Aukaha
KIA KAHA, AU KAHA

Te Awa Ōtākou Cultural Narrative

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TEREKOU
HE PO HE PO
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KA AWATEA

E TUKU ANA KĀ MIHI O TE RAKI NEI KI TE KAUPAPA NUNUI AKE NEI KO KĀ KŌRERO E PA ANA KI TE AWA ŌTĀKOU, HE TAI TIMU, HE TAI PARI,

O KĀ ARA TAPUWAE O RĀTAU E HEKE ANA MAI, HE PATAKA KAI MO KĀ REAKA O KĀ RĀ O MUA, Ā, MŌ RĀTAU E AKĀ WHAKAMUA ANA.

KO TE AWA ŌTĀKOU HE ARA NUI, HE ARA PAI MŌ TE TINI ME TE MANO E HAERE ANA KI ĒTAHI KOKOKA O TE WAHAPŪ, KI KĀ WĀHI NOHOAKA O ĒTAHI KĀIKA HURI NOA TE HAPUA,

MAI PUKEKURA KI TE WAHAPŪ TAE NOA KI ŌTEPOTI KI UTA.
KIA HORA TE MARINO, KIA WHAKAPAPA POUNAMU TE MOANA KIA TERE TE KĀROHIROHI I MUA I TŌ HUARAHI.

THIS IS THE RURU (MOREPORK) WHO CALLS
WHOSE HEAD DOES NOT BOW
FROM SIDE TO SIDE, UP AND DOWN
THE HEAD OF THE RURU IS STEADFAST ON ITS SHOULDERS
AS IT CALLS US FROM THE DARKNESS
AND INTO THE WORLD OF LIGHT
TO A DAWN OF NEW UNDERSTANDING

MANY ARE THE GREETINGS ON THIS SPECIAL OCCASSION, HERALDING DISCUSSION ON THE SEA RIVER ŌTĀKOU, THE TIDE THAT EBBS AND FLOWS, PLYED BY THE MANY PAST AND PRESENT, SUSTAINER OF GENERATIONS, PAST, PRESENT AND FOR THE FUTURE.

ŌTĀKOU THE SEA RIVER OF MANY JOURNEYS, OF MANY FEATURES, BENEFACTOR TO THE MULTITUDES, OF THE MANY COMMUNITIES, FROM PUKEKURA AT THE MOUTH TO OTEPOTI AT THE HEAD OF THE HARBOUR.

MAY PEACE BE WIDESPREAD
MAY THE SEA GLISTEN LIKE GREENSTONE
AND MAY THE SHIMMER OF LIGHT GUIDE YOU ON YOUR WAY

EDWARD ELLISON – ŪPOKO, TE RŪNAKA O ŌTĀKOU

Opening Words

This cultural narrative provides information regarding the significant lifeforce that is Te Awa Ōtākou, the Otago Harbour, with the aim of producing an insight to its cultural and historical value of those before, and those who remain. Various collaborations of celestial and historical information are utilised throughout this narrative to demonstrate the many ways in which Te Awa Ōtākou has been at the centre of identity for Kāi Tahu throughout time, and how it remains an essential physical form of identity for the identity of Ōtepoti, Dunedin.

The use of Kāi Tahu tribal dialect is prominent throughout this narrative. The preferred use of 'k' replaces the common use of 'ng'. For example, Ranginui is familiarly referred to as 'Rakinui'. Also included throughout the report are various terms particular to Kāi Tahu iwi.

The use of macrons are adhered to throughout this narrative. As a crucial part of the Māori language, these tohutō indicate when a vowel is long or short, with the ability to change the complete meaning of a term.

This cultural narrative has been produced by Aukaha (1997) Ltd with the aim of emphasising the mana that is instilled within our bodies of water and how these water forms hold within them a long history of change, challenge and culture. We hope that this will function as a resource for learning for all. Please contact Aukaha if you have any questions.

Background Context

This document was commissioned as part of a report for the Otago Regional Council and Dunedin City Council on the 'health of the harbour'.

The report that eventuated was written collaboratively by Rachel Wesley and Ella MacDonald on behalf of mana whenua, the team at Morphum Environmental including Dave Cox, Stu Farrant and Chloe Price and designed by Kate Blackburne from Studio Pacific Architecture.

Te Awa Ōtākou – Issues and Opportunities report can be found here.
https://www.orc.govt.nz/media/tkflgau1/te-awa-otakou-issues-opportunities-feb-2025.pdf

Kōrero Tuku Iho

Te Awa o Ōtākou holds profound cultural, spiritual, and historical significance for Kāi Tahu and Kāti Māmoe hapū. The harbour has been integral to Māori life since the 13th century and stands as a testament to the enduring relationships between Kāi Tahu and their ancestral and cultural landscapes. It is a living embodiment of cultural identity, spiritual significance and historical continuity.

The name Ōtākou, given by early Waitaha settlers, refers to a tidal flow within the harbour. Ōtākou is the name of the eastern channel, that flows from the mouth of the harbour, along the front of Ōtākou Marae at Ōmate, and ends as a 'kou' at Akapatiki.

Te Awa Ōtākou is an awa moana, a saltwater river, which once teemed with diverse marine life. Since the earliest human arrival on Otago Peninsula, it has supported numerous kāika along its shores, been a vital source of mahika kai, provided a transport route towards the northern coast and up-harbour, and remains a living symbol of connections to atua and tīpuna.

