



Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi  
INCORPORATED

**MEDIA RELEASE – 7 March 2024**

## **HUI TAUMATA CALLED TO ACTION MĀORI UNITY**

A Hui Taumata will be held in Ngāti Kahungunu on 31 May 2024 hosted by Omāhu Marae to identify solutions for Māori Unity - Kotahitanga.

Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Inc. Chair, Bayden Barber says, “We saw thousands of people gather at Tūrangawaewae, Rātana and Waitangi. One of the key themes spoken of at each of these hui was the need for Iwi Māori to unify. We must come together as an irresistible force that cannot be ignored, no matter who is sitting in government. We must not lose momentum on this important kaupapa. We need to take advantage of the energy and passion that is out there. The timing is right.”

Helmut Modlik, CEO of Ngāti Toa Rangatira, who facilitated a National Iwi Chairs Forum (NCIF) wānanga in Rotorua last month to start thinking about such issues, says, “We’ve done the talking. It’s now time to do the mahi and consider what Kotahitanga could look like in the 21st Century. If we are to truly achieve Rangatiratanga as a people, we need to come together, but it needs form and function.”

The Hui Taumata will be an action call to Māoridoms’ thought leaders from around the motu to put forward proposals and discussion documents on achieving Kotahitanga before the hui, so they can be considered and discussed by those in attendance on May 31. “If we can start forming the building blocks before the Hui Taumata, we won’t need to start from scratch as some of the thinking would have already been shared,” says Barber.

“We have numerous existing collectives within Te Ao Māori such as the National Iwi Chairs Forum, NZ Māori Council, Māori Womens Welfare League etc. and they all play an important role, however, we are yet to achieve the Kotahitangi needed to truly influence. This government continues to ignore us. We need to change that.”

This is not the first time Ngāti Kahungunu has been involved in aims to unify Māori. The Kotahitanga Movement started with a hui held at Waipatu Marae in Heretaunga in 1892. Ngāti Kahungunu ancestors such as Te Whatahoro Jury, Henare Tomoana, Mohi Te Ātahikoia and many others saw then what we are seeing now, that a unified iwi Māori is a powerful proposition.

Rāhui Papa, spokesperson for Waikato Tainui says, “The Tūrangawaewae hui was a call from Kīngi Tūheitia to unite on issues that were coming thick and fast from the Coalition Government, especially the attack on our founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We saw the power of a united iwi Māori. We now need to move to the next taumata or level where we can map out what constitutional arrangements will collectively move Māori to the Mana Motuhake and Tino Rangatiratanga we aspire to.”

The Hui Taumata will be held at Omāhu Marae, one of the seven Marae devastated by Cyclone Gabrielle just over a year ago and the largest marae in Heretaunga. Barber says, “Omāhu is a tohu, or sign, of Māori Mana Motuhake, of true community resilience in the face of extreme hardship. Our marae have shown what can be achieved through unified vision and collaborative effort. Nothing is impossible.”

Omāhu Marae minitā, the Rev. Zhane Tāhau Whelan welcomes the opportunity for his marae and hapū to host the Hui Taumata, “Our tīpuna Renata Kawepō always said that Omāhu was a marae for the motu. He was a great prophetic voice and champion for Kotahitanga. We look forward to welcoming Kīngi Tūheitia

back to the marae after his visit not long after Cyclone Gabrielle hit last year. It will be fantastic for him to see the progress that has been made in the last 12 months as we come together for the unity and flourishing of te iwi Māori ”

The Ven. Ngira Simmonds, the Office of the Kīngitanga spokesperson, says, “Kīngi Tūheitia will be in attendance and is looking forward to supporting this important kaupapa. The Kīngitanga was formed from the desire of iwi to unite under the common aspiration of Māori Mana Motuhake. We certainly are keen to bring our experience and aspirations to Omāhu in May. We will also report our findings from the Hui-ā-Motu held back in January”

Barber is encouraging iwi and Māori organisations to come prepared to discuss and debate. “Kaua e haere mai me tō rae anake. Haria mai ō whakaaro hei waihanga i tō tātou whare.”

There will be a repository of discussion documents available on the following website in due course. A communications team is working on getting information loaded onto the site. [www.huitaumata.co.nz](http://www.huitaumata.co.nz).

The Hui Taumata will be held at Omāhu Marae, Heretaunga, Friday, 31 May 2024.

In association with the National Iwi Chairs Forum, the Hui Taumata will be hosted by Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Inc., Mana Ahuriri, Ngāti Pāhauwera, Ngāti Hineuru and Omāhu Marae/ Te Piringa Hapū.

**ENDS**

Media Enquiries, Bayden Barber, Chair Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Inc. 021570011