



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND
POUHERE TAONGA

Caring for Urupā after Cyclone Gabrielle



Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga supports iwi, hapū and marae to identify, preserve and protect their heritage places. Urupā (cemeteries) are important wāhi tapu for many Māori communities, and they may also be archaeological sites. Flooding events can cause significant impacts for urupā, and this guide is for marae who have experienced damage to their urupā.

Damage to urupā following natural disasters can result in burials being disturbed, and kōiwi tangata (human skeletal remains) can be carried away by flood waters. The discovery of kōiwi tangata can be a distressing experience. If you find a body, you must notify Police. If you find bone fragments outside of an urupā, you should cover/secure them, and contact your local marae or iwi authority who will provide guidance. We can also provide advice.

Safety

Flood water can be heavily contaminated and could cause illness and infections. Wear gloves, face masks, eye protection, and gumboots. Always wash hands after handling kōiwi tangata.

Tikanga

Urupā are associated with a marae or hapū, and they will decide and lead on the protocols that are right for the situation. Some common approaches are included in this guide.

Record and Store

When fragments of kōiwi tangata are found, keep them together in a box, bag or container. It is important to record the location of what you find and keep these details with the kōiwi tāngata.

Return and Rebury

Reburial may not be possible immediately. The kaitiaki may need to store the kōiwi tangata until reburial can take place. Once ready to rebury, marae tikanga will guide the process.

Common Needs in Care of Kōiwi Tangata

- ▶ **Identify a key contact person from the marae or iwi for members of the public to contact if they find kōiwi tangata. They will have keep in contact with us, the local Police, and the local Public Health Unit of Te Whatu Ora.**
- ▶ **Create the time and space for karakia and appropriate protocols to take place.**
- ▶ **Refrain from eating and carrying food and drink near kōiwi tangata.**
- ▶ **Use appropriate tools for working with kōiwi tangata (avoid using gardening tools used in food gardens).**
- ▶ **Use of appropriate containers and receptacles (nothing that has been used for food).**
- ▶ **A designated repository or storage space may be required, that is not a residence or places of work.**
- ▶ **Water will be needed for cleansing/tapu removal.**

Key Contacts

Te Whatu Ora Health NZ: Te Whatu Ora has advice available at <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/emergency-management/protecting-your-health-emergency/floods-and-health>

NZ Police: Contact numbers for all police stations can be found on the NZ Police website: <http://www.police.govt.nz/district/phonebook.html>

Heretaunga / Hawke's Bay District: Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Central Regional Office, Wellington, tel: 04 494 8320 email: infocentral@heritage.org.nz. Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand Te Matau a Māui Hawke's Bay Public Health Unit tel: 06 878 8109

Te Tairāwhiti / East Coast: Lower Northern Area Office, Tauranga, tel: 07 577 4530 email: infolowernorthern@heritage.org.nz. Te Whatu Ora Tairāwhiti Public Health Unit tel: 0800 800 620

Te Tai Tokerau / Northland: Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Northland Area Office, Kerikeri, tel: 09 407 0470 email: infonorthland@heritage.org.nz. Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand Te Tai Tokerau Bay Public Health Unit tel: 09 470 0000.

Equipment List

Protective Gear: Gloves, masks, eye protection, sturdy footwear / Gumboots, long sleeve shirt and pants, whistle, mask, torch.

Documentation supplies: Notepad, pencils, pens, labels, markers, camera - your phone is a good option.

General equipment: shovels, rakes, spades, trowels, dustpan and brushes, paint brushes of various sizes can be used for cleaning/clearing silt, string, twine or rope. Tarpaulins to create a clean space, or cover items.

Boxes, containers, and bags: Boxes or plastic containers can be used for storing items and a variety of sizes will be useful. Zip-lock bags come in handy. These can be handed out to the public with a marker (or paper and pen to record details inside) to note location of find.

Storage facility: This might be a building on the marae that is re-purposed, or could be a shipping container. Padlocks and shelving might be required. In a rapid response situation, a number of large plastic crates might be used initially.

This guideline is intended to support marae in the recovery and reinterment of historic kōiwi tangata and care of their urupā following damage caused by Cyclone Gabrielle.

For information on dealing with kōiwi outside of an emergency situation, detailed advice is available on our website at <https://www.heritage.org.nz/protecting-heritage/archaeology/-/media/a483bc2fdc14f1aa67dd84e3e16b80d.ashx>

