

Statement of association to KARAU Stream

The traditions of Rongowhakaata confirm the cultural, historical and spiritual importance of the Karaua Stream to Rongowhakaata. These traditions represent the links between the world of the Atua and present generations; reinforce Rongowhakaata tribal identity; and are continually expressed in whakapapa, waiata, and korero and mahi toi.

The values of mana, whakapapa, tapu and mauri define the relationship of Rongowhakaata with the Karaua Stream. Mana defines the kaitiekitanga responsibilities of Rongowhakaata, within which Rongowhakaata is charged with protecting the Mauri or life force of the Karaua Stream. Whakapapa defines the genealogical relationship, while Tapu describes the sacredness of the relationship between Rongowhakaata and Karaua Stream. These values remain important to the people of Rongowhakaata today.

The Karaua Stream is rich in historical and cultural association for Rongowhakaata.

From the time of Horouta waka, Hinehikirangi, Kaitieki of the precious kumara tubers and a woman known for her powers of cultivation, traversed the lands of Turanganui a Kiwa, searching for the ideal whenua to plant her precious taonga. From Papatewhai at Muriwai, her party navigated a probable passage through Wherowhero Lagoon to the Karaua stream, passing Puketapu Maunga heading to Manawaru where the first kumara within Te Tairawhiti were planted.

Po Po lament of Enoka Te pakaru

*Ko Hinehikirangi ka u kei uta
Te Kowhai ka nga ora ka ringitia te kete
Ko Manawaru, Ko Arai te uru*

It is said that Hinehikirangi also gathered her hangi stones from the foot of Puketapu at the waters of the Karaua Stream.

Origin

The Karaua Stream originates from the watersheds on the Waiwhakaata and Tauowhiro lands and at one time flowed past the Tapui Pa into the Te Arai te Uru river. This changed when the Te Arai te Uru river cut its course leaving the Karaua Stream later flowing past the maunga Puketapu then out to sea at Pakirikiri.

A number of settlements have been established by the hapu of Rongowhakaata along the Karaua stream. Such settlements highlight the significant resource and usage exercised by the hapu while they occupied these areas. In the time of Rongomairatahi, the only son of Turahiri and Rongowhakaata, he built his Pa atop the maunga Puketapu. The significance of Rongomairatahi is acknowledged in the whakatauki ; ***“Te kotahi a Turahiri ripo ana te moana”***

Turourou son of Rongomairatahi, and a most outstanding leader amongst his contemporaries maintained the Pa on Puketapu also. Another such settlement was Te Pahou Pa, associated to the hapu Ngati Kaipoho, located on the Tauowhiro lands at the upper reaches of the Karaua. Te Pahou was the kainga of Te Whaiti, the mokopuna of Kaipoho and son of Te Aweawe. Te Whaiti was a Tohunga Whakairo, a prolific carver who was responsible for many Pa within the Te Arai valley and hapu waka, which on completion were launched into the Karaua for readiness to the moana. Te Whaiti also ensured from his pa Te Pahou that large cultivations were grown to sustain the carvers, whilst the Karaua stream was the source of eel, morehana, inanga and a direct access to the kaimoana from Turanganui a Kiwa.

The Karaua Stream was a trade way for not only hapu of Rongowhakaata but a crossing for surrounding travelling tribes also. Two trading houses were maintained on the Karaua Stream, one each on the upper and lower reaches, both were required to accommodate the movement of goods and resources. With the main trading stations located at Wherowhero Lagoon and Turanganui, thus linking to the Maori Trading economy, where the large cultivations of Rongowhakaata were exported on the five trading vessels owned and operated by Rongowhakaata Hapu.

Those whanau of the hapu Ngati Kaipoho remained on the Karaua lands which verge the Karaua Stream through to the time of Raharuhi Rukupo and his brothers, Paora Kate, Te Waaka Mangere and Pera Tawhiti. It was Rukupo who relocated Ngati Kaipoho to Pakirikiri lands, on the verges of Karaua Stream and Wherowhero lagoon in the aftermath of the illegal taking of Te Hau ki Turanga from Orakaiapu, the Waerengahika and Ngatapa excursions and Raupatu of the Rongowhakaata tribal estate. Pakirikiri Pa was to become a refuge for the tribes of Turanga and wider Maori Political movements as Raharuhi Rukupo and Rongowhakaata Rangatira at the time held hui to progress the retention of Maori lands and repudiation of existing land deals. These hui were numerous with hundreds sometimes thousands of whanaunga in attendance, with organised cultivations and resources from the sea, waterways and forests sustaining the manuhiri.

The house Te Poho o Rukupo was completed in 1878 at Pakirikiri alongside the Karaua Stream, five years after Rukupo had passed as a memorial by his younger brother Pera Tawhiti. As had Raharuhi Rukupo when he led the carving and building of the whare Te Hau ki Turanga at Orakaiapu Pa in their older brother Te Waaka Mangere.

Rongowhakaata tipuna had considerable knowledge of wahi tapu, traditional trails, tauranga waka, places for gathering kai, rongoa and other taonga, ways in which to use the resources of the Karaua Stream, the relationship with the Karaua Stream and their dependence on it, and the tikanga for the proper sustainable utilisation of resources. All of these values remain important to the people of Rongowhakaata today.

The Karaua Stream is of great cultural and historical importance to Rongowhakaata. The mauri of the Karaua Stream represents the essence that binds the physical and spiritual elements of all things together, generating and upholding all life. All elements of the natural environment possess a life force and all forms of life are related. Mauri is a critical element of the spiritual relationship of Rongowhakaata whanui to the Karaua Stream.