

Our Tattooed Angels

Me Te Whakatohea Hikoi Opotiki Ki Poneke

Day one.

5am Thursday 17th August 2017

We are gathered at the Whakatohea Maori Trust Board for Mihi, Roll Call and Karakia.

6am The Engine Room Mechanics have completed all the Programme checks for the Day.

Baggage stowed, Paper Bag hunched and water in hand, we board the Buses including Eight who are Eighty years and rising. They drifted up those Bus stairs in style.

Everyone is on a singular Mission, for the morrow we had an assignation with the crown.

Aboard with us our Tattooed Angels.

The day it flies, interspersed with Waipata, Humeau, Comfort stops and whanau to pick up along the way.

Crossing the Waikouru Desert, we are regaled with the legends of the Battles between the Giants,

"Nga Maunga, Mountains."

Battles between them over a Maiden Maunga

The legend echoes around our ears.

They stand today, where the Battle stopped
Sentinels of the Desert

The wind brushes the Desert grasses.

They shimmer and wave in their vibrant colours
atop the Terrain.

A fitting Korowai for Papatuanuku

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Day One

Stormy weather came and went
Came when we were on the Buses
Went when we stopped for Breaks
Our Tattooed Angels with us.

On approaching Poneke, the waves,
they swelled and rose,
clashing against the jagged rocks,
spumes of spray flying high and wild
Such a welcome.

We are in the central city of Wellington,

Approaching Pipitea

It is late afternoon

Our Whare awaits

Copious enough enough to hold and care for
200 plus including our children.

We are joined by Whanau who have arrived
from various points throughout Aotearoa
by Planes, Vans and cars.

We stand outside in the courtyard of Pipitea
for the Kai Karanga to call us

The call to enter

The weather is fine

Our Tattooed Angels wait with us.

Pawhiri over

Protocols observed

Warm greetings all around.

It is time for bed making
With showers to refresh us in readiness for
Dinner

The beds they stretched from North to South
From East to West, including the Stage Space,
with barely a pathway left to negotiate to the
ablution facilities

The evenings Hakari over, lovely it was.
Time for settling down to rest

It's been a massive day
for old and young alike.

That is, excepting for the Planning Group.
Checking, checking and checking again.

For the next days proceedings must run smoothly
~~The smooth running of tomorrow's proceedings~~

The Big Day

The day of our assignation with the Crown.

Whanaungertanga rolls around the room
Some quiet waiata

A softly thrumming guitar

Snatches of the days events,

Mixed with laughter, chuckles, snorts

And a little cry from our Baby.

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Day one + two.

The Night

Quiet now

Except, for Dudu on watch duty
calling out instructions to this one or that one

Does Dudu Sleep?

Na!! he sleeps while awake

Now, it is past midnight.

Hello!! Rustling in my ears

It is the Nannies In the Night

The rustlings,

A search for Toilet Sundries and Towels.

Not one Nanny, Not two Nannies, there are three plus
rustling and calling to each other across the night

Oops, Now there's a night race on

One Nanny in order to evade Dudu

negotiates around the room

lucky not to trip up.

Dudu in closing pursuit

also lucky not to trip up

Issues the order

Nanny Bella, get to bed, it's past midnight

Nanny Bella swerves, luckily holding her feet

By now Dudu is right on her tail.

Nanny Bella concedes and decides to beel down

You are not down "Dudu"

Yes I am

No you are sitting up "Dudu"

On and on the dialogue goes

I am silently cracking up.

Ahh!! it is quiet
Just a symphony of sounds
rippling around

Nothing too distracting or disturbing
you know, the usual.

Whoa, night's entertainment is over

It is quiet

Sleep might steal upon me now

No!!

Knock, knock, knock upon the wall.

Dudu signals for the pre-dawn Karakia to begin

Welcome the Dawn

Welcome the Day

Api joins in unison

A duo chanting the chant

Peaceful, Good.

Day 2

And so to Breakfast

Humour an additional dish

Te Reo Lessons too

Then the Days Timetable is announced

to balance the Day

Following Breakfast and before departure

There are Kaumatua Photographs

Pe Settlement Trust Photographs

Utteru Komiti whiriwhiri Photographs

Itapu Katoa Photographs

GREAT!

