

Ka kawe nga kī i te Tonga

To carry the knowledge from the South



TAKUTAKU

TE POU

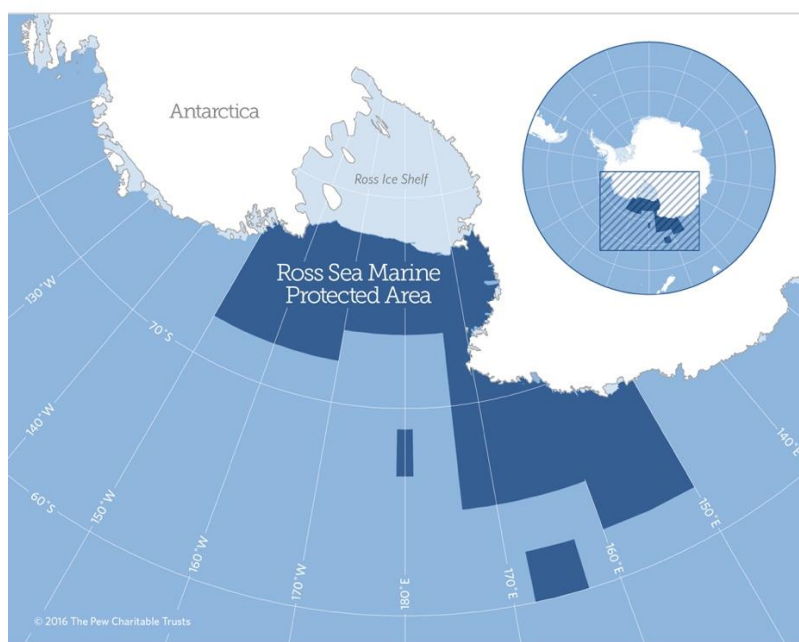
Te pou te pou
Te tokotoko i whe nuku
Te tokotoko i whe rangi
Tokia tukia
Ko te mumu, ko te āwha
Ko te manini kai ota
Ta kiri panapana
Ma rau ki runga
Ma rau ki raro
Ka whai tamore i runga
Ka whai te more i raro
Tena ko te pou
Te pou o Rongo
No Rongo mauri ora
Ka oa e ei

Background

In December 2017, Antarctica's first Marine Protected Area (MPA), and the world's second-largest MPA, the Ross Sea MPA, came into being.

This was a significant step towards protecting the marine and safeguarding more than 383 million kilometres of water off the icy continent.

Ross Sea Marine Protected Area



Source: Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources

In conjunction with the MPA, a five-year research programme 'The Ross Sea Region Research and Monitoring Programme (Ross-RAMP)' started, to scientifically monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Ross Sea MPA.

As part of this kaupapa, Ngāi Tahu and Ngātiwai partnered with Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research scientist Dr Priscilla Wehi to begin exploring mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) perspectives and relationships with Antarctica, and how those might be expressed through whakairo, the traditional Māori art form that embeds values and history, and acts as a repository of knowledge.

TOI WHAKAIRO

"Toi whakairo is our form for recording and transferring knowledge and history down through the generations, long before we used a written language," explains Te Warihi Hetaraka of Ngātiwai, a tohunga whakairo who oversaw the project along with tohunga whakairo Fayne Robinson (Ngāi Tahu).

Te Warihi, his son Poutama Hetaraka (Ngātiwai, Ngāi Tahu), Fayne, and James York (Ngāi Tahu, Ngā Puhi), came together with Priscilla Wehi and Arielle Kauaeroa Monk to conceive a whakairo that depicts and communicates the ongoing damage to Papatūānuku, and calls for action on the part of the world's leaders to address the major environmental problems that we now face.

"Papatūānuku is suffering and humanity is suffering and the theme of the whakairo we wanted to create is nurturing the environment, nurturing Papatūānuku," says Hetaraka.

It is believed the wellbeing of Papatūānuku starts with Antarctica as an indicator, and the challenge is also from scientists to heed the plight of Papatūānuku.



