

3: STATEMENTS OF ASSOCIATION

Mangapukahu Scenic Reserve (as shown on deed plan OTS-201-25)

The Mangapukahu Scenic Reserve (the Reserve) and environs are of immense spiritual, historical and cultural significance to the Hapū who maintained ahi-kā-roa (long occupation) in this area. The Hapū are Ngāti Marangatūhetaua (Ngāti Tū), including Ngāti Rangitohumare and Ngāi Te Aonui, Ngāti Kurumōkihi and Ngāi Te Ruruku. Ngāti Rangitohumare and Ngāi Te Aonui intermarried with Ngāti Tū and became known as Ngāti Tū.

The importance of the Reserve is in part due to its location. It lies on the steep, northern side of the Arapawanui Valley and borders the Aropaoanui River (this is the official name; the name known to the Hapū is Arapawanui). Accordingly, the following statements of association are relevant to the Reserve.

- Rocks and Reefs and Hapū Coastal Marine Area;
- Coast; and
- Waikoau and Aropaoanui Rivers and their tributaries.

Spiritual importance

Located within the Reserve are urupā (burial grounds). And known to the Hapū are taipō (supernatural beings) that inhabit nearby areas.

Kōrero tuku iho – historical importance

“Arapawanui” has been explained by kaumātua as “ara” meaning pathway, “pawa” to describe the “V” shape of the high canyon walls descending down to the narrow pathway of the awa (river) far below, and “nui” referring to the depth, and sheerness, of the canyon. Hence “Arapawanui” - the way of the big canyon.

The official name of the awa is Aropaoanui. A similar name known to the Hapū is “Arapaoanui” and refers to a site within the Arapawanui valley, and relates to an incident that occurred just prior to the migration of Taraia I. It was there that a chief from another district had committed the corpses of slain enemies to the hāngī (earth oven). The paoa (kidneys) of the enemy began to quiver and twitch. Thinking this was some form of witchcraft, the chief responded by attacking the offending organs with a stick, hence the name for that site of “Arapaoanui” - thoroughly bashed kidneys.

Arapawanui features in many kōrero (stories) of the Hapū including kōrero relating to the voyage of the waka (canoe), Tākitimu. It is said that Ruawharo, a tohunga (high priest) on the waka, placed his son, Makaro, who had been turned to stone near the rivermouth of the Arapawanui River. The toka (stone) held the mauri (life force) of fish life, and where ever it was placed, the area would become prolific and bountiful with fish. Arapawanui has long been renowned as an area that was abundant with kaimoana (seafood).

Arapawanui is also highlighted in the kōrero several generations later, relating to the arrival of the Wairoa chief, Te Ruruku. The Ngāti Tū tipuna (ancestor) Marangatūhetaua sought the help of Te Ruruku to defend the fishing grounds at Tūtira and Tangoio, which were being plundered by another hapū. On their journey to Tangoio they slept the night at Arapawanui. The next morning they climbed to the summit of Te Karaka, a high hill overlooking the awa. There they were afforded a panoramic view of the surrounding area. Te Ruruku watched in awe as dense clouds of birdlife rose above the forests to black out the horizon of the sea and the rays of the rising sun. Impressed, Te Ruruku asked who had rangatiratanga (authority) over the region.

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Marangatūhetaua replied that his occupation began from Arapawanui to Maungaharuru, then to Te Waka from there to Hukanui and on to Puketitiri. On hearing this information Te Ruruku's interest in the expedition increased and discussions began about what help he could provide to Marangatūhetaua.

Arapawanui has always been one of the principal and largest coastal kāinga (villages) of the Hapū and continued as such well into the nineteenth century. Located within, and in the vicinity of, the Reserve are numerous sites of significance which attest to the occupation of the area by the Hapū. These sites include urupā and other wāhi tapu (sacred places), kāinga (villages), pā (fortified villages) and mahinga kai (food gathering places). The northern ridges in the valley, including the Reserve, formed one of two trails used by the Hapū for their seasonal travel between the coast and inland to Tūtira and Maungaharuru (Maungaharuru Range) (the other main trail being from Tangoio). The trail was high on the ridge to ensure the Hapū could see if the way was safe from any awaiting war party. Along these trails are located sites including Te Hoe, Te Korokoro-o-Marama, Te Karaka and Parepohatu. As noted earlier, Te Karaka was a high point in the area. It is commemorated in a waiata (song) composed by a tipuna (ancestor), Kowhio. The waiata is about a girl named Hariata who was in love with Te-Iwi-Whati, and how, when looking down from Te Karaka, she could almost see his dwelling.

