

Title: Tāmaki Herenga Waka, Tāmaki Herenga Tangata - Anchoring and connecting our people and stories

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Abstract:

Tāmaki Makaurau is a diverse multicultural city with the highest population of Maori people in New Zealand. As a part of the vision for Future Museum, Tāmaki Paenga Hira - Auckland Museum has embarked upon a major project to renew its permanent gallery offer. Six projects will be rolled out over 5 years.

The Museum is guided by our Taumata-a-lwi which has representatives from 3 Tāmaki Iwi - Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Pāoa, and Waikato-Tainui. The Taumata-a-lwi works under 5 governance principles - Active protection, redress for past mis-understanding, Māori expectations, partnership, and the right to advise. Further guiding not only how staff work with Iwi, but also providing a framework around Tikanga and Te Ao Maori is He Korahi Maori - The Māori Dimension for Auckland Museum. With such a large project being undertaken it is crucial that the Taumata-a-lwi are able to support and that Iwi Māori are empowered to participate in the development of these new galleries - while further continuing to embody the key principles of He Korahi Maori (Mana Whanua, Manaakitanga, and Kaitiakitanga).

One of the projects in development is a gallery which tells the contemporary story of Tāmaki Makaurau based on the Maori concept of a pepeha. Museum exhibitions often take a chronological approach which preferences colonial narratives and can reduce indigenous knowledge to mythology. In using a Maori framework the gallery acknowledges that while Auckland is a multicultural city it has long established tribes with an unbroken connection to the land. From the 1950s large numbers of Maori people arrived in Auckland with the motivations of work and a new life. A challenge of the exhibition has been how to represent the everyday experience of urban indigenous people through objects. Historically museums collected with a colonial eye concentrating on customary or ritualistic artefacts. Contemporary museum practise has included collecting artworks produced by eminent indigenous artists. Arguably both of these forms of collecting represent a privileged indigenous identity and ignore the everyday indigenous experience.

This paper seeks to outline the challenges and innovative approaches involved in addressing two things 1) Iwi engagement across the Future Museum projects to ensure Iwi voice is heard, and Iwi are able to participate; and 2) Curating a museum exhibition about New Zealand's largest indigenous city. This paper will demonstrate the importance and necessity of active and authentic participation by Iwi in the Museum space, and how this is beneficial to both Iwi and the Museum. Furthermore it will show how a gallery about a major international indigenous city could include a variety of objects not traditionally associated with indigenous culture. It argues the need for museums to collect diverse material that represent a variety of indigenous identities and discusses the challenges of acknowledging multiple indigenous perspectives.