



Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi
INCORPORATED

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‘TŪTIRA MAI NGĀ IWI, TĀTAU, TĀTAU – COME TOGETHER AS ONE’

‘Tūtira mai ngā iwi, tātau, tātau e - Come together as one’... This was a great Kahungunu catch cry of the 1960’s and 1970’s, and still resonates today. It means people coming together; that we should all be one; that there is unity in strength; and that there is also diversity within unity, which has to be cherished. ‘Tūtira mai ngā iwi’, is a phrase in a long list of Kahungunu iconic sayings, such as ‘Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari taku toa he takitini’, which means ‘My strength is in the combined efforts of the people, not in each individual member working alone’.

In the first world war and the second world war, Ngāti Kahungunu came together in their own units, or wider Takitimu units, and their ferocity in battle, as part of the Māori Battalion and Pioneer Battalion, echoed throughout the warring world, to prompt one of the German generals to declare that if he had the Māori Battalion, he would conquer the world.

At the turn of the 19th century, Ngāti Kahungunu hosted the first *Kotahitanga* parliament, the first sitting of the Māori parliament. It was the first time in the history of Māori settlement in Aotearoa, that hapū, iwi all came together, united in the greater vision for Māori development and aspirations. Kotahitanga, or unity, became the kaupapa right throughout the country right up until today, emanating from that event.

Meeting houses and dining rooms throughout Kahungunu were renamed Kotahitanga, such as in Nuhaka, in Raupunga, in Heretaunga, in Tamatea and in Wairarapa. The Kotahitanga movement grew as a response to the divide and rule tactics of governments of those eras, who cut iwi from hapū, hapū from hapū, and hapū from whānau, and dictated who they would talk to, despite the traditional collective voice of Māori communities. This atomised and confetti-ised Māori strength, and Māori have been on the back foot because of this social engineering by successive governments.

Māori proved that when united, we can shake the world, such as the Māori Battalion, and we have also proved that we could shake the cultural world through the Te Māori exhibition in the 80’s when it visited five US super cities and took that cultural arena by storm.

The Māori All Blacks have beaten every rugby nation in the world, except Australia and New Zealand. They drew with South Africa. New Zealand won’t play the Māori All Blacks, for fear of losing. Australia would love to play the Māori All Blacks every pre-season, to get them battle prepared to take on New Zealand and South Africa.

In 1984, many Wairoa kaumātua, led by Moana Raureti, Cambridge Pani, Cannon Wi Te Tau Huata, Te Ōkanga Huata, John Scott, Parae Christie, Denal Meihana, Bill Blake and others, came down to Heretaunga and went on to Wairarapa, to promote and encourage the reforming of a united Kahungunu. This emerged as *Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Kahungunu*. At the same time, Lena Manuel was promoting the merging of the Waikaremoana/Wairoa Trust, with the Aorangi Trust and the Wairarapa Moana Trust, to form one of the largest farming collectives in the country. The modern drive for Kotahitanga, or unity, has come from Wairoa, which we have always deemed to be the *tuakana*, or elder of Kahungunu.

In 2001, the Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated conducted a survey by visiting 80 of our 90 marae in the region, to identify what were the key drivers over the next 25 years. The number one driver was to revive Te Reo o Kahungunu, to ensure that over 25 years, every household would be speaking in te reo.

Another priority was the alignment of central and local government boundaries to a single Kahungunu boundary, which meant removing the eight local authorities and three regional authorities, and creating one regional authority that would perform the tasks that the current 11 authorities undertake. At a local level, there would be district boards meeting with taiwhenua boards. This formed the key backbone of Ngāti Kahungunu's 25 year vision, and we are constantly hustling government agencies to work more collaboratively across all sectors to do so, and so too with local government.

In the early 2000's Wairarapa Taiwhenua now operating as Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, experienced some legal trial and tribulation. Wairoa Taiwhenua was first to come to the rescue and led the support of the iwi to give aid to Wairarapa. In more recent years with the lockout of the Affco Freezing Workers in Wairoa, Wairarapa whānau and all the other Taiwhenua didn't hesitate to unite their efforts by offering kai and koha for the local resource centre.

The current amalgamation referendum offers a rare opportunity for Ngāti Kahungunu voters to support the aspirations and dreams of our former leaders and our foremost Kahungunu thinkers and speakers. At our last Iwi board meeting, there was concern that Ngāti Kahungunu was not visible enough in the proposed structure, and the Wairoa Taiwhenua urged that we should be more prominent in the outcome. On this basis, they were against the proposal. However, this is an ongoing negotiation process which hasn't been concluded.

I, on behalf of Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated, as a carrier of the dreams and aspirations of that generation of Wairoa Kaumātua who set down the challenge in the 1980s to come together and to be unified as Kahungunu in order to drive social, cultural and economic change in this region, urge you all to consider carefully what has been said, and whether you vote for, or against, you should at least vote.

Well known Māori aspirational statements:

Tutira mai ngā iwi (come together as one)

He toa takitini taku toa (my strength is in unity)

Whāia te kotahitanga (pursue common aspirations)

Tātau tātau e...! (we are one!)

ENDS

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