKERAU

*'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium*

‘ōhi‘a wood given as a gift to Kamehameha Schools by the Polynesian Cultural Center and master Māori Carver, Jared Pere. It was carved by Kumulā‘au Sing and Pere, in a collaboration that symbolizes the flow of knowledge and friendship between Māori and Hawaiians. Māui was girded with an ‘ōlena-dyed malo and a lei was set on his shoulders and at his feet; he was placed inside the whare to await the opening.

### *The Pwo Ceremony*

In addition to the opening of the whare, Piripi Evans and Stanley Conrad, two respected and skilled Māori leaders, were recognized as pwo (master navigators) in sacred ceremonies that began at dawn in the bracing waters of Tokarau.

The ceremonies continued with chanting, hula and ritual feeding of ‘awa to all thirty-two ki‘i of Kāpehu Whetū, the star compass at Aurere. As the ceremonies moved from the star compass to the whare wānanga, a misty rain descended on the group, a sign of blessing from the akua and our guiding elders.

### *Whetū Mārama*

Hector, who spent time the previous evening reflecting on an appropriate name for the whare was able to pull one from the heavens. Taking up the toki/ko‘i, he severed the lei piko and spoke the name for the first time, “Whetū Mārama!” At the severing of its piko and the utterance of its name, Whetū Moana took its first breath; observers standing at the doors of the building were visibly pushed forward by the exhalation of hā from inside the sealed building. It was an occurrence that was truly awe-inspiring and another layer of the blessings revealed on that day; to witness the breathing of Whetū Mārama was to witness the mana of our ancestors.

Over 100 members of the communities of surrounding Taipā, Kaitaia, including students from various local schools, whānau, carvers, and navigators gathered at Aurere to celebrate the opening of the whare. Cherished members of the community poured into the whare, which overflowed with tamariki, matua, kuia and koro. Ceremonies continued with honorific speeches, chants, and hula. Draped in kīhei dyed with ‘ōlena, the two newest pwo, Piripi and Stanley, were greeted by pwo Hector, Jacko Thatcher, Piripi Smith, and Nainoa Thompson.

### *The Declaration of Kinship*

Amongst the celebrations, a Declaration of Kinship was signed between the Kupe Waka Centre, the Polynesian Voyaging Society, the Kamehameha Schools Ka‘iwakīloumoku Hawaiian Cultural Center, the ‘Aha Moananuiākea Consortium, Te Tai Tokerau Tarai Waka Inc., and Arawai Ltd. The declaration committed the signees to work together as an extended family to celebrate our wayfinding heritage and promote cultural education that develops dynamic leaders and a vibrant sustainable Pacific community. The Declaration of Kinship signed with the Kupe Waka Centre was the first of a series of Declarations negotiated by ‘Aha Moananuiākea, laying the foundation for a network of partnerships across the Pacific.

## THE HISTORY OF NGĀTI RUAWĀHIA TE IWI TUAONO O TE TAI TOKERAU

*'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium*

### **Tā Hekenukumai Pūhipi**

#### *Hector Busby's Knighting*

In recognition of his role in reviving Māori celestial navigation and waka hourua (double-hulled voyaging canoes), Hector was affirmed as a Knight Companion of the New Zealand order of Merit on February 4, 2019. Hector's was the first knighting ceremony ever held at Te Whare Rūnanga at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, and the celebrations were filled with te reo tributes, waiata, and haka. Representatives from Ngāti Ruawāhia were honored to attend the ceremonies of this momentous occasion for Hector and Aotearoa.

In March of 2019, shortly after the knighting of Tā Hekenukumai Pūhipi, the Kupe Waka Centre was one of five Far North projects awarded a prestigious grant from the Provincial Growth Fund by Tourism Minister and Te Tai Tokerau MP Kelvin Davis, totaling \$4.6 million (NZ). The monies have allowed the project to move forward and support the revival of waka-building, sailing and traditional wayfinding in Aurere. Development and construction of the Kupe Waka Centre continue.

### **A Whetū Ascends to the Heavens**

Ngāti Ruawāhia's beloved kaumatua passed into the realm of pō. Sir Hector Hekenukumai Pūhipi Busby died on Saturday, May 11, 2019 at 86 years old. News of his sudden passing prompted members of Ngāti Ruawāhia to immediately fly to Aotearoa. His tangi was held at Te Uri o Hina Marae in Pukepoto. News reports noted that more than 500 people visited on the first day he lay in state and thousands more came throughout the services. His tangi was also broadcast for the thousands who were not able to make the journey, a fitting testament to his huge contributions to Māori and in the Pacific. Final karakia were offered on Wednesday, May 15, and his coffin was borne by members of his iwi to Rangihaukaha urupā, where he was buried next to his beloved wife Hilda. Hector served as the anchor for Ngāti Ruawāhia in Aotearoa since 1985, and has joined our guiding elders of Ngāti Ruawāhia, leaving a legacy as wide and deep as Moananuiākea and setting course for us from the heavens.