The harbour's Māori history is layered with the stories of successive migrations - Waitaha, arriving in the late 13th century, followed by Kāti Māmoe in the 16th Century, and finally, Kāi Tahu in the 17th century. Each wave of people brought their own traditions, interweaving them with those of their predecessors, creating a complex cultural landscape that continues to exist to this day.

Kāi Tahu Tribal Area in Southern Aotearoa

Ko wai mātau? Kāi Tahu are the prominent iwi of Te Waipounamu, Southern Niu Tireni For centuries we have explored, utilised and thrived within these unique landscapes. Through generations of lived experience, Kāi Tahu have developed an intimate understanding of our local environment, which shapes how we protect and care for our whenua. Our knowledge systems are distinct from those of northern iwi, as evidenced in our unique creation stories and reflected in our particular worldview and way of being.

The Waitaha people, descendants of the Uruao waka, were the first human inhabitants of Te Waipounamu. These initial settlers discovered a land of abundant resources and developed a thriving culture based on mahika kai traditions.

Archaeological evidence dates human presence in the area to the early 1300s, with numerous moa hunter sites identified along the coast and on the Otago Peninsula. These early sites, including Papanui Inlet, Little Papanui, Harwood, Anderson's Bay, and St. Clair, provide tangible links to the region's first inhabitants and their way of life.

Due to the southern climate's horticultural limitations, these early settlements relied heavily on mahika kai cycles. Kāika were strategically located close to moa hunting grounds and marine resources, such as seal rookeries.

In this bountiful environment, the Waitaha cultivated a profound understanding of the natural world. They developed a deep well of mātauraka about the land, the moana, its seasons, and its resources. This knowledge, passed down through generations, formed the foundation of a sustainable way of life that would endure for centuries.

The legacy of the Waitaha lives on in the names etched into the landscapes of Otago. These place names, still used today, serve as enduring reminders of the long history of human habitation in this region.

Image: Ngāi Tahu takiwa

The Arrival of Kāti Māmoe

The 16th century marked a significant shift in the cultural landscape with the arrival of Kāti Māmoe. Descending from Hotu Māmoe, this iwi originated in the eastern North Island near Napier. Their journey south, crossing Raukawa Moana brought new influences to Te Waipounamu.

Over several generations, Kāti Māmoe expanded their presence along the east coast of Te Waipounamu. Their expansion was characterized not just by settlement, but by strategic integration with the existing Waitaha population. Through marriages with chiefly Waitaha women, Kāti Māmoe forged strong connections to the land and established mana throughout the island. Te Rakitauneke, master of the taniwha Matamata, was a notable rakatira who resided on the Otago Peninsula for a time.

Settlements from this period include Makahoe (Papanui Inlet) and Rakipipikao, near Pukekura.

This era of Kāti Māmoe expansion and integration added new layers to the cultural and genetic makeup of the region's people. It was a time of both change and continuity, as new traditions melded with the old, and the knowledge of the land grew ever richer.

The Migration of Kāi Tahu

The 17th century brought another wave of change as Kāi Tahu began their migration southward. Initially a mosaic of hapū from the eastern North Island, Kāi Tahu gradually coalesced into a unified tribe over the course of a century. This period was marked by conflict, peace-making, and intermarriage - both among themselves and with Kāti Māmoe.

The Kāi Tahu migration was not a single event but a series of movements at the hapū level. In some cases, they came at the invitation of Kāti Māmoe. Over time, Kāi Tahu absorbed the traditions and resource management practices of both Kāti Māmoe and Waitaha. This process of cultural blending and adaptation resulted in a rich, layered tradition that drew from all three iwi.

By the time this migration and integration process was complete, the principal people of Kāi Tahu carried the whakapapa of all three iwi - Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, and Kāi Tahu. This intermingling of bloodlines and traditions created a robust and adaptable culture, deeply rooted in the landscapes of Te Waipounamu.

Through intermarriage and intertribal affiliation, a stronghold of Māori sovereignty formed within the bounds of the southern tribal areas.

Reflections of the Past

Lifeways Focused on Te Awa Ōtākou

The area now known as Dunedin and the surrounding harbour held great significance for mana whenua. The name Ōtepoti itself speaks to this importance, referring to a corner of a woven food basket (poti) which mirrors the shape of part of the harbour. This name reflects the abundance and importance of the area as a food source.

Tikaka Focused on Te Awa Ōtākou

Tikaka and a uniquely Kāi Tahu worldview, deeply rooted in whakapapa, pūrākau, and lived experiences, continue to shape mana whenua interactions with the harbour environs and its wider stakeholders. Tikaka, or values, grounds approaches and provides a distinct lens through which mana whenua engage with contemporary harbour issues, from climate change to policy. The relevant tikaka that adhere to the context of Te Awa Ōtākou revolve largely around kaitiakitaka, a right and or responsibility that is conceived within one's connection to a space, enforced through whakapapa, or genealogy. As mana whenua, a requirement to act as guardians of the life force that is Te Awa Ōtākou is essential, and appears in many forms. Kaitiakitaka relies on the environmental knowledge developed and exchanged throughout generations and is an essential driver for Kāi Tahu engagement in environmental protection and restoration projects. Tapu and Noa are tikaka concepts that filter throughout this document, they indicate the restricted and the ordinary. Tapu and Noa are largely introduced within our Pūrākau. Creation narratives and traditional knowledge establish what is considered sacred or restricted, influencing tikaka around rituals, ceremonies, and daily practices. Through these narratives a concept of Tuakiritaka is also acknowledged, this being indicators of identity, place and belonging throughout generations. They connect current generations to their ancestors and the land, serving as teaching tools for passing down cultural knowledge. This connection strengthens cultural identity and resilience in the face of ongoing colonisation impacts. These stories continue to inspire contemporary Kāi Tahu art, literature, and performance. They provide rich material for cultural revitalisation efforts.

