

3: STATEMENTS OF ASSOCIATION

Bellbird Bush Scenic Reserve (as shown on deed plan OTS-201-47)

For Ngāti Kurumōkihi, the Bellbird Bush Scenic Reserve (the Reserve) and environs are integral to the distinct identity and mana of the Hapū. The importance of the Reserve derives from its position high along the eastern slopes of Maungaharuru (the Maungaharuru Range) within the Ahu-o-te-Atua (formerly named Ahuateatua) and Tarapōnui-a-Kawhea (as it is known to the Hapū; the official name is Taraponui) areas of Maungaharuru, and its proximity to Lake Opouahi. It is also bisected by the Waikoau River. Accordingly, the following statements of association are relevant to the Reserve.

- Peaks of Maungaharuru Range;
- Balance of the Opouahi Scenic Reserve; and
- Waikoau and Aropaoanui Rivers and their tributaries.

The Reserve is one of the few areas of remnant and regenerating native ngahere (forest) on Maungaharuru. It is located in moderate to steep terrain at an altitude of 700 metres above sea level. Consequently, it consists of diverse ngahere of tawhairaunui (red beech), kāmahī, mānuka (tea tree) and kānuka (white tea-tree). Other tree species include tawhairauriki (black beech), rewarewa (New Zealand honeysuckle), māhoe (whiteywood), horoeka (lancewood) and maire. The ngahere provided the ideal habitat for a large number of native birds including huia (before it became extinct), kiwi, kārearea (native falcon), kākā (native parrot), kererū (native pigeon), koekoeā (long-tailed cuckoo), korimako (bellbird) and tūī (parson bird). Many of these taonga (treasures) were harvested for a range of uses, including kai (food), rongoā (medicinal plants), clothing (including feathers for decorating garments and personal adornments), building materials, trade and gifting.

The Hapū have cultural, spiritual, traditional and historic associations with the Reserve and its environs, its waters, associated land and flora and fauna. The Hapū have a responsibility as kaitiaki (guardians) in accordance with their kawa (rules) and tikanga (customs) to restore, protect and manage all those natural and historic resources and sites. This relationship is as important to present day whānau (families) as it was to their tīpuna (ancestors). The continued recognition of the Hapū, their identity, traditions and status as kaitiaki is entwined with Maungaharuru, including the Reserve and associated resources.