

# Kāinga tahi, kāinga rua: A kaupapa Māori Response of Te Puea Memorial Marae

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In the winter of 2016, Te Puea Memorial Marae (TPMM) initiated a kaupapa Māori marae-led response, opening their doors to vulnerable whānau seeking emergency housing. Following in the legacy of Te Puea Herangi,<sup>1</sup> the marae answered the call of homeless whānau in Auckland and in doing so disrupted the dominant Auckland housing narrative where the government had until that time refused to acknowledge homelessness as a serious issue. In the full view of the media, TPMM not only made the reality of homelessness visible by caring for 181 people (of all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds), but named the housing situation in Auckland as a 'crisis'.<sup>2</sup>

TPMM also reminded us that historically marae have always provided shelter for those in need, and further demonstrated that marae can still be an integral part of urban emergency and transitional housing solutions today. In this article we argue that the mahi (actions) of TPMM exists within a cultural framework that conceives of urban marae as a 'kāinga rua' (second home), a place that is also grounded in te reo (Māori language) and tikanga Māori (Māori cultural practices).

There are more than 70 marae in the Auckland Region (Independent Māori Statutory Board)<sup>3</sup> and, as an established feature of the Tāmaki Makaurau cultural landscape, marae have always been the epicentres of our whānau, hapū, iwi and urban Māori communities. Marae provide a critical connection to our culture, whenua (ancestral land) and the wider natural environment, and continue to be foundational to our turangawaewae (cultural security) and sense of identity.

The post-World War II urban Māori shift, motivated by economic imperatives precipitated a Māori diaspora from rural homelands that eventually resulted in the establishment of urban marae from the 1960s by taura here (iwi from other parts of Aotearoa)<sup>4</sup> and mataawaka (pan tribal faith or suburban area based marae) as kāinga rua. Derived from the whakatauki (proverb) 'Ka mate kāinga tahi, ka ora kāinga rua', this infers that when one dwelling is no longer viable, the second provides critical security.<sup>5</sup>

As a part of the deliberate process of colonisation (in particular policies of assimilation), Māori were 'pepper potted' in cities.<sup>6</sup> These new culturally isolated living circumstances often saw whānau in socio-economic positions that rendered them unable to control the financing, design and building of their own culturally suitable housing solutions. Consequently, Māori in the cities were prevented from supporting each other as they previously had in their close-knit papakāinga, and urban marae evolved to become their 'kāinga rua' as the heart of new urban Māori communities. Considered to be critical as cultural bastions,<sup>7</sup> urban marae enabled whānau, hapū and iwi to sustain cultural protocols, practices and beliefs in urban centres, characterised by nuclear family homes.

As Māori researchers, a kaupapa Māori analysis of TPMM response to homelessness in 2016 (and again from August 2017), is paramount. In the recent wake of natural disasters the ability of marae to provide a safe haven during a crisis has become more prominent in the public eye. In 2011, Ngā Hau e Whā Marae in Christchurch hosted a range of organisations following the

Canterbury earthquakes. Similarly, in November 2016, Takahanga Marae responded following the 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Kaikoura, extending their generosity and hospitality to hundreds of people stranded without food or accommodation. However, to Māori the role of marae in assisting those in need of shelter and support is not new, but as the whakatauki suggests, 'kāinga rua' is a part of a cultural expectation and obligation. In this regard, TPMM has enacted an ancient tradition in the contemporary urban context in response to the homelessness crisis.

While urban marae have always been able to provide manaakitanga in times of crisis they have also progressively expanded their day to day roles from the 1980s to include health centres, kaupapa Māori education (especially Kōhanga Reo) and te reo Māori revitalisation initiatives. However these marae have only now been called upon to respond to the systemic Māori and wider community homelessness which has resulted from the deepening housing crisis.<sup>8</sup>

In this regard TPMM have drawn attention to the potential role of marae to make a fundamental contribution to the Māori housing continuum through providing a marae-based operation which stabilises homeless whānau through supporting their health, educational, employment and financial wellbeing prior to placing them in long-term healthy and affordable accommodation. Once accommodated in the community TPMM remain closely involved with the whānau as they consolidate their life circumstances, offering ongoing specialised support and advocacy to ensure their new tenancies a fully sustainable.