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Te Ikoa o Ōtākou

The name Ōtākou, given by early Waitaha settlers, refers to a tidal flow within the harbour. Ōtākou is the name of the eastern channel, that flows from the mouth of the harbour, along the front of Ōtākou Marae at Ōmate, and ends as a ‘kou’ at Akapatiki.

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Pūrākau

Rakinui and Papatūānuku

Creation narratives are fundamental to human cultures worldwide, serving as cornerstones for understanding our place in the universe. For mana whenua, creation narratives are fundamental living knowledge systems that shape worldviews and relationships with the environment. They explain the interconnectedness of all things and inform kaitiaki responsibilities.

The Kāi Tahu story begins with Papatūānuku and her relationship with Takaroa, atua of the ocean. Their union produced children, with Takaroa journeying far to bury each child's placenta. During one of the long absences of Takaroa, Papatūānuku formed a new relationship with Rakinui.

Upon his return, Takaroa discovered Papatūānuku and Rakinui together with their many children. Enraged, Takaroa challenged Rakinui to a fight, wounding him with a spear through his buttocks. Satisfied with his retribution, Takaroa retreated to Rakiriri, Goat Island. The reputation of Takaroa within the bounds of the harbour remain strong as Rakiriri is remembered as the abode of Takaroa and the second largest island within Te Aka Ōtākou.

Before his union with Papatūānuku, Rakinui was in union with Pokohāruatepo. One of their senior progeny was Aoraki. Curious about Rakinui's new wife, Aoraki and his brothers descended from the heavens in their waka to greet Papatūānuku. The meeting was amicable, but when Aoraki attempted to return to their celestial home, a mistake in the karakia caused their waka to lift. As Aoraki and his brothers scrambled to the upturned hull, they were caught by the sun's rays and transformed into granite, becoming the highest peaks of the Southern Alps. This story beautifully explains the creation of Te Waipounamu's most prominent mountain range, linking the celestial realm with the physical landscape.

Southern Māori creation stories intertwine with waka journeys that brought mythical beings and human tīpuna to Te Waipounamu. Te Waka Huruhurumanu and Te Waka a Raki introduced supernatural beings and left their mark on Otago's landscape. One such, Te Atua o Taiehu, named for the captain of Te Waka a Raki, stands prominently to the east of Ōtākou Marae.

Maui, while travelling in his waka, named Kā Tiritiri o te Moana and paused at Pukekura to repair a torn sail. Āraiteuru's ill-fated journey to bring kūmara to Te Waipounamu is remembered through placenames down the eastern coast, including the Moeraki Boulders. Rakaihautu, leading the Uruao waka, shaped inland lakes, and brought Waitaha to Te Waipounamu. Tākitimu, captained by Tamatea was wrecked, becoming the Tākitimu Ranges. Tamatea is the name of the whare at Ōtākou Marae.

Image: Artist interpretation of Rakiriri (Kirsten Parkinson, Kāi Tahu)

Matamata

Matamata, the pet taniwha of Te Rakitauneke, a chief of the Kāti Māmoe, shows the continuity of land-shaping into the human era, forming significant features around Te Awa o Ōtākou and the Taiari River. Matamata played a crucial role in the shaping of the Otago landscape. Matamata lost his master, and in his attempts to find him, he used his sharp claws and huge tail to forge his way, creating the harbour mouth, bays, surrounding hills, and the twists and turns of the Taiari River. Matamata finally rested, becoming the prominent twin peaks of Pukemakamaka and Turimakamaka, now known as Saddle Hill.

Image: Saddle Hill, Ōtepoti (Aukaha)

Waka Traditions and the Shaping of the Land

Various waka feature prominently in southern Māori creation stories, bringing both mythical beings and human tipuna to Te Waipounamu. These include:

Te Waka Huruhurumanu: One of the earliest mythical waka to visit Otago, bringing characters like Kopuwai (who became the Obelisk on the Old Man Range), Pouakai (a gigantic man-eating bird), and Kārara-hua-rau, a deceitful lizard.

Te Waka a Raki: Captained by Taiehu, who cleaved the seas with his axe. He is remembered in the small rocky peaked hill immediately east of the Ōtākou Marae – Te Atua o Taiehu.

Māhunui/Mahutūkiteraki: Māui's waka in southern traditions. It's said that Māui first sighted the Southern Alps from this waka, thinking them an ocean mirage and naming them Kā Tiritiri o te Moana, a reference to their appearance being similar to the froth atop ocean waves. Māui's journey along the southern coastline is remembered in the names left upon the landscape. A waiata from Ōtākou remembers his stop at Pukekura to repair sails torn by the wind.

"Tērā Pukekura, ka piri hau i te moana"

Āraiteuru: A trading and voyaging waka known throughout Aotearoa. It's said to have introduced kumara to the North Island before foundering off the Otago coast, its spilled cargo becoming the Moeraki boulders. Passengers and crew onboard the Araiteuru are remembered in the landscape from the Kaikōura ranges to the Otago coast.

