



Seventh time winners at Hauraki festival

Te Whare Wananga o Waikato scooped the overall prize for the seventh consecutive year at the Hauraki Gulf Cultural Festival in October. The annual event attracted 16 culture groups representing the Hauraki and Waikato areas.

"More teams stimulate the competitions. I think this is probably the biggest one Hauraki has ever held," said Mr Sam Karetu, tutor of the winning team.

"It's good to see more people supporting the competitions. That's why we enter."

"The Hauraki area supported our last overseas tour, so this is how we support them... which is a good philosophy," he said.

The male leader for Te Whare Wananga, Mr Joe Harawira, said: "This is the first competition for a lot of them, so we're quite pleased with their efforts."

Overall competition was at peak this year.

"The whole performance was very entertaining," said a senior judge, Mr Hector Connor.

"Some of the styles were very different and there were some very polished performances."

Mr Karetu agrees that some of the groups did look impressive. However, he admits that he is a "words man". He feels it's very important for people to understand what they're talking about — and when it comes to judging, he is very critical.

"Words are becoming secondary in Maori culture and this is a tragedy. What's the point of saying something if you don't understand it?"

Both Messrs Karetu and Connor commented that in many cases groups reflected their tutors. However, over the years, Te Whare Wananga has adopted their own style.

As a judge, Mr Karetu has two rules. The songs must make sense and the group must be conservative.

"We don't have people coming into

our group jumping around and doing the pukana whenever they want to. It is important that they know what they're doing and why."

Early Images of the Maori

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