

Te Kawerau a Maki

Te Kawerau a Maki were one of the earliest tribes to settle within the wider Auckland area. Our origins arise from the first inhabitants of the land - the Turehu, to the arrival of the Tainui, Aotea, Tokomaru, Kahuitara, and Kurahaupo canoes in the 14th century, and the Ngati Awa, Ngaoho, and Ngaiwi people who occupied the wider area prior to 1600. The eponymous ancestor Maki is an important figure in the history of Tamaki Makaurau. He was a famed warrior who conquered much of the region during the early 1600's after migrating with some 300 of his hapu to Tamaki Makaurau through the lands of his Tainui relatives from the northern Taranaki-Kawhia area. It is through this whakapapa that when Maki settled Tamaki Makaurau he was in the land of his Ngaiwi and Ngaoho relatives and ancestral home. The name Te Kawerau a Maki arises from an incident which occurred while Maki was visiting the southern Kaipara, and is also one of the names given to Maki and his wife Rotu's only Kaipara-born son and the founding ancestor of the iwi, Tawhiakiterangi, sometimes shortened to Tawhia.

In time Maki's descendants occupied lands from Hikurangi (West Auckland), to Te Whenua roa o Kahu (the North Shore), Whangaparaoa, Mahurangi, Matakanakana, Pakiri, southern Kaipara, and the gulf islands of Aotea (Great Barrier Island), Hauturu o Toi (Little Barrier Island) and Tiriti Matangi, forming the Te Kawerau confederation. By the early 1700's the traditional rohe was thus from Okaka (South Head, Kaipara) to Paratutai (North Head, Manukau) in the west; and from Te Arai o Tahuhu (Te Arai Point) in the northeast to Takapuna in the southeast as well as the gulf islands (fig.1). The heartland of Te Kawerau a Maki was and remains Hikurangi.

While it is recognized that this broad area is of interest to other iwi and hapu, Te Kawerau a Maki are associated with many geographic locations and areas through the traditions, songs, place names, and histories of the people. Te Kawerau's mana whenua status is established through take tupuna (ancestral rights), ahi kaa (occupation), and kaitiakitanga (guardianship and management of cultural and natural resources).

The role of kaitiaki continues in current cultural and natural resource management. Kaitiaki responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Protection and maintenance of wahi tapu and other heritage sites

- Protection of taonga
- Placing of rahui (temporary ritual prohibition) to allow replenishment of harvested resources
- Restoration of damaged ecosystems
- Protection of sensitive environments
- Directing development in ways which are in keeping with the environment
- Ensuring the sustainable use of resources
- Observing the tikanga associated with traditional activities
- Providing for the needs of present and future generations

North Shore and Okura

Our ancestor, the Turehu chieftain Tiriwa, lived throughout the extensive forest which once covered West Auckland and the northern reaches of the Waitemata and North Shore, the remnant of which is now the Waitakere Ranges. It is from this ancestor that the traditional name for Waitakere, Te Wao nui a Tiriwa – the great forest of Tiriwa, comes.

The north shore's traditional name is 'Te Whenua roa o Kahu' (the extensive lands of Kahu). The name belongs to Ngati Kahu, who descend from Kahu, a grandchild of Maki. Maki had a number of sons who were each given lands across the region. Tawhia (Te Kawerau a Maki) was a younger son who occupied Hikurangi, while his older brother Maeaeeriki held the lands from Devonport to Orewa. Kahu was the child of Maeaeeriki. Tawhia married Marukiterangi, the daughter of Kahu (and hence his grandniece). Hence Kawerau link to the north shore via Tawhia through Maki, Maeaeeriki, and Kahu, as well as through marriage to Marukiterangi. They were all Kawerau. Nga puhi pushed everyone out of Tamaki in the early 1800's, and what was left of Ngati Kahu/Kawerau came back to their land about a decade later and stayed until the early 1900's.

Te Kawerau had kainga, wahi tapu, and resources across the landscape including at O Te Ha (Albany Village), Whakarewatoto (Southern end of long bay beach and headland above), and Okura. Okura as a name comes from Maki's younger brother Mataahu who married a local chiefly Ngaoho woman known as Te Kura. It is from her that the Okura area adjoining Long Bay to the north takes its name, 'the dwelling place of 'Kura'.