Uruao: The great waka of Rākaihautū, who led the ancient Waitaha people. With his giant kō (digging stick), Tūwhakarōria, Rākaihautū is credited with discovering, naming and digging out nearly all the significant freshwater lakes in the South Island, from Rotoiti, through the McKenzie basin and the Lakes district, to Lake Waihora (Waihola), south of Dunedin. A short stay on the coast of present day Dunedin is remembered in the name Kaikarae (Kaikorai) – where a meal of the seabird karae was eaten.

Tākitimu: In the southern version, this waka was captained by Tamatea. After landfall in the North Island, it continued south to Te Waipounamu, eventually wrecking and solidifying as the Tākitimu Ranges.

These creation stories are not relics of the past but living narratives that continue to inform the cultural identity and environmental ethos of Mana Whenua . They provide a framework for understanding the deep connections between people, land, and sea, and offer valuable insights into sustainable management practices.

For local and central government entities with legislative and regulatory responsibilities, understanding these narratives is crucial. They provide context for the cultural values that underpin Māori relationships with the environment and offer a foundation for developing policies and practices that respect and incorporate indigenous knowledge systems.

By acknowledging and integrating these creation narratives into our understanding of the land and its history, we take an important step towards more inclusive, culturally responsive governance that honours the legacy and living traditions of mana whenua. These stories remind us of the profound interconnectedness of all aspects of the natural world and our responsibility to maintain balance and harmony within it.

The recent resurfacing of waka in and around the Kāi Tahu rohe (dated from around the mid 15th century) reignites the importance of waka migration histories in relation to place and belonging for many.

Image: Papanui waka hull in situ (Dilys John)

Wāhi Tīpuna and Prominet Kāika / Pā within & around Te Awa Ōtākou

The landscape surrounding Te Awa Ōtākou and its catchment was rich with sites of cultural, spiritual, and practical importance to mana whenua. These places reflect the deep connection Kāi Tahu and their predecessors had with the land and sea, serving various purposes from resource gathering to settlement and spiritual practices.

The highlighted wāhi tīpuna hold extensive historic, cultural and spiritual connections for mana whenua. The tupuna, activities, and events associated with these places form integral parts of a cultural landscape. This landscape, both temporal and spatial in nature, is a crucial element within the broader cultural tapestry of Te Waipounamu.

It is important to note that these are the more significant of wāhi tīpuna within the harbour catchment. Every landscape feature contained some form of cultural connection, whether it be for access to mahika kai, transport route, stone quarrying and resource gathering, or notable events.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Te Awa Ōtākou had been long inhabited by way of kāika, nohoaka, and pā sites.

Traditional Place Names

- **Makahoe (Papanui Inlet)**
- **Tarewai Point overlooking Takiharuru Pilot's Beach**
- **Tahakopa – a medium-sized kāika on the western harbour**
- **Te Ruatitiko – one of the many kāika in the inner harbour in 1836**
- **Ōmate**
- **Parihaumia – Portobello Bay**
- **Turnbull's Bay**
- **Ōrau (Sandfly Bay)**
- **Ōtaheiti-Acherons Head – Grassy Point**
- **Ōhinetū**
- **Te Waiparapara – on the spit at Aramoana**
- **Orawharerau – on the western side of the harbour**
- **Ōtākou**

The legacy of Waitaha, Kāti Mamoe lives on in place names still used today, etching their history into the very landscape of Otago. Prominent headlands were utilised for their defensive advantage, some remain as beacons of identity for those who descend from the inhabitants of these headlands. One particular site that reflects this description is Pukekura Pā. Pukekura is near the site where, on 13 June 1840, Captain Bunbury obtained the signatures of the chiefs Karetai and Korako to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, on board the HMS Herald. Pukekura enjoys a commanding view of all that lies before it. Exposed as it is to the four winds, it has become home to the toroa. However the story of this now iconic species offers us a glimpse into an ongoing alienation for mana whenua from this most sacred wāhi tapu.

Toroa (albatross) only arrived to the headland in 1907, after Pukekura had been taken from mana whenua families still living there by the colonial government under the Public Works Act. The families were partitioned from the land to make way for port and maritime purposes including the lighthouse. Later the Crown enacted the taking of Pukekura in its entirety for Fort Taiaroa in response to the perceived Russian Threat of 1885. Fortified with gun emplacements and occupied by a military camp the headland became more and more inaccessible for mana whenua. In the years to follow as the 'threat' eased the land should have been returned to mana whenua but instead passed into the governance of the Wastelands Act 1853 and later the Reserves Act – effectively legislating the ownership and rights of mana whenua owners from existence. The successful hatch of an Albatross chick in 1937 and subsequent management of the species and other wildlife at Pukekura has enabled and empowered DCC and the Crown to control the land ever since. Toroa have always been a taoka species for mana whenua, as ocean-faring people there are long lines of story and association with this majestic bird. It is ironic that Toroa are so closely linked to the sad separation of mana whenua from this wāhi tapu.

