

## Press Release

### **Ngāti Manu Continues on a Journey of Rediscovery Through Major Marsden Fund Research.**

Ngāti Manu are on a profound journey of rediscovery—reconnecting with our past, revitalising ancestral practices, and forging a future of hope and prosperity for our people. Central to this journey is Otuihu Pā, a site of immense historical and cultural significance. Otuihu Pā and other ancestral sites are the foci/focuses of this ground breaking research initiative.

We are therefore incredibly excited that Ngāti Manu, in partnership with Auckland University Professor Thegn Ladefoged and Associate Professor Krushil Watene (Ngāti Manu, Te Hikutu, Ngāti Whātua o Orākei, Tonga), have been awarded a Marsden Fund Standard grant. This research seeks to understand how Ngāti Manu sustained collective wellbeing and continuity amid severe disruption—exploring pathways of adaptation and resilience.

Otuihu Pā stands as a beacon of hope for Ngāti Manu. In 1845, our people were forcibly displaced from Otuihu and compelled to flee to Matairiri Pā, then onward to Puketohunoa Pā at Karetu. Under orders from Colonel Hulme of HMS *North Star*, Pomare II and his daughter Iritana were unjustly arrested, chained to the mast of the *North Star* and transported to Mt Eden prison in Auckland. This event marked the loss of our last occupied ancestral lands, leaving Ngāti Manu landless. We have never forgotten.

Over the past 180 years, Otuihu Pā remained in Crown and private ownership. In the early 1990s, Arapeta Hamilton placed a caveat on the site to prevent development and ensure Ngāti Manu's access. In 2020, John MacIntosh purchased adjoining land blocks at Waikino Peninsula, which included Otuihu Pā. He then initiated a relationship with Ngāti Manu through the Karetu Māori Committee leading to the sale of Otuihu Pā back to the Ministry of Māori-Crown Relations in 2022 to be land banked for redress to Ngāti Manu.

Following on from this Ngāti Manu began the License to Occupy application process with Land Information NZ, receiving approval in August 2025. And secondly, sought a university partner to help us find out more about Otuihu Pā. Discussions with Auckland University's Associate Professor Watene and Professor Ladefoged culminated in a sensing project at the pā in collaboration with Ngāti Manu.

A literature review undertaken as part of the sensing projected revealed a number of artefacts obtained by the 1840 Charles Wilkes Expedition to Otuihu and the Bay of Islands are held at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington DC. This includes a heitiki belonging to our tūpuna Te Rangingangana, wife of Pomare II. A delegation of Ngāti Manu have been fortunate to visit the taonga in June this year.

This latest project was born from follow up kōrero held in the maara at Whaakaurau at Karetu where we explored how we might deepen our understanding of Otuihu Pā. Guided by Arapeta Hamilton we decided on this project and to apply to the Marsden Fund.

Ngāti Manu's connection to Otuihu Pā remains steadfast. This Marsden Fund research project will deepen our understanding of ourselves and our history, adding new layers to our collective knowledge. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Royal Society for supporting this kaupapa and look forward to the journey ahead.

More information about the project and how whānau can be involved will be made available on the Ngāti Manu website. At this stage, involvement can include supporting archaeological work at Otuihu Pā—an opportunity to be part of this rediscovery in a hands-on way.

**Mā Ngāti Manu, Nā Ngāti Manu, E ai ki a Ngāti Manu**