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Day 2

10:45 am

We depart Apitea

Those of us via the two buses

The rest of the Whanau on foot

We are scheduled to arrive at the Beehive Steps
at 11:00 am.

On arrival our other Whanau hold their placards
Protesting as is their right of choice.

A TV Channel records them

They are but few

But we are many 220 plus.

Arohamai Te Whanau

Te Puni Kokiri and Security Personnel
are on hand to guide us through

The Halls of Parliament

A team from the Orotiki District Council

accompany us.

Our Tattooed Angels too.

Security is tight

Shades of International Oneeks

I declare my Pounamu Patu for Symbolic purposes only
Patu Handbags jewellery watches etc

All pass on trays through the xray Machine.

We are now upstairs, having arrived there by lift
Others by the stairs

It is a room that curves around the Stairwell.

Now we are many more,

Babies in arms and children of all ages

Kaumotua rest on comfy armchairs

Cameras are upon us
Flashing, manoeuvring, recording, Archiving
Handbags Coats and Jackets
are checked in by Ushers,
to be uplifted on exit

The atmosphere is electric

The People move to their positions

We have several Kai Karanga to represent us

We wait

The Doors open

Kai Karanga call to us to enter

Our Kai Karanga respond

The atmosphere lifts, higher, higher,

and as is their custom in that part of the Maori World
as at Pihotea

The men preceded the women

Our Contingent of 220 plus fill the Banquet Room
Echoes and Flashes of past Banquets in
celebration of successful Rauropatu of our People
by the Crown play upon my mind

I am not thinking clearly
sequences of the formal processes
become out of time to me

The strong presence of the Ancestors
are ~~strong~~ inside the room

Their presence has a purpose also

In tune with ours of times long ago

I cry in my mind.

I dislike the term Banquet Room.

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Day 2

However we were the largest Body to Date
to enter these Portals

Maniapoto having just preceeded us, as had other
Tribes this same week

We will Make The Best Fist of the Terms

we have agreed to

for the future of our Tribe. Te Whakatohea

We will hone/sharpen and polish the finer detail
to embellish and produce

wider and deeper meaningful benefits for the children.
The future of our Tribe.

Mihi are exchanged

Bruce Pakepake answers on our behalf

The People again responded with a resounding Waiata

Karakia

Te Rikiri assisted ably by Kaumatua

began the chant o te Karakia.

It was magnificent

The voices of the many rolled around the room.

The likes of which had never been witnessed

since of Morita Delamere's time. The Crown in awe.

The chant full and rich and mesmerising.

Quietness descends

Chris Finlayson Minister for Rauropatu steps forward
on behalf of the Crown. to speak.

He cites with dignity and sincerity

a Confession of Crimes, committed against us,

The Tribe of Whakatohea ~~in~~ ^{of} the dark and painful times

The People Wept

The Crown Confessed

Our tattooed Angels Sustain us.

We are not alone

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Day 12

Graeme Riesterer now stands for us as
Chairperson of the Pre Settlement Claims Trust
looking stately.

Upon his shoulders a Korowai Muka
woven by Rukia Hudson

our ex Vietnam Veteran

A well thought through and considered Koroero
that echoed the Right of our People

The People wept

The Crown stood in respectful silence

Our Tattooed Angels a tangible presence

A Korowai of strength and comfort

There was not a doubt in the minds of our People

that signing The Aims in Principle

with good faith and will

would carry us through

into the future with Confidence.

Minister Kinlaysons Team had prepared per request

Three Books for the Signatures, to allow all

present to enter their names and the names of their Itepa

and sign they did, children included!

Our Kai Waiata never broke off their singing
even as few by few they would ^{take} their place
in the que for signing.

I don't know how long the Process took.

Time had become of no consequence

So the People they had signed

and the People they had wept

and the People they had prayed

and the People they had sang

As our Tattooed Angels stood to witness and Support

The Kaupapa

Page 10
The afternoon
of Day Two

Formal proceedings over
apart, from the ongoing signing line.