### **Moving Forward on our Course**

Following Hector's passing, members of Ngāti Ruawāhia sought to reaffirm our commitment as the Hawaiian tribe and to strengthen our relationships with our friends and partners in Aotearoa. Representatives of Ngāti Ruawāhia and 'Aha Moananuiākea, including campus leadership from Kamehameha Schools Kapālama, travelled to Aotearoa in December 2019. Visits were made to Paihia Elementary School and Taipā Area School who welcomed us with pōwhiri. Discussions with teachers and staff at both schools about culture, language, and identity were meaningful to all present and will be at the forefront of our minds as we work to establish partnerships and exchanges with these schools.



## THE HISTORY OF NGĀTI RUAWĀHIA TE IWI TUAONO O TE TAI TOKERAU

*'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium*

### *Ceremonies and Declaration with Te Tii Marae*

Ngāti Kawa Taituha, Chairman of Te Tii Marae, esteemed elders and leaders, and families welcomed Ngāti Ruawāhia with a formal pōwhiri on December 10, 2020, featuring soaring oratory and deeply emotional expressions of love and kinship.

Notwithstanding our mutual respect and aloha, it seemed our hosts were hesitant about signing our declaration of unity and felt uncomfortable with our request to serve 'awa inside the whare nui (meeting house), a tapu/kapu place where eating and drinking are typically forbidden. The Polynesian practice of 'awa drinking was discontinued when Māori ancestors settled Aotearoa centuries ago so there's no traditional precedent for its use in contemporary ceremonies let alone inside the whare nui. Surprisingly, just moments prior to the start of the pōwhiri, the marae chairman came outside the gate to inform us that the elders had moved the pōwhiri outdoors to the marae ātea. This very formal ceremonial setting allowed us to more clearly explain the purpose of our declaration and our intent to serve 'awa as both an ancestral tribute and a ceremonial ratification of the declaration. This was the only way we could offer 'awa, and they wanted us to do everything we had planned to do.

With heart-warming deference for our kūpuna, marae leaders laid out a large sheet of kapa with a special area designated for our collage of four elders: Hector Busby (Aotearoa), Pinky Thompson (Hawai'i), Mau Pailug (Satawal) and Alban Ellacott (Tahiti).

With greater understanding regarding our purpose and intent, we were allowed to prepare ceremonial 'awa which was served to the chairman and male elders and leaders of the marae all of whom were extremely receptive. Then, unannounced, a formidable group of respected female leaders stood up and made their way to the front row to await their turn to be served 'awa. The humor of the moment did not escape us. Earlier feelings of uncertainty seemed to have dissipated, and a collective sense of pride and aloha was now very palpable.

Then the chairman and the group of male elders/leaders enthusiastically agreed to sign our declaration. The same group of women and a group of children followed suit affixing their signatures wherever they could find a space on the document. This was highly gratifying as the declaration signing was one of the main reasons for our coming to Waitangi.

A "tokotoko" was gifted to Ngāti Ruawāhia and received by Randie Fong. It is a highly ornate "ceremonial walking stick" of notable heft and design. On the marae, it is emblematic of leadership, authority and status for the speaker. It appears to be a worn and storied tokotoko which suggests it was well used over the years by marae elders. The manner of presentation was highly stylized and ritualistic with dramatic movements low to the ground that were deferential to the extreme; the oratory was explosive and hyperbolic and drew spontaneously from Ngāti Ruawāhia's own history. Clearly, we were being elevated to a place of high honor and we knew we were witnessing something incredibly rare and very real – a window into the ancestral past. Finally, it was shared during the hongī, the face to face greeting of host and guest, that the tokotoko had a direct association with a recently departed elder of note whom members of Ngāti Ruawāhia had met in

## THE HISTORY OF NGĀTI RUAWĀHIA TE IWI TUAONO O TE TAI TOKERAU

*'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium*

previous years. Just as the 'awa represented the seal of agreement for Ngāti Ruawāhia, the tokotoko served as an affirmation for the elders of Te Tii Marae: this in essence was the green light for our cultural partnership.

Chairman Ngāti Kawa Taituha agreed to work with 'Aha Moananuiākea to form a representative delegation from the Marae to visit Hawai'i and be hosted by Ngāti Ruawāhia. Over the course of the past 35 years, Ngāti Ruawāhia has been welcomed with pōwhiri at Te Tii Marae at least 12 times. Te Tii Marae has never been welcomed in Hawai'i before, therefore the time for reciprocation is at hand.