Image: Toroa / Albatross (GoodGallagher)

Pukekura tūtei pō, tūtei ao

Pukekura stands guard night & day

Image: Pukekura (Aukaha)

Mahika Kai

The story of mana whenua in Ōtepoti and the surrounding Otago Harbour is one of profound connection to the land and sea, rich cultural traditions, and sophisticated resource management. Te Awa Ōtākou has acted as a convenient and once abundant provider of food resources, sustaining inhabitants for centuries. The area now known as Dunedin and the surrounding harbour held great significance for mana whenua. The name Ōtepoti itself speaks to this importance, referring to a corner of a woven food basket (poti) which mirrors the shape of part of the head of the harbour. This name reflects the abundance and importance of the area as a food source.

Te Awa Ōtākou was the lifeblood of the region, teeming with resources that sustained generations. The harbour supported rich biodiversity, providing a variety of kaimoana, including shellfish, seaweed, and numerous fish species.

“He reka te tuaki kaimārire, Ka haere te whānau ki te pāti e,

Ka peke kā kuha i te anu, auatu rā, ka kī te puku!”

“The bountiful cockles are sweet, The family goes to the shore,

The thighs are numb with cold, never mind, the tummy is full!”

The richness of Otago Harbour is deeply woven into traditional knowledge and practices of mana whenua who have lived alongside these waters for generations. Through customary management and kaitiakitaka, the abundance of marine life was sustained. The harbour's waters were home to diverse species, including marine mammals like, whales, (embodying the tradition of Paikea), as well as mako, hāpuku, makā, pātiki, hokahoka, aua, wheke and paara . The extensive shellfish species included were tuaki, roroa, kaiotama, kākahi, whētiko, pupu, and tio.

This detailed account not only demonstrates the rich biodiversity of the harbour, but also the depth of traditional ecological knowledge held by Kāi Tahu. It serves as a valuable record of the harbour's ecosystems prior to significant changes brought about by European settlement and industrialisation.

In 1880, prominent Ōtākou leader and parliamentarian H.K. Taiaroa provided crucial evidence to the Smith-Nairn Commission of Inquiry. This commission was established to investigate Kāi Tahu's grievances regarding the Crown's purchases in the South Island, particularly the unfulfilled promises made during these transactions.

Taiaroa's testimony included a detailed account of the mahika kai in the Otago Harbour. This information was vital in demonstrating the extensive knowledge and use of local resources by Kāi Tahu, thereby asserting their deep connections to the land and to the waters. Taiaroa's list serves as a valuable record of the biodiversity and resource richness of the area prior to significant European settlement and environmental changes.

"Ko te whakamaramatanga o tenei awa moana Otakou e nui nga tikanga pumau o roto o tenei awa me nga take a nga Maori I nohoaia ai tenei awa moana a Otakou. I nga take nui kei nga ika o taua awa e maha ona ika o tenei awa: e tohora, e Paikea, e mako, e hapuku, e maka, e patiki, e hokahoka, e aua, e wheke, e paara, e patiki. Ko nga pipi o taua awa: e tuaki, e roroa, e kaiotama, e kakahi, e whetiko, e pupu, e tio."

Seasonal Patterns and Resource Management

Life for mana whenua was characterised by seasonal movements and careful resource management. Mobile, small parties traversed the harbour and inland tracks, engaging in fishing, fowling, plant gathering, and stone quarrying according to the seasons. Archaeological evidence indicates a vast trade and resource gathering network that extended across Te Waipounamu and Aotearoa. Te Awa Ōtākou played a vital role, not only for its resources but also as an important transport route.

Fishing grounds were considered tribal property and were subject to strict tapu at certain times of the year. These tapu, overseen by atua, ensured that resources were not over-exploited. This system of resource management reflected a deep understanding of ecological balance and sustainability.

The abundance and variety of kai moana underscored the cultural and economic importance of these resources to mana whenua. Their intimate knowledge of the environment, passed down through generations, allowed them to utilize these resources sustainably over centuries.

Significant Sites and Settlements

The landscape of Ōtepoti and its surroundings was rich with sites of cultural, spiritual, and practical importance to mana whenua. These places reflect the deep connection Kāi Tahu and their predecessors had with the land and sea, serving various purposes from resource gathering to settlement and spiritual practices.

Tauraka waka were crucial points of access and connection, situated all around the harbour. These landing sites served as gateways between sea and land, often marking the beginning of inland trails used for food gathering and trade. Notable tauraka waka included (see image below):

