

## **Honouring our Grandparents: Connecting Whānau (family) through Waka (canoes)**

My mother has always told stories about our grandparents to my younger sister and I. In 2011 we held a whānau hui (a gathering of families) at our ancestral meeting house Te Houhanga, in the Far North of the North Island of New Zealand. We had four generations of direct descendants present from my grandparents Waata Te Ahu Parore and Mere Edmonds. Some of the aspirations that were shared were for our whānau (family) to come together more often, to learn about our histories, and to build a waka (canoe). As time has passed, my generation are now second in line and our responsibility quite simply is to uphold the mana (importance) of our grandparents. So, in mid 2018, to fulfil our whānau aspirations we held another whānau hui. I live almost at the other end of the country from where my bones lie in the Far North, and part of this story, is that the community I work closely with in the South Island, or my kaupapa whānau (people connected through purpose), answered a call from my family; and that call was to take their double hulled sailing canoe from the South Island to the Far North. Thus, in mid 2018, we drove a small waka called Hauteruruku on a trailer from Karitāne in East Otago to Dargaville in Northland. It was a trip of approximately 1600km. My kaupapa whānau built Hauteruruku and he has been part of the reimagination of waka in the south. Hauteruruku stayed with my whānau for a few months over Winter and watered the seeds of waka, waka building and connectedness in my whānau as we continually strive to honour our grandparents. In this kōrero (presentation) I hope to share my experiences as a researcher, archival wanderer, waka builder, kaumoana (waka sailor) and mokopuna (grandchild).