Ākuanei au ka piki ki Te Karaka rā ia
A marama au te titiro ki Manga-hinahina rā
Kei raro iho nā ko taku atua e aroha nei au
Taku hinganga iho ki raro rā ko turi te tokorua
Te roa noa hoki o te pō tuarua e Iwi
Oho rawa ake nei ki te ao, hopu kau kāhore, ei

I will climb with the dawn to the top of Te Karaka
So that I may get a clear view of Manga-hinahina
Just below lies my beloved one.
Whilst I slept alone, my tucked-up knees only were
my bedfellow.
During the long night, twice, Iwi, I have dreamed of
thee, I awoke, I felt for thee; thou wast gone!

Downstream from the Reserve is the largest terraced pā within the valley, known to the Hapū as Te Puku-o-te-Wheke - literally, the stomach of the octopus (it is also known by others as Arapawanui pā). It is located on the coast on the northern side of the awa. It was an ancient pā occupied by the Hapū, and in later times was associated mostly with Ngāi Te Ruruku, Ngāti Rangitohumare and Ngāi Te Aonui. Te Puku-o-te-Wheke was often visited by allies, being a convenient tauranga waka (anchorage) site. Tamatea (the captain of the waka Tākitimu) and his son Kahungunu, are known to have stopped there for food supplies, and the pā remained a port of call for travellers voyaging up and down the coast. It is recorded that at one time a fleet of up to 50 waka anchored at Arapawanui on their way to a tangihanga (funeral) for a dignitary. Within the valley are other kāinga and pā sites, although many have been destroyed or damaged through land use. The remains of two other pā are visible a little further up the awa on the south side. One of these is known as Rangipō.

Cultural importance

Arapawanui has long been famous as a mahinga kai (a place for gathering food), and in the past was renowned for its kaimoana, fine fern roots and kiore (rats). The awa and its mouth provided an abundant food basket with fish, kina (sea urchin), pāua (abalone) and kuku (mussels). In earlier times, tuna (eels) would also make their journey from Tūtira along the awa and out to sea to spawn. One tipuna recounted of 'te rere o ngā tuna' - 'the migration of the eels', that you could smell them before you could see them, there were so many tuna in the awa. Sadly, due to issues at Lake Tūtira and elsewhere, it appears the migration of the eels is no longer possible and there are far fewer tuna in the awa today.

Arapawanui is also the home of Uwha, a Hapū kaitiaki (guardian) which reveals itself as a wheke or tuna. Uwha continues to guard the river and coastline to this day.

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Prior to the 1931 Napier Earthquake, the awa was very deep and was used as a means of transport for waka. In later times, the awa was used for commercial purposes to transport bales of wool from the interior to the coastline.

The alluvial soils near the river mouth were easy to cultivate, and cultivations covered the valley. In more recent times maize, kūmara (sweet potatoes), taewa (potatoes), watermelon, kamokamo (squash), tomato, sweetcorn and pumpkin were grown in the fertile, black soil.

While hunting manu (birds) was common, Hapū kaumātua speak in later times of also hunting the plentiful ducks, rabbits, hares and pheasants at Arapawanui.

Substantial forest resources were within the valley. Tōtara was collected from areas including the Reserve and used to construct waka, and later, whaling boats.

Today there is little left of the indigenous forest. The Reserve consists of remnant forest and regenerating bush, including mānuka (tea tree), tawa, tītoki, rewarewa (New Zealand honeysuckle), kahikatea (white pine) and mataī (black pine). The forest used to provide the ideal habitat for a large number of native manu. These taonga (treasures) were harvested for a range of uses, including kai (food), rongoā (medicinal plants), clothing (including feathers for decorating garments and personal adornment), building materials and trade and gifting.

Arapawanui continues to be a popular summer camping and fishing destination for many Hapū whānau (families). Some members of the Hapū still maintain landholdings there today.

Arapawanui was, and is, considered by the Hapū to be an area of immense spiritual, historical and cultural importance. This is signified by the dense settlement of the Hapū there and their willingness to defend this prized area. The Hapū have a responsibility as kaitiaki (guardians) in accordance with their kawa (rules) and tikanga (customs) 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 (ancestors). The continued recognition of the Hapū, their identity, traditions and status as kaitiaki is entwined with Arapawanui and the Reserve, and their associated resources.