

TE KAWA POOWHIRI O ARATIATIA MARAE

Basic welcome protocols of Aratiatia Marae

The following is a basic outline of the welcome protocols for Aratiatia Marae, the protocols are aligned to those of the local hapuu (tribe) Ngaati Wairere and the wider Tainui area. It provides those people visiting our Marae guidance in the welcome procedures and in some way ensures some cultural safety guidelines.

Whakapiri ki te Waharoa (Gather at the front entrance)

Manuwhiri (visitors) gather at the front entrance to prepare to be called onto the Marae. Usually the visitors will have a kaikaranga wahine (female caller) and a kaikoorero taane (male speaker). This is also a time in which to gather koha¹. Once manuwhiri are ready to be called on it is useful, to all stand together below the Waharoa to indicate to the hosts that you are ready.

Wero (the challenge)

Toa (warriors) from the tangata whenua (locals – people of the land) will approach the group, this is a challenge to assess whether the visitors come in peace or otherwise. At the end of the wero the lead toa will lay a taki (offering) before the visitors – a lead person from the visitors will usually pick up the taki whilst keeping their eyes focused on the lead toa. In picking up the taki, the indication is of a peaceful visit – if the taki is left to lie on the ground or kicked at – the warriors purpose becomes one of warfare!!

Karanga (Call of welcome)/Whakaeke ki te marae (Entrance)

Once the taki is picked up, the tangata whenua kaikaranga will begin a call of welcome with the visitor kaikaranga providing a reply – as the karanga is performed, the visitors move forward onto the marae, preferably as a single unit with the women leading and the men following. The karanga performed not only pay homage to yourselves as visitors but also introduce the visitors and their ancestors to the marae – tears can often follow as memories of ancestral links are remembered and honoured. Shortly before the Wharenui (ancestral house) the kaikaranga will pause and bow their head – this is in respect of the carvings displayed on the ancestral house whom will usually represent ancestors of the area. A short pause is taken. The tangata whenua will perform another karanga acknowledging the visitors again and inviting them to make their way to their seats. The men will now sit in the front seats and the women will sit behind. The tangata whenua kaikaranga or someone from the paepae (threshold) will guide the visitors to where they will be seated.

Whaikoorero (Oratory speeches)

The kawa (protocol) of Ngaati Wairere and Tainui therefore Aratiatia Marae is called Tau utuutu whereby the tangata whenua kaikoorero (local male speakers) will open the speeches and then speeches will alternate between tangata whenua and manuwhiri. Each speech is accompanied by the relevant group singing a waiata to embellish their speakers korero. The last manuwhiri speaker will lay the collected koha before the tangata whenua. Prior to the tangata whenua picking the koha

¹ Koha – this is a gift, usually monetary in these contemporary times, of anticipated appreciation or to help pay for the kaupapa (visits purpose) or to assist the tangata whenua (local people) in their hosting of you. One can appreciate that there is a lot of organization that goes into welcoming people onto the marae or in staging events on the marae. All members of the visiting party contribute (if able) to the koha.

up, the kaikaranga will perform a karanga of appreciation following which the tangata whenua kaikoorero will pick up the koha and thank the visitors then invite the visitors to hariru.

Hongi/Hariru/Kihi (physical greeting)

When Taanemaahuta made the first woman, Hineahuone, he instilled life into her by sharing his breath with her through her nose and greeting her into existence. This is how we traditionally greet our visitors and each other by sharing a breath. Some further touch foreheads and combine the sharing of breath with a sharing of thoughts and memories as well.

Whakanoa (cleansing/removal of tapu)

Following the hariru, the kaikaranga will perform her last karanga inviting the visitors to share a meal that has been prepared by the tangata whenua. The visitors will be guided to the wharekai (dining hall) whereupon the food will be blessed and the visitors invited to partake of the kai (food) first. The tangata whenua will join once the visitors have been fed.

Throughout the poowhiri process, all have been under a state of tapu (uncertainty), and to remove that state of tapu, kai is provided to whakanoa (cleanse). Kai and water are the ultimate cleansers of tapu.

As outlined at the start, the above is a basic guideline. Protocols and processes may change due to numbers, availability of tangata whenua and other influences. In some instances a smaller, more condensed version of a poowhiri may be delivered which is called a mihi whakatau – this by no means diminishes the importance of the visitors, and the protocol observation, spiritual connections, and cultural recognitions are the same.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Eddie Neha, Marae Kaitiaki to discuss at either 021 232 4770 or nehae@faircol.school.nz