We relax, chatter and intermingle
amongst ourselves and our Parliamentary Host
Fine food is laid out from Bellamys Catering

Time To Exit

Uplift Bags, Jackets and coats

Make our way downstairs

We are out in the fresh air and sunshine again

Who said Wellington weather is terrible

The buses waiting for those of us wishing to return to

Pipitea

The buses inadvertently are standing between us
and our estranged whānau

Maintaining their stance of non committal.

Arohāmai our whānau.

Across the street the Building of the National Library.

A special viewing prepared for those wishing to partake

The inner City works as well for others to explore

As for the buses and bugged older we retreat to

Pipitea

A Kaumatua Room prepared for us

We are showered, down and out for the Count to

re-energise for later

The Evening The tables for the Evenings Celebratory Hākari are set

They fill the space of what was and will become again

The Sleeping Chamber.

North to South, East to West, they fill the Hall.

Bedding stored behind the curtains of the stage.

Whakatohea will now be the hosts

Page 11
Evening
Day 10/11

Minister Chris Finlayson and his Team are in attendance.
Also our Deputy Mayor Wynne Reesler and her Team.
The Evenings Facilitator Bruce Puke Puke assisted by Dunny Paru
Karakia o nga Kai
Customary speeches
Selected Speakers are invited to stand.
There is no Open Forum
Later that same evening
The Youngers explored
They tipped at the Backbenches Bar
They checked out the trends
Socialising, whatka hauranga atanga
Returning to Pipitea
Before the proverbial coach turned into a pumpkin
Bless their hearts
Most of us were happy to stay home
Yak! yak! yak!
Much wiser the second time around
Marcia and I commandeered two fat sofas, leather too
Others in the Kaumatua Room with us
had double decker B mattresses
Outside our Bedroom door, a Sentry
in the guise of Louis
A Blissful Night
Slept like Bay Moses in his reed cradle.

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Day Three

The Returning Home Preparations.

Early up, Showers.

Pack away mattresses and bedding

The kids a great help,

Pitching in regardless of age.

Breakfast for the second and last time

Urined and sustaining.

Luggage stowed

Knives and water Bottles ready to hand

a Poroporoake

A Rohe placed into a hat upon the floor.

A Korero by our host, around a marriage

linking Whakatohea to Te Atiawa and Ngati Toi.

On the forecourt of Pipitea

Campbell Squared a Filming Company

Contracted by the Whakatohea Pie Settlement Trust

were ready to capture our faces and Korero

on our way to the Buses

Practically everyone used the opportunity

to give their thoughts and feelings

on the previous days events

A great treasure to be archived for the Mokoopuna

Pipitea, Farewell, Farewell

We thank you and Bless you for your

Hospitality and kindness

We are aboard our Buses

Waving Waving Waving

Farewell and

Farewell Whanau

Farewell Poneke.

North of Ponake

The Seas are calm and beautiful

A sense of joy and achievement comes over us.

All the way home

The world would appear in different forms

like a nod, of,

Hey! you did okay,

Between ^{we} stops ~~and~~ a break for a Tatou Picnic lunch
Stones are shared. ^{Bare} ^{gabap} on the Buses

The children too, encapsulate their thoughts

on the previous days

As the Mike wandered up and down the aisle
going from one to another

Thoughts revealed in easy comfort
as they share their Spiritual Experiences

At long last we have reached the Whakatōhea Rohe

Danny points out a couple of reserves

including and adjacent to Matekarepa
that will be returned to us.

We Karakia on the Buses as time is growing late

Our Drivers will need to return to Kawanga

The Karakia covering their last leg of the journey also,

as they would not have us to keep them awake and amused!

Yes, we are home

We disembark

Scramble in the dark for our luggage

Bid the Drivers farewell and wish them well.

Climb into our waiting vehicles

We are off to our homes.

Thank you Our Tattooed Angels for a faultless Hiko

Day 13
Day Three

the past three days

The past three days had been all about
Whanaungatanga
Ihaputanga
Iwitanga.

My tribute to the Journey

My thoughts with those
who wanted to go but couldn't

My thoughts with those who refused to want to
Amene Amene Amene.

Mural Ngehwi Smith Kelly -