



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **TALLEST MAORI/PACIFIC CARVING IN THE WORLD**

***With a great deal of determination and hard work from everyone involved, Pou Kapūa the tallest Maori/Pacific carving in the world, is now a reality.***

Pou Kapūa is currently being carved from magnificent ancient Kauri from the forests of the Iwi of Te Rarawa. It will stand more than seventy feet high at the new TelstraClear Pacific Events Centre opening in April in Manukau City. The “***Pou Kapūa Taonga***” is a significant Māori/Pacific cultural arts project, depicting the journeys and adventures of Māori and Polynesian Tupuna, and their nautical legends and histories of migration to Aotearoa. When completed, Pou Kapua is to be gifted to the nation.

***“He Taonga mo Aotearoa”  
“A gift to the nation, a gift to the world”***

Carving operations started in Kirikiriroa in 2002 moving to Queens Wharf, Downtown Auckland (opposite QEII Square) on February 28<sup>th</sup> 2003. This move to Auckland’s waterfront during the America’s Cup when hundreds of thousands of local and overseas visitors populated Auckland’s waterfront area, ensured high exposure for Pou Kapua and provided a powerful way to exhibit the unique Taonga of Māori/Pacific art and design, giving a positive tourism boost to Maori/Pacific culture internationally.

The completed *Taonga* is destined to stand in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland at the TelstraClear Pacific Events Centre in Manukau City. It narrates the stories of migration of the Moari/Pacific people throughout the Pacific and as Manukau City has the highest population of Maori and Pacific peoples in Aotearoa, this was felt to be an appropriate place for the *Taonga* to stand. Furthermore, as a gift to the people of Aotearoa, it must be accessible to all peoples at all times, which is possible at this site.

Working on Pou Kapua are Tohunga Whakairo, four master carvers and several team carvers. Other Pacific and Indigenous carvers have travelled here to take part in the creation of Pou Kapua. Inuit carver Frank Wolfhead from Glacier Bay, Alaska, and Professor Anthony Dieter from the Cree Nation of Saskatchewan, Canada have, on behalf of their peoples, contributed to this kaupapa by carving their ancestors on Pou

Kapua. Our Rarotongan carver Tavita Tau Maruariki has also spent hundreds of hours carving their stories and figures on the Pou.

Currently at the Penrose warehouse where Pou Kapua is being completed, are two master stone carvers, Luis Hey and Tomas Tukitepano from Rapanui (Easter Island) who are carving two moai (Rapanui figures) of hinuera stone, each about 2.4 metres and 4 tonnes, to stand as kaitiaki (sentries) of Pou Kapua. Our carver and master waka navigator from Hawaii, Kavika Eskaran, has depicted stories of the creation of the first man and the origins of ohana (whanau), and is also carving traditional designs into Kupe. Our Kanak carver from Noumea, Luc Tutugoro is carving Melanesian designs onto the 50,000 year old swamp kauri base.

The project has also provided work for local contractors, including electrical, catering, plumbing, drilling, transport contractors, and local employment in a number of other areas (security, engineering, catering, painting, etc).

Tania Haerekitera Wolfgramm, Development Strategist of Pou Kapua says “we are deeply appreciative of all the support and contributions made to the creation of Pou Kapua. For the project to come this far, we have had the help and support of people from all over the country. Many have donated their mahi/work, goods, and services (e.g. food, accommodation, carpentry and engineering design and security)”.

“We feel that we have a responsibility as Māori, as the people of Aotearoa/New Zealand, as Iwi, as individuals to promote and enrich our Nation, to nurture our *Wairua*, protect our *Mauri*, and uphold our *Mana*.” continues Wikuku Kingi Jnr, Project Manager, Designer and Chief Carver. This *Taonga* will narrate our values in a powerful and positive way. This magnificent icon, an artistic representation and symbol of who we are and how unique we are, will be a national showcase to a global audience”.

## **ENDS**

TelstraClear Pacific Events Centre is due to open in May 2005.

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