

Toi Ohomai Pōhiri Guide

The pōhiri is a formal Māori welcome ceremony. At Toi Ohomai, pōhiri are used in a wide range of settings and occasions to welcome new staff, new students and visitors to our campuses. We have five campuses that are located in five different tribal regions which have their own customary practices.

WHO ARE TANGATA WHENUA?

The word tangata translates as 'people' and 'whenua' as land, so 'tangata whenua' literally means 'people of the land' who act as the hosts when visitors are welcomed onto the marae. Tangata whenua status can be accorded by genealogy or association. As tangata whenua we are responsible for practising manaakitanga where we uphold and strengthen the mana of our visitors, making sure they are well looked after. Here at Toi Ohomai, the tangata whenua will be local iwi (Hau Kāinga) and/or staff who perform important roles on the marae and others who have already been welcomed on in the past.

WHO ARE MANUHIRI?

Manuhiri are the new staff, new students or visitors being welcomed. For a warm and enjoyable experience, manuhiri should take their lead from the tangata whenua.

The Pōhiri Process

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

KARANGA

Karanga is the call of welcome that invokes the support of Atua and tipuna. This call is always made by a kaikaranga (caller) to the manuhiri and is always performed by a female. This call paves a safe rite of passage for the visitors. The composition may vary depending on the occasion, but in most cases will include a welcome to the particular marae and acknowledge those who have passed on. The sacredness of the karanga acknowledges both physical and spiritual aspects of all those present.

What to do:

Manuhiri meet and wait at the waharoa (entrance gate). It is important to be on time to avoid arriving when the formalities are already taking place. Dress as you would for any formal occasion and for the weather (including skirts/dresses for females, long trousers for males). Make sure mobile phones are off and refrain from using videos or cameras. When karanga commences, proceed slowly onto marae (females in front). At one point, the group may stop and stand still for a few moments to pay respects to those who have passed away. If the group is proceeding into the wharenui/meeting house, please remove shoes and follow the guidance of the hosts about who should sit where.

[more overleaf...](#)



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

WHAIKŌRERO

Whaikōrero are the formal speeches usually made by men. The basic format whaikōrero includes acknowledgment of the Creator, those who have passed, the living, the ancestral house, welcoming of guests and reference to the purpose of the meeting.

What to do:

Once speeches commence, it is important to stay respectfully quiet. Moving and walking around should also be avoided (if you arrive late or need to leave for any reason, wait until a speech has ended before you move). Speeches should be conducted completely in te reo Māori/the Māori language. This is due to the sacredness of the ceremony and the need to ensure the ancient art of Māori oratory is retained. Once formalities are completed, certain people may be invited to address the group in English.

WAIATA MŌTEATEA

Waiata mōteatea are traditional songs each group will perform as a way of supporting the whaikōrero of the speaker. Waiata mōteatea are a very important part of the oral history of Māori as they are often composed around significant people and/or events.

What to do:

The waiata mōteatea chosen will depend upon the kaupapa/nature of the meeting or who is present. When the speaker or someone from your group starts the song, you can stand in support to join in or remain seated.

HONGI/HARIRŪ

The hongi (pressing of noses) or harirū (shaking of hands or light kiss on the cheek) lifts the tapu (sacred separation) and bonds together the tangata whenua (hosts) and manuhiri (visitors) as one.

What to do:

Depending on the size of your group, some or all of you may be invited to perform this aspect of the pōhiri. If you are not entirely sure what to do, follow the lead of the tangata whenua.

KAI

After the hongi/harirū the sharing and partaking of food lifts the final tapu (sacredness) of the pōhiri ceremony.

What to do:

Everyone is invited to come together in the dining area to share in refreshments

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