

Tapu lifted on Papakura Marae Dininghall

Haare Williams

Te tangi a te tui
Ki nga taumata korero
O Pukekiwiriki
Tui, tui, tui-tui-a
Tuia muka tangata
Ka ao, ka ao
Ka awatea!

"A dream come true" was the way Papakura builder, John Beach described the lifting of the tapu from the new dininghall and the completion of the first phase of the Papakura Marae complex at the predawn service. About fifty people of Ngati Papakura were joined by earth and sky, trees and birds, ancestors and generations unborn in the spirit of birth of the new building. Kaumatua, Rangi Reihana welcomed the rain, hail, thunder and lightning "As a blessing from the elements."

About eight years ago, three people got together, huddled over a coffee table and with \$48 in the bank, and loads of enthusiasm, they resolved to get cracking and set up a marae complex for Papakura which would provide for the social, cultural, and integrative needs of both Maori and Pakeha. The three were John Beach and his wife Ramai, and a Papakura accountant, Jim Baker. Their determination was infectious enough to grab others. However, the idea started away back in the late 1950s when Rangi Reihana was a city councillor.

NINE YEARS AGO

And now, almost nine years to the day, the new building was cleared of the tapu with rituals, so that the practical functions of the marae can be performed. Like all other marae projects, money is needed. Lots of it. Already, the complex is now estimated to be worth \$400,000. The next phase is the completion of the ablution block and the landscaping of the three acre site. Already, the committee's attention is turned to the fully decorated meetinghouse.

"Raising money", said Jim Baker "Is the toughest job. We've proved our determination, and now we are asking the Papakura city to back us."

And while there is occasional friction, as in all committees, there is more tolerance and more emphasis on group activities than on individual effort and stress. For John Beach, agreement "As a whanau", is as important as time, money and efficiency.

VAST RESOURCES OF MAORITANGA

And so, through a concerted effort and agreement, the Papakura Maori Committee can be proud of a building which the Minister of Education Mervyn Wellington described at the predawn service, "As an important step for the city of Papakura." Mr Wellington added, "The marae will be a centre which will help the citizens of Papakura understand the vast resources of Maoritanga and as a place to understand cultural diversity."

First over the threshold were Kuia Tate and grand-daughter, Vanessa Turei (7). The prayers of thanksgiving were led by elder Brian Joyce and concluded with the ritualistic sprinkling of

sacred water to the four corners of the house. The sermons were delivered by kaumatua, Rangi Reihana, and by a direct descendent of the Ngati Paoa tribe, Ihaka Paraone of Kawakawa Bay. According to Maori oral history the Ngati Paoa tribe settled on Pukekiwiriki when the Tainui canoe made landfall in the Tamaki isthmus. Pukekiwiriki is the 'sacred mountain' upon which the blood of Ngati Paoa people was spilled. It looks out over the marae site on Hunua Road, and the city of Papakura.

TE KOIWI DOMAIN

The marae is part of an eleven hectare recreational park known as Te

Koiwi Domain. Work on the dininghall was started in 1979 with commercial and voluntary labour. Committee Chairman, Heta Hodges was proud of his Committee's achievements. An excited Mr Hodges said that he would like to see local and national governments consider the usefulness of the project in education, welfare, law and justice, health, sport and recreation, leisure time, and other uses.

"The main beneficiaries, apart from the Maori community will be the schools." That's the way schoolteacher and city councillor, George Hawkins described the marae. Mr Hawkins urged the people of Papakura to get behind the project and help to raise the \$200,000 needed to build the carved meetinghouse.

Another supporter of the scheme is Papakura District Court Judge, Ken Mason of Clevedon. Charlie and Noeline Kake have started to plan a cul-

Te mokopuna me te whaea o Papakura ... the first female to step over the sacred paepae was seven year old Vanessa Turei, and kuia, Mari Tate. (Photo: George Hawkins).