The marae-led response of TPMM is a culturally responsive initiative that is grounded in kaupapa Māori. A kaupapa Māori approach coheres around principles that include: Tino Rangatiratanga – the principle of self-determination; Taonga Tuku Iho – the principle of cultural aspiration; Ako Māori – The principle of culturally preferred pedagogy; Kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kāinga – the principle of socio-economic mediation; Whānau – the Principle of extended family structure; and Kaupapa – The principle of collective philosophy.<sup>9</sup>

While all of these principles are enacted in marae in everyday practices to varying degrees (depending on the activities of the marae), the TPMM response perhaps best exemplifies the 'kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kāinga' in an effort to offer practical support for homeless whānau. Driven by kaupapa Māori imperatives, marae enact values such as manaakitanga (hospitality), aroha (compassion), whanaungatanga (familial relationships) which frames a particular way of seeing the world and organising ways to respond to the issue of 'homelessness'.

Part of a kaupapa Māori agenda is the need to be decolonising. Understanding that homelessness is not a new phenomenon but closely connected to landlessness as a result of colonialism, is a critical starting point. The dislocation from whenua, rather than property, not only has physical and economic implications, but for Indigenous peoples has also had intergenerational cultural, social and spiritual ramifications.<sup>10</sup>

As part of the tribal confederation of Waikato-Tainui, strong in the memory of TPMM is the history of abundance and technological advancement which characterised the 1840s and 1850s to the land wars and land legislation including unjust land confiscations totaling more than 480,000 hectares in the 1860s.<sup>11</sup> By 1900, a report tabled in the New Zealand House of Representatives listed more than 3,000 landless Māori from Waikato.<sup>12</sup>

This year, at the dawn opening of a new multi-purpose facility at TPMM

named 'Piki te Ora', one of the Waikato kaumātua reminded the people that homelessness is not new, but something that we intimately identify and empathise with as the 'original homeless' in our own country.

Aligned to a kaupapa Māori approach, the success of TPMM demonstrated that marae are not just a place of refuge during times of crisis. The ability of the people of the marae to initiate and effectively implement an immediate voluntary response that housed large numbers of whānau over the 2016 winter and spring, is not to be underestimated.

More than just providing physical shelter, the culturally demarcated space of the marae ensured an all-encompassing familial network that provided constant wrap around care and support. The cultural and social investment that goes beyond a roof overhead, rests on the cultural pillars, such as manaakitanga, on which marae are founded. In this regard, the ability of TPMM to efficiently support whānau into long-term housing in a way that disrupted conventional practices of community housing, local and government agencies is highly significant.<sup>13</sup>

Given the centrality of marae as Māori cultural bastions and safe havens in urban settings that are hospitable, productive and protective, the TPMM experience reveals that marae have significant potential as providers of 'kāinga rua' – a source of resilience in the face of the housing crisis and demographic trends in Auckland.

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## Endnotes

1. Prominent Waikato-Tanui leader and Māori social advocate of the early 20th century, niece of the Māori King Mahuta.
2. Collins S 2016, June 1, Marae calls for army to help with homeless crisis, *New Zealand Herald*. Retrieved from: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=11648844](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11648844)
3. This number also includes institutional marae, ie school and university marae.
4. First urban marae was Te Ūnga Waka in Epsom, Auckland, established in 1966, (see Anderson A, Binney J and Harris A 2014, *Tangata whenua: An illustrated history*, Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, p.366)
5. Mead S M and Grove N 2001, *Ngā pēpeha a ngā tīpuna = The sayings of the ancestors*, Victoria University Press, Wellington.
6. Walker R 2004, *Ka whawhai tonu mātou: Struggle without end*, Penguin, Auckland,
7. *ibid.*
8. Faneva T 2016, Responding to homelessness among rural whānau in Northland, *Parity*, vol.29, no.8, pp.17-19.
9. Smith G H 2002, *The development of kaupapa Māori: theory and praxis*, The University of Auckland: International Research Institute for Māori and Indigenous Education.
10. Walker R 2004, *op cit.*
11. Anderson A, Binney J and Harris A 2014, *op cit.*
12. O'Malley V 2016, *The great war for New Zealand: Waikato 1800–2000*, Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, p.509.
13. Henare P 2016, Opinion 5: Peeni Henare; Member of Parliament Tāmaki Makaurau, *Parity*, vol.29, no.8, pp.62-63.

