

3: STATEMENTS OF ASSOCIATION

Waipatiki Scenic Reserve (as shown on deed plan OTS-201-27)

Waipatiki Scenic Reserve (the Reserve) and environs are of great spiritual, cultural and historical significance to Ngāti Marangatūhetaua (Ngāti Tū), Ngāti Kurumōkihi (formerly known as Ngāi Tātara) and Ngāi Te Ruruku. The importance of the Reserve derives from its location on the Waipātiki (formerly known as Waipatiki) Stream, and proximity to the coast and Tangitū (sea). Accordingly, the following statements of association are relevant to the Reserve.

- Rocks and Reefs and Hapū Coastal Marine Area; and
- Coast.

Kōrero tuku iho – historical importance

The Reserve is located at the head of the Waipātiki valley. The Reserve and its environs was an area of significant occupation by the Hapū and contains nohoanga (camping sites), kāinga (villages) and pā (fortified villages), urupā (burial grounds) and other wāhi tapu (sacred places).

The key pā, located on the coast on the northern side of the river mouth is Te Wharangi. During the time of the Ngāti Marangatūhetaua (Ngāti Tū) chief, Marangatūhetaua and Ngāi Tātara chief, Tātaramoa, their fishing grounds at Tūtira and Tangoio were being plundered by another hapū. To help protect their fishing grounds, Marangatūhetaua made an alliance with Te Ruruku, a chief from Wairoa. In exchange for helping to repel the invaders, tribal archives record, “ko Waipātiki nā Marangatū i tuku ki a Te Ruruku” – Marangatūhetaua gifted land at Waipātiki to Te Ruruku. Included within this gift was Te Wharangi pā. This was considered a prized gift as the area was renowned as an excellent source of kaimoana (seafood), manu (birds) and other kai (food).

Cultural importance

Today, the Reserve is one of a few areas of native ngahere (forest) remaining in the Waipātiki valley. It comprises mostly kānuka (white tea-tree), hangehange, kawakawa (pepper tree), tītoki, tawa, karaka, rewarewa (New Zealand honeysuckle) and large stands of nīkau. Although not as plentiful as earlier times, kererū (native pigeon) and tūi (parson bird) still remain.

The seasonal passage of the Hapū to collect kai is evidenced by the trails from Maungharuru to Tangitū. And within the Reserve is the remnant of an old trail used by the Hapū.

Tarahau, a fishing reef located out to sea opposite the mouth of the awa (river), was renowned for tāmure (snapper), tarakihi and moki, and the coastline from Waipātiki north to Arapawanui was excellent for pāua (abalone). Up until the mid-twentieth century kina (sea urchin), pāua, kuku (mussels) and kōura (crayfish) were still plentiful at Waipātiki and collected regularly by the Hapū.

Kai was also sourced from the awa. The Hapū caught tuna (eels), īnanga and ngaore (forms of whitebait), and as the name suggests, Waipātiki was prolific with pātiki (flounder).

Prior to the 1931 Napier Earthquake, Waipātiki was an estuarine valley. The earthquake uplifted the whole valley so that the previously wide flats and large estuary were replaced by the deeper stream pattern of today. The awa was and continues to be a taonga (treasure) to the Hapū. Traditionally, the awa provided a wealth of resources to sustain the Hapū. The life forms, which are an integral part of the awa, cannot be separated from them. The relationship the Hapū have with this taonga relates to the entire catchment. The health of the awa reflects the health of the Hapū.

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Pā harakeke (flax bushes) supplied tīpuna (ancestors) with raw products for rongoā (medicinal plants), weaving materials and trading. Harakeke were located in the wetland areas and associated lowland forests and provided an important habitat for nesting birds and fish species. Although freshwater fish and tuna have been severely depleted, they are still an important resource for whānau (families) today.

Traditionally, kāinga in the river valley were surrounded by an abundant source of timber. The river flats were heavily forested with tōtara, along with lush dense stands of other native timbers. The fruits of the trees were a source of food. A vast range of edible products were harvested from the ngahere. Hapū members knowledgeable in rongoā would gather kawakawa leaves (pepper tree), kōwhai bark, harakeke (flax), frond stems of mamaku (black tree fern), karaka berries, and ngaio. These taonga were used for a variety of ailments, were highly valued by tīpuna and remain culturally significant to the Hapū today. However, the availability of rongoā species has diminished considerably over the past century.

In pre-European times, ngā manu (birds) associated with the awa were plentiful. Kererū (native pigeon), tūt (parson bird), weka (woodhen), kākā (native parrot) and kiwi were found in the ngahere that hugged the river valley; pākura (pūkeko or purple swamp hen) and native ducks were harvested in the wetland areas. Ngā manu were not only important as a source of food, the feathers were also used for cloaks, decorating garments and personal adornment.

In addition to the resources of Tangitū, the awa and ngahere, the alluvial soils near the mouth of the awa were easy for the Hapū to cultivate.

The Hapū have a responsibility as kaitiaki (guardians) in accordance with their kawa (rules) and tikanga (custom) to restore, protect and manage all their natural and historic resources and sites. This relationship is as important to present day whānau as it was to their tīpuna. The continued recognition of the Hapū, their identity, traditions and status as kaitiaki is entwined with the Reserve and associated resources.