### *Māui Pāmaomao*

Members of Ngāti Ruawāhia visited the poupou Māui Pāmaomao to ascertain its condition in December of 2019. After standing as a representative of Hawai'i among the Māori ancestors at Te Tii Marae for nearly thirty years, it was discovered with a grief akin to losing a beloved kupuna (elder), that the elements of Waitangi had irrevocably damaged Māui. Working with Waitangi Treaty Grounds Maintenance Supervisor Richard Takimoana, Ka'iwakīloumoku artist Kumulā'au Sing helped to restore parts of Maui's kino (body) until a new poupou could be carved and erected at Te Tii Marae in its place. It is with great aloha and hope that members of Ngāti Ruawāhia work with representatives of Te Tii Marae, the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, local kura and master carvers to embark on a project to carve a new poupou, and to carry the original Māui pāmamao home to Hawai'i. In this effort, there will be new opportunities for learning and collaboration, and a strengthening of pilina between Māori and Hawaiians that will last for many more generations.

### **Ngāti Ruawāhia: The New Journey**

To recount information about Ngāti Ruawāhia is to share both Māori and Hawaiian history for our peoples. It is to tell a shared mo'olelo of a Pacific that is greater than tiny islands in a vast sea, that is instead the sum of the relationships that serve as the foundation for our work.

For more than a generation, the Ngāti Ruawāhia tribal heritage has been cared for by the Polynesian Voyaging Society and Kamehameha Schools. Both serving statewide constituencies in Hawai'i, the Kamehameha Schools educational mission is devoted to the advancement of Native Hawaiians; the mission of the Polynesian Voyaging Society has a global reach with emphasis on traditional navigation, environmental restoration and sustainability.

Co-leadership roles for Ngāti Ruawāhia are served by two individuals both of whom were involved in the 1985 arrival event at Waitangi, had witnessed the declaration by Sir James Henare, remain devoted to the legacy of the late Sir Hector Busby, and continue to maintain close ties with the Busby family:

## THE HISTORY OF NGĀTI RUAWĀHIA TE IWI TUAONO O TE TAI TOKERAU

*'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium*

**Nainoa Thompson, Pwo/Master Navigator – Tribal Head of Ngāti Ruawāhia (senior):** Nainoa serves as President of the Polynesian Voyaging Society and has served as a Kamehameha Schools Trustee – as did his father, revered elder and leader Myron Pinky Thompson.

**Dr. Randie Kamuela Fong – Tribal Head of Ngāti Ruawāhia (junior):** Randie represents Kamehameha Schools where he is Executive Culture Officer and serves as Managing Director of Ho'okahua Cultural Vibrancy Group. He has served as cultural advisor for the Polynesian Voyaging Society since 1985, and was closely mentored by Myron Pinky Thompson, Nainoa's father.

Among Polynesians, the notion of “tribal” status is unique to Aotearoa and central to Māori identity. Typically, iwi, tribes, identify with particular ancestors who migrated from the Hawaiiki homeland on specific waka captained and navigated by individuals whose names are largely known and revered. Iwi identity is also shaped by the regions and waterways they settled over the course of centuries. There is great respect for the traditions, practices and worldview of the tangata whenua, the true people of the land, the Māori.

Ngāti Ruawāhia is made up of people from Hawai'i, who have legacy responsibilities in Waitangi and Aurere tracing back to 1983. Therefore, Ngāti Ruawāhia naturally views itself as an 'ohana, a Hawaiian extended family representing the communities at large that support and are dedicated to the missions of both the Polynesian Voyaging Society and Kamehameha Schools. Ngāti Ruawāhia membership is earned by honoring and maintaining the heritage of Ngāti Ruawāhia and the Tai Tokerau community, particularly of Waitangi and Aurere.

Informed and inspired by conversations with Sir Hector Busby from February 10, 2018 to the time of his passing, the following commitments are endorsed and accepted. Ngāti Ruawāhia:

- Will collaborate on the joint effort to complete the Kupe Waka Center at Aurere and develop and implement its cultural programming related to traditional navigation education, cultural living and learning, and leadership development.
- Will collaborate on the joint effort to refurbish the Te Aurere canoe in preparation to sail.
- Will establish a site at Aurere to provide modest accommodations for visiting members of Ngāti Ruawāhia for purposes of cultural education associated with the Kupe Waka Center.
- Affirms Hector Busby's endorsement of 'Aha Moananuiākea, a Pacific consortium consisting of Kamehameha Schools, Polynesian Voyaging Society, Bishop Museum, and the University of Hawai'i System for which the late Hector Busby serves as a guiding elder.
- Supports the formalization of an institutional educational relationship between the Ka'iwakīloumoku Hawaiian Cultural Center at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama founded by Myron Pinky Thompson, and the Kupe Waka Center at Aurere founded by Sir Hector Busby.
- Will nurture and maintain an ongoing relationship with Te Tii Marae at Waitangi and make periodic visits to the stone monument located along the exterior stone wall of the marae, and the Hawaiian poupou, Māuipāmamao, located among the local tribal poupou near the marae.