

**OTUKOU MARAE
LAKE ROTOAIRA
TURANGI**

Whanau Ora ki Tuwharetoa
Shop 4
Turangi
3353

2 December 2015

Attention Mitch

Tena koutou katoa

I ahu mai tenei kei runga i te haumarie e pupuhi ana mai no te tihi o to tatou maunga tapu Tongariro, kei runga he mihi, ha aroha.

This comes to you upon the caring breeze that blows forth from the summit of our sacred mountain Tongariro, with it comes our acknowledgements and love.

KIA WHAKATŪPATO GUN LICENSING WANANGA OTUKOU MARAE

The following is a saying from amongst the mountain people of Ngati Tuwharetoa, it was spoken by the tupuna of Otukou Marae and those of Ngati Hikairo descent;

“Na te hau matao, ka wiri te kiri, na te wiri o te kiri ka piri te tangata, na te piri o te tangata ka ora ai tatou”

It is the frost laden winds that cause the skin to shiver, from this people come together for warmth, and it is from the people coming together that we are able to survive the harshest cold

Tongariro stood sheathed in a korowai of mountain mist and cloud, the mountain ranges surrounding us looked down on the assembly below and gave forth their tears in a light drizzle, and so began the ritual of the ancients. The still air pierced by the sacred call of karanga. This was a beginning in more ways than one, the manuhiri moved forward slowly karanga passed between the two parties, home and visitors reinforcing their bonds of welcome and respect. The NZ Police, Firearms Safety Specialists NZ, Tuhoe, Te Arawa lead by Whanau Ora ki Tuwharetoa. There began an experience on Otukou Marae that not only transformed our people but may in time be seen as a moment that changed the landscape of other iwi in Aotearoa.

The Kia Whakatupato Kaupapa was in the house!

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Ngati Hikairo is a Hapu of Ngati Tuwharetoa who have lived off the land since our occupation of our mountain valleys many centuries ago. Our Hapu are hunters and gatherers of food. Our tribal estate is our Pataka. We know every aspect of this environment, the best times to gather specific food from our forests and waterways, and also when and where to hunt. This is not a sport or recreation for our people, it is a necessity to feed their whanau, and also an integral part of our Cultural DNA.

Our Hapu members were taught to hunt and gather food from their youth. For Ngati Hikairo the early childhood progression is usually, walk, ride, bush, fish, hunt, and not necessarily in that order.

I believe this is the situation in all rural Maori communities, we grow up hunting.

There however, has always been a societal disconnect, in that there is a large natural grouping in Aotearoa that hunt within the lore of their people, while remaining outside the law of the land. Do they have guns? of course they do. Did they ever have the security of a gun safety programme? No, of knowing how to safely store a firearm? No, Of operating so that they did not further criminalise themselves? No, Of having trust in the system? No

This circumstance pushes our whanau even further from mainstream society. Whereby, their actions and activities are clandestine and carry the perpetual risk of being “caught out” This nurtures distrust, which in turn encourages negative associate behaviour which invariably results in further alienation of large sectors of our rural Maori community.

Kia Whakatupato blew that all away in one weekend. Because of the manner in which the programme was delivered and the calibre of the deliverers, decades of apprehension and distrust dissolved before the first morning tea break. The group was animated, exciting, enthusiastic and appreciative.

We the Whanau of Otukou, Ngati Hiakiro and Ngati Tuwharetoa cannot thank you enough. For somewhere between the 28th & 29th of November this gathering had ceased just been just about a gun license. It had become the first step in re-engaging our whanau in mainstream society. We saw pride in achievement, gratitude in tutors who had not written them off as so many had done before, and a willingness to trust again.

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We have since had 4 requests from the group to help facilitate them getting their Drivers License, and all want proper firearms storage facility. the change in attitude from the whanau has been very humbling, again we thank you.

“Na te piri o te tangata ka ora ai tatou”

In summary I return to the last words of our Hapu proverb, *“it is from people coming together that we are able to survive the coldest winters”*

We thank you for bringing this Kaupapa together, and for bringing all the various participants together to have this programme on our marae such a success. If there was ever a recipe for transformation it was this programme and the people who delivered it, and the manner in which it was delivered.

To the NZ Police, Firearms Safety Specialists NZ, our Tuhoe whanau, Te Arawa (Uncle John) and Mitch and the Whanau Ora ki Tuwharetoa Team, Otukou Marae thank you for nurturing our whanau. You will always have a warm welcome and a home upon our marae and in our hearts.

No reira

Ma te Kaihanga koutou e manaaki kei runga i ou kaoutou mahi, mo ake tonu.

Naku iti

Te Ngaehe Wanikau

Chairperson

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