Protecting Papatūānuku

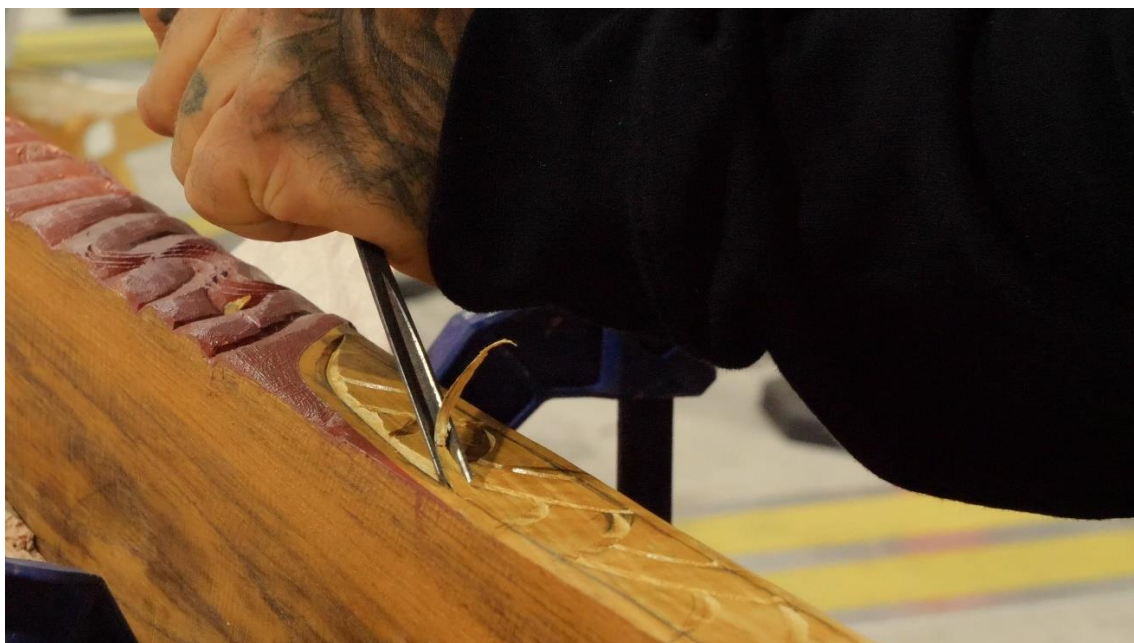
Te Unuahi i whakapiri ki te ika nui a Maui – The descaling of the fish

Within te ao Māori, Te Unuahi is a tohu (sign) that represents the fish scales that cling to the great fish of Maui.

Te Unuahi is made of up four scales that are each reflected in the concept and design of whakairo.

“The first scale represents the flesh of Papatūānuku and all the elements that are within that such as minerals. The second scale refers to the vegetation and the flora, the third to the animals and the fauna, and the fourth scale to humanity. Together, they are the scales that protect Papatūānuku. When we deforest and mine we are scaling Papatūānuku,” says Te Warihi Hetaraka.

“We can see that Papatūānuku is in trouble and that we all need to tend to our mother. The wellbeing of Papatūānuku starts with Antarctica; it is an indicator, a litmus test for the rest of the world,” explains Hetaraka.



Ngā Whakawae

The whakairo was started by the carvers in 2018. The wood was slowly transformed.

“Carving styles come down from Maui –tikitiki a Taranga. Tāne was the first carver in the North, and so it was fitting that the wood we selected to work on the whakawae was a hardwood that came from deep within the forests of Tāne,” says Te Warihi.

Te Warihi and Poutama selected the wood for the whakawae from a tree with very hard wood called *Robinia* that is native to South America but was growing near Whangarei, in Northland. It is similar in texture to pūriri. It was selected for its high density, a critical characteristic in the harsh conditions of Antarctica.

Using this wood connects the carving to other peoples and groups across the world who share similar environmental concerns.

Left whakawae



The left whakawae represents mātauranga Māori in the form of Papatūānuku, and that we see her with her korowai draped over her. When Papatūānuku is healthy she cannot be seen, but because in the whakairo her korowai exposes some of her skin so that we can see parts of her, the whakairo reflects the idea that Papatūānuku is in trouble.

Right whakawae



The right whakawae is a taiaha that has been converted into a ko for digging the garden.

“The message from this is instead of destruction, it becomes a tool of construction,” explains Poutama.

The challenge in the takutaku is for Rongo to lean towards Tumatauenga. That is, the taiaha is converted into a ko, a digging stick, representing the need to nurture Papatūānuku in a sustainable and reciprocal relationship,” he adds.

The Pare



James worked on the pare, which has been carved from tōtara and rimu. It has two manaia carved at each end. One represents the partnership of Ngātiwai and Ngāi Tahu in creating this piece, and the other represents the partnership of knowledges from modern environmental scientists and Indigenous Peoples, who have a common concern to care for the environment in sustainable ways. Both of these groups are acting to solve the immense ecological and environmental problems facing us.