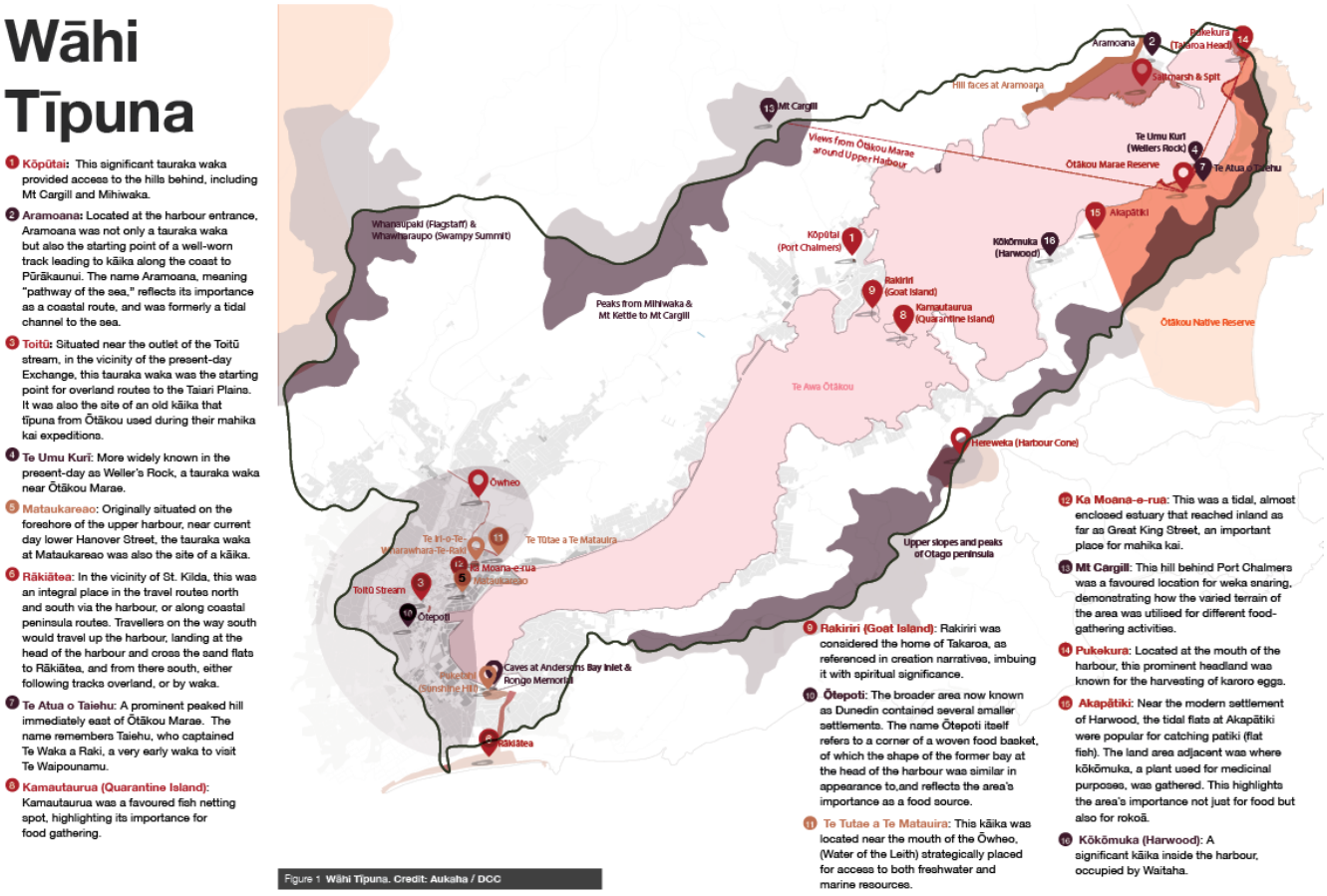

Figure 1 Wāhi Tīpuna. Credit: Aukaha / DCC

Image: Wāhi Tupuna (Aukaha / DCC)

Skills Developed

The Story of Tarewai

Tarewai was a renowned figure in the fabric of Ōtākou history and whakapapa. He came to Ōtākou with the Kāi Tahu - Kāti Kurī tribal migration south.

In a brief period of peace, a Kāi Tahu group including Tarewai were invited by rival iwi Kāti Mamoe to the Pyramid (Papanui/Ōkia flat) area to assist in building a new whare. Games and wrestling took place during a break in the work, the games turned serious and all Tarewai's men were killed.

Tarewai was held down by several men, as he was a very large and strong man. His enemies took his mere pounamu (weapon) and cut his chest open. As they were cutting Tarewai, they were distracted, and he was able to break free. Tarewai fled to the safety of Hereweka Mauka (Harbour Cone) and tended to his bloody wounds using the fat of weka. He used rongoā (medicine) to heal his wounds, and it is said that the patupaiarehe (fairies) also assisted in his recovery.

Tarewai planned his revenge on the Pā of his enemy as he wanted to retrieve his mere pounamu. One night he crept up to the Kāti Mamoe camp site, staying in the shadows beyond the flickering lights cast by the flames. Feigning a speech impediment of someone he knew that resided in the Pā, Tarewai joined with the men as they sat around the fire, handing his mere to each other. Tarewai patiently waited for the mere to be handed to him, and as soon as it was in his grasp, he leapt up crying: 'Naia te toa o Tarewai, kai a ia anō tōna patu"' (I am the strong Tarewai and this is my patu!) and then he escaped into the night.

"Naia te toa a Tarewai, kai a ia anō tana patu".

Image: Hereweka - Harbour cone (Aukaha)

Skills Developed

The story of Tarewai depicts the reliance of early tīpuna and the natural resources found within and around the harbour. It speaks to the importance of fishing grounds as a tribal property, and the intimate knowledge of the resources for the purpose of healing, like that of weka. It also demonstrates how pūrākau like these are reflected in a modern context through naming of the natural environment. These memories are instilled to our surroundings and emphasis the relationship mana whenua have with these lands and waters.

Mana whenua developed sophisticated practices and technologies adapted to their environment:

Maritime Expertise: Advanced maritime technologies and navigational techniques were crucial. Carved single and double-hulled waka were the preferred mode of transport, allowing extensive travel. In 2014, a mid 15th century fishing waka was retrieved from Makahoe (Papanui Inlet), providing a rare glimpse of the everyday nature of waka use in the area.

