

Te Whare Karioi o ngā Taiohi o te Uru

“Te Whare Karioi o ngā Taiohi o te Uru” literally translates to ‘The House of Entertainment or Amusement of the Youth of the West’. It is the name that has been given to the mauri stone for the Western Cluster Schools Kapa Haka. The Kapa Haka is a non-competition day of celebration of our traditional performing arts, encouraging participation by all our tamariki, no matter what their cultural background may be. Having been held at Te Kura ā Rohe o Whāingaroa (Raglan Area School) for the past two years it will now travel around the participating schools, being passed to the school that agrees to host the following years gathering by the present host at the completion of the days events, as a symbol of the life principle of the kaupapa. Horotiu Primary School are the current holders of the mauri stone, having agreed to host the 2016 Western Cluster Schools Kapa Haka.

The mauri stone consists of a volcanic stone placed within a kete harakeke (flax basket). The stone was collected by local teacher Kylie Hollis from Te Whaanga (Whale Bay) near Raglan, site of the old pā (village) of Tāwhao, a famous ancestor of the Tainui people, and father of the equally famous brothers Tūrongo and Whatihua, situated beside Te Whaanga lagoon, on the slopes of maunga Karioi (Mt.Karioi). Traditional designs have been painted on it by local artist Simon Te Wheoro which reflect the interconnecting relationships of the participating schools, the children and their families. The kete harakeke has been woven from local flax by Raglan weaver and school teacher Gwyn Erangi Brodie, the weaving further reflecting those inter-relationships afore mentioned. The mauri stone was blessed by local kaumātua Sean Ellison at Pūtoetoe, in the waters of Whāingaroa (Raglan) Harbour, and given the name “Te Whare Karioi o ngā Taiohi o te Uru”.

The ‘Whare Karioi’ is a traditional Māori institution referring to a travelling band of entertainers who moved from village to village giving displays of the performing arts, more commonly housed in the Whare Tapere or House of Amusement. Professor Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, in his dissertation on the subject, listed six forms of materials contained within the traditional Whare Tapere. These are: Ngā Kōrero - storytelling and narratives (such as pakiwaitara and pūrākau); Ngā Waiata – songs; Ngā Haka – dance; Ngā Taonga Pūoro – musical instruments; Ngā Taonga-o-Wharawhara – adornments (costumes, makeup etc); and Ngā Tākaro – games and amusements (cat’s cradle, darts, puppets, kites etc). Edward Treager in his book “The Māori Race”, offered three names for the Whare Tapere – Whare Tapere (general term); Whare Mātoro (entertainment for young people); and Whare Karioi (the travelling troupe).

As the kaupapa of the Western Cluster Schools Kapa Haka now travels from school to school, the name ‘Whare Karioi’ reflects that point, and refers to the children themselves as the carriers of the kaupapa from area to area. It also references its point of origin - the sacred mountain Karioi as a ‘punga’ or anchor stone for the kaupapa; Whāingaroa Moana (Raglan Harbour), te hoenga waka o ngā tūpuna (the paddling place of our ancestors), in whose waters it was blessed; and Te Whaanga (Whale Bay), where the stone originated, site of the village of Tāwhao, Tūrongo and Whatihua, ancestors of many of the children of the participating schools. ‘Ngā Taiohi o te Uru’, or the Youth of the West, is again representative of the tamariki of the Western Cluster Schools, anchored in Te Tai Hauāuru (the West Coast), to Maunga Karioi (Mt.Karioi), ‘maunga tūtei o te uru’ (sentinal mountain of the west).

“Te Whare Karioi o ngā Taiohi o te Uru” - Tau mai te mauri! Haumi e! Hui e! Tāiki e!

nā Sean Ellison