

Media Release

Ngā Ara Tipuna milestone

Ngā Ara Tipuna is reaching a huge milestone this week, with the beautifully crafted pieces that will bring the stories of Tamatea and its people to life being installed across seven historic sites.

Te Taiwhenua o Tamatea chairman Dr Roger Maaka said Ngā Ara Tipuna will enable the history of Tamatea to be learned, understood and acknowledged, in a way that is unique in New Zealand. "As well as sharing knowledge with our wider population and bringing visitors to our rohe, it will enable us to make our history real for our rangatahi, so they can understand how it relates to them and where they are today, and give them a good grounding to become mentors for the next generation".

This week's installation signals the near-completion of five years of planning and construction by Mana Whenua hapū and Central Hawke's Bay District Council, on what will be a nationally significant cultural and educational treasure, says mana whenua lead, Brian Morris.

Ngā Ara Tipuna focuses on significant historical pā sites in Tamatea (Central Hawke's Bay), with information either on the former pā sites or looking across them. The sites are: Pukekaihau Pā, Moana-i-Rokia Pā, Kaimanawa Pā, Ruatangaroa Pā, Kaitoroa Pā, Te Waipukurau Pā and Lake Whatumā.

At each site storyboards, re-creations of original features, art work, and links to on-line resources will tell the story of the tipuna who lived there, and what their natural world would have looked like.

The key site is Pukekaihau Pā, in Hunter Memorial Park in Waipukurau. A whare kōrero at the base of the hill will welcome visitors, after which a short walk will take them to the pā site atop the hill. With views across the rohe, a signature pou, re-created lengths of palisade, extensive story boards, and links to on-line resources accessed using mobile devices, the site will give visitors 'the big picture'.

"This is for our local people and our visitors, so they can understand the place where they live and what's beneath their feet. We do that by sharing stories of our tipuna who walked this land hundreds of years ago; feeding their families, building seasonal and permanent homes, travelling – all the things we do today, but in a vastly different way that was tied intrinsically to the land," says Mr Morris.

Central Hawke's Bay Mayor Alex Walker noted the significance of the project, and the opportunities it would create for the people of Tamatea and across Central Hawke's Bay. "This partnership project for the people is an outstanding example of the unique Tamatea way we work together with Te Taiwhenua o Tamatea and mana whenua," she said.

"Story telling is so powerful in bringing places such as Pukekaihau to life and for re-shaping the assumptions that we all make about the place we live in and its history. This project will etch the important place of mana whenua on our landscape and enrich our people in so many ways.

Ngā Ara Tipuna

Central Hawke's Bay District Council
28-32 Ruataniwha St, Waipawa, Central Hawke's Bay
PO Box 127, Waipawa 4240
Phone: 06 857 8060

“Through Project Thrive we heard from our community the importance of this project and providing for a Central Hawke’s Bay of the future. We are proud to have been working hand in hand with Te Taiwhenua o Tamatea and hapū representatives to develop Ngā Ara Tipuna, to see Tamatea reawakened.”

Physical works started in earnest last year, when Government announced it would contribute \$2.8m to the project, through the its Provincial Growth Fund. Initially intended to open in early-2021, COVID had pushed the official opening to later in 2021, with a date due to be announced within weeks.

As well as being a resource enabling local residents to learn about the district’s history, Ngā Ara Tipuna will be marketed as a tourism attraction. While all sites will be open to the public to take self-guided tours, the trust being formed to manage it will develop guided tours which will expand on the information available on site.

Background:

Ngā Ara Tipuna is a collaborative project being developed by hapū of Taiwhenua o Tamatea in conjunction with Central Hawke’s Bay District Council. The cultural heritage project combines traditional design elements with contemporary materials and processes, digital storytelling and displays at significant sites. It will engage locals and visitors through the sharing of stories of the people of Tamatea and their relationship with the land, and enhance shared connections: Learnings from the past; appreciation for the present; hope for the future.

The project is funded by: The Provincial Growth Fund; Heretaunga-Tamatea Settlement Trust; Eastern and Central Community Trust; Lottery Environment and Heritage Fund; Central Hawke’s Bay District Council.

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Media Enquiries

Diane Joyce

Joyce Communications

Phone 021 612270

Email joycecomms@outlook.com

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Crafted metalwork bases for storyboards are appearing on Ngā Ara Tipuna historic sites.