Food Preservation: Large quantities of tī (cabbage tree) were cooked at once in umu tī and, once dried, could last for several years. This preservation technique allowed for long-term food storage and trade. Many of the hill slopes at the northern end of the Otago Peninsula are dotted with the physical remains of umu-tī, evidencing the importance of this food resource.

Resource Utilisation: Harakeke and the leaves of tī were major sources of material for rope and textile making. The hills surrounding the harbour were used for harvesting tī, while kareko (seaweed) was collected from the shore. Pounamu, while not locally sourced, was worked at several coastal sites, demonstrating the importance of trade and economy networks. Bones from marine birds such as toroa, as well as moa, kurī, and seals were utilised into tools, such as fish hooks and points, awls, spear points, as well as for personal adornments.

Mahika kai: Seasonal activities included hunting birds like tītī, kererū, and kākā on the peninsula, harvesting karoro (black-backed gull) eggs at Pukekura, and collecting frost fish that beached themselves during winter low tides. Seal species were also harvested seasonally, forming an important part of the diet throughout the centuries. The pre-European history of mana whenua in the Otago Harbour area is a rich tapestry of migration, adaptation, and deep connection to the land and sea. From the early Waitaha settlers to the later arrivals of Kāti Māmoe and Kāi Tahu, each group contributed to the development of a sophisticated culture uniquely adapted to this environment.

The intricate knowledge of natural resources, the development of sustainable harvesting practices, and the creation of a complex network of settlements and significant sites all speak to the depth of mana whenua's relationship with this land. This history, preserved through oral tradition and later, written accounts, continues to inform the identity and practices of Kāi Tahu today.

Understanding this rich pre-European history is crucial for appreciating the full cultural landscape of the Ōtākou Harbour area. It provides invaluable context for contemporary discussions about resource management, cultural heritage, and the ongoing role of mana whenua in shaping the future of this significant region.

The Changing Tides: Mana Whenua & Otago Harbour in the 19th Century

As the 19th century dawned, Otago Harbour was a vital and expansive centre of Kāi Tahu life. The significance of this area cannot be overstated - it was one of the largest and most important Māori settlements in southern New Zealand.

The harbour area was densely populated, with up to 12 kāika dotting the lower harbour's shores. These settlements, home to an estimated 2,000 people, were a testament to the rich resources and strategic importance of the area. John Boultbee, an early European visitor, recorded that Ōtākou was the largest and oldest settlement in southern New Zealand, with Tahatū recognised as the principal chief at the time.

The scale of these settlements was impressive. By 1826, Captain Herd recorded four villages inside the harbour, containing around 50 whare and numerous whata. The settlements extended beyond the immediate harbour area, with nohoaka recorded on the South Dunedin flats, along with pig runs in the 1830s and 1840s.

The vitality of these settlements was evident in their extensive cultivations. D'Urville, visiting in 1840, noted that the valleys and hillslopes were divided into fields which produced plentiful harvests. The diversity of crops was notable - potatoes, introduced earlier, had become a staple, but turnips and other vegetables were also cultivated. This agricultural abundance, combined with the rich marine resources of the harbour and the surrounding coast, supported a large and thriving population.

Te Taeka Mai - European Arrival

The arrival of Europeans to these shores is a history of varied interactions and engagements between Māori and Pākehā. The first documented European contact with the area came in 1770 when Captain Cook sailed past, naming Cape Saunders. However, it wasn't until the early 1800s that more frequent interactions began. Sealers, whalers, and traders started visiting the area from around 1810. The early period of contact was not without conflict, as evidenced by an incident at Whareakeake in 1817. This event involved William Tucker, the brig Sophia under Captain James Kelly, and the local Māori community.

Image: Ōtakou Harbour (Aukaha)

Not Without Conflict

In December 1817, the Sophia anchored off Whareakeake. Captain Kelly, along with Tucker and several crew members, went ashore to trade for potatoes. However, the situation quickly escalated into violence. Several of Kelly's crew were killed, as were a number of Māori, including Korako, the father of Te Matenga Taiaroa, who would later become a significant leader in the area. In retaliation, Kelly and his crew attacked the main settlement at Ōtākou, burning it to the ground and destroying 42 waka on Te Rauone Beach.

This incident had long-lasting repercussions. It soured relations between local Māori and European visitors for some time, leading to a period of heightened tension and mistrust. The destruction of so many waka was a significant blow to the local community, impacting their ability to fish and travel.

However, the resilience of the Ōtākou community was evident in their recovery from this setback. By 1820, just three years after the incident, two substantial villages were again recorded near the Otago Heads.

The 1830s marked a significant shift in the harbour's dynamics. In 1831, the Weller brothers established a shore whaling station at Te Umu Kurī. This station became a focal point for European-Māori interactions, trade, and cultural exchange. Edward Weller married daughters of important Ōtākou rakatira, firstly Paparu, daughter of Tahatū, and later Nikuru, daughter of Taiaroa, effectively bringing the activities of the whaling station under the mana of rakatira.

Māori quickly adapted to the new economic opportunities. They worked alongside Europeans in whaling crews, adopted whaling boats for their own use, and engaged in trade. Potatoes became a significant crop for trade, with Tuckett claiming that Otago potatoes were the best he had ever seen. The harbour bustled with activity, with Māori-owned schooners trading as far as Australia.