"The phases of the moon are also represented, by a disc in the middle and a crescent," explains James York.

The moon [marama] reminds us of the importance of the maramataka, which relies on careful observational of seasonal change, and the importance of managing resources carefully so that we harvest, for example, at appropriate times to ensure a bountiful but also reciprocal relationship.

"There is a manaia in the moon which is a little bit twisted, to show the confusion of the moon and the maramataka, as things stand now," James adds.

Collective voices

As the carving in New Zealand progressed, other carvers added their tapping to the whakawae.

The sharing of the tapping embedded the collective voices of many into the whakawae, emphasising the multitude of voices calling for change and laying down a wero or challenge to the world's leaders.



Ralph Ruka was one of those who added a collective voice to the whakairo in Whangarei.

The shipping and preparation for Antarctica

After months of preparation by the carvers, the whakawae and pare travelled to Christchurch where they were prepared and shipped for their journey to the ice.

Each whakawae weighed around 40 kilograms and was carefully wrapped and protected along with the pare.

A blessing ceremony took place at Antarctica New Zealand where all involved were able to gather and farewell the pieces.

The carvers arrived in Antarctica on February 5th 2019. Most of the carving had been completed by this stage, with some of the smaller details and embellishments still to be carried out so that James and Poutama could embed some of their insights from being in Antarctica itself. Nobody was sure what it would be like to carve into Antarctica, and how the cold might affect the process.



The completion and unveiling in Antarctica

James and Poutama were inspired by what they experienced in Antarctica. James incorporated some of the interconnectedness of the ecosystems he saw into his carving. Poutama drew from the enormous windswept ridges and landforms of Antarctica.



The carving was completed two weeks later. It was installed around the inside of the door to the New Zealand headquarters in Scott Base, where all who go to Scott Base enter.

A ceremonial unveiling took place the morning after it was finished with a takutaku.



James York and Poutama Hetaraka with the completed whakairo.

Taking it through Aotearoa - The talking rākau, the tokotoko

To continue this important conversation, a talking rākau was also shaped by carvers Poutama Hetaraka and James York while in Antarctica.

The team passionately agreed that lifting awareness of climate change and its impacts is a vital issue, and one that needs to reach into the discussion at marae around the country.

The talking rākau, was carved from manuka and created to travel to marae around the country, so that each marae could have the opportunity to add a notch into the rākau as an emblem of their mana, as part of the plan for action around climate change.



Ngā Mihi

The whakairo project was conceived through the Ross Sea Region Research and Monitoring Programme (Ross-RAMP) Vision Mātauranga research strand, led by Dr Priscilla Wehi of Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research.

Ross-RAMP is funded by an MBIE Endeavour Fund grant.

The Ngai Tahu Fund and Antarctica NZ supported the project and the journey to Antarctica.

The whakairo team consisted of Te Warihi Hetaraka and Fayne Robinson, Poutama Hetaraka and James York. Carvers worked in Hihiaua Cultural Centre, Whangarei and Colac Bay, Southland, as well as at Scott Base, Antarctica. Vanessa Wells of Elanti Media took many of the stunning photos; she accompanied the carvers to Antarctica and created a short film Te Whakairo about the project. Priscilla Wehi led the science contribution to and management of the project, and Arielle Kauaeroa Monk was an integral team member with additional project management and communications expertise. Nigel Scott of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu was critical to the initiation of this project, and Matt Pinkerton (NIWA), leader of the overall Ross-RAMP programme, added scientific expertise and support. Janet Hetaraka, Clive Stone, and Ralph Ruka offered additional tautoko, as did many others who helped carve at Hihiaua Cultural Centre, Whangarei.

We also thank Megan Martin from the Community Engagement Programme of Antarctica New Zealand, the engineers and other personnel at Antarctica New Zealand who helped turn the dream into reality. The Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research graphics team assisted with booklet graphics, layout and production.

Finally, we want to acknowledge all of our whānau who came with us on this journey.

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All photos are copyright of Vanessa Wells, Priscilla Wehi and Arielle Monk.

See <http://maoriantarctica.org> and <http://priscillawehi.com> Scientific Journeys for more information and resources about this Antarctic research project and journey.



L to R: Arielle Kauaeroa Monk, Te Warihi Hetaraka, Poutama Hetaraka, Clive Stone and Priscilla Wehi at Hihiaua Cultural Centre, Whangarei, January 2019. Photo: Arielle Monk.



L to R: Vanessa Wells, Poutama Hetaraka and James York at Scott Base, Antarctica in February 2019. Photo: Vanessa Wells.