This period saw the emergence of a bicultural existence. By 1840, Māori communities around the harbour reflected both Māori and Pākehā influences in their family makeup, dwelling structures, and village layouts. This cultural exchange, while bringing new opportunities, also began to alter traditional social structures and economic practices.

Image: Louis Le Breton (1818-1866), Mouillage d'Otago (Nouvelle Zélande), lithograph by P. Blanchard & Thierry frères, Paris, from 'Voyage au Pôle Sud et dans l'Océanie. Atlas pittoresque', pl. 181, 1846, hand-coloured lithograph: 181 x 310mm, purchased with Hocken Library Endowment funds. Hocken Collections - Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago - Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka, 91/40.

Ripples of Change: Socio-Political Impacts on Ōtākou

The conflicts with Te Rauparaha and the effects of introduced illnesses cast long shadows over Ōtākou, reshaping its role within Kāi Tahu society and its relationships with both other Māori and the increasing number of European settlers. As the dust settled from these battles, Ōtākou found itself in a transformed socio-political landscape.

The settlement's strategic importance soared in the aftermath of the conflicts. As a southern stronghold that had successfully weathered the storm of Te Rauparaha's campaigns further north, Ōtākou became a crucial bulwark for Kāi Tahu. Its large population and abundant resources positioned it as a vital base for organizing defence and launching counter-attacks, should they be needed in the future.

The conflicts also set in motion significant population shifts that would alter the fabric of Ōtākou society. As news spread of the fall of northern pā like Kaiapoi, a stream of refugees made their way south, seeking safety and new beginnings. The settlement of Ōtaheiti on the western shore of the lower harbour stood as a testament to this movement, likely established in the 1830s by those fleeing the northern conflicts. These new arrivals were integrated into the social fabric of manawhenua around the harbour.

In the crucible of conflict, leadership at Ōtākou was forged anew. Chiefs who played key roles in the defence against Te Rauparaha saw their mana enhanced. Men like Karetai and Taiaroa, whose names would later be inscribed on the Treaty of Waitangi and the Otago Purchase deed, likely owed some of their standing to their actions during this turbulent time. Their experiences in uniting Kāi Tahu against a common threat would serve them well in navigating the complex relationships with European settlers in the years to come.

The conflicts also spurred technological innovation and adaptation. The sight of whaleboats cutting through the waves alongside traditional waka as Kāi Tahu forces headed north was a powerful symbol of Ōtākou's quick embrace of new technologies. This adaptability, born of necessity in wartime, would prove crucial as Ōtākou faced the rapid changes of the 19th century.

Beyond its immediate borders, Ōtākou's role in the conflicts reshaped its relationships with other Māori communities. Bonds with other Kāi Tahu settlements were strengthened through shared struggle and mutual defence. At the same time, the conflicts redefined relationships with North Island iwi, creating new alliances and enemies that would echo through generations.

All of these changes unfolded against the backdrop of increasing European presence in the area. The establishment of whaling stations coincided with the need for weapons and resources to combat Te Rauparaha. This confluence of factors likely influenced how Kāi Tahu at Ōtākou engaged with European traders and settlers, setting the stage for the complex intercultural relationships that would characterize the coming decades.

Treaty & Land Sales: The Beginning of Major Changes

As the 1830s drew to a close, Ōtākou stood at a crossroads. Strengthened by adversity, adapted through necessity, and positioned as a key player in southern New Zealand, the settlement faced the dawn of a new era. This new chapter began on June 13, 1840, when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed at Pukekura by Kāi Tahu rakatira Karetai and Korako. This event marked the beginning of formal British involvement in the area and would have far-reaching consequences for mana whenua.

Four years later, in 1844, the Otago Block was sold to the New Zealand Company. This sale, comprising over 400,000 acres for £2,400, was a pivotal moment. The local chiefs had initially sought to retain 21,250 acres of the peninsula, but European negotiators insisted on its inclusion. In the end, Kāi Tahu agreed to accept only the land at the northern end of the Peninsula as a reserve.

Image: Otago Peninsula (Aukaha)

The sale agreement included verbal promises to reserve 10% of all land sold (known as "the tenths") in trust for Kāi Tahu. However, this agreement was not honoured, becoming a source of long-standing grievance. This broken promise would have significant implications for the economic future of mana whenua.

Tūhawaiki's speech (translated) - Sale of the Otago Block 1844

"Look here, Karaka," he said, "here, and there, and there and yonder; those are all burial places, not ancestral burial places, but those of this generation. Our parents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, children, they lie thick around us."

"This was one of our largest settlements, and it was beyond even the reach of Rauparaha. We lived secure, and feared no enemy; but one year, when I was a youth, a ship came from Sydney, and she brought measles among us. It was winter, as it is now. In a few months most of the inhabitants sickened and died. Whole families on this spot disappeared and left no one to represent them. My people lie all around us, and now you can tell Wide-awake (Wakefield) why we cannot part with this portion of our land, and why we were angry with Tuckett for cutting his lines about here."

Changing Landscapes & Livelihood: The Impact of Colonisation

Following the land sale, many Māori continued to reside in villages around the harbour, particularly at Ōtākou. They engaged in agriculture and trade with European settlers. However, the loss of access to traditional mahika kai and environmental changes began to impact their way of life profoundly.

The rapid influx of settlers following the establishment of Dunedin in 1848 brought further challenges. The transformation of the landscape was dramatic. Forests were cleared, wetlands drained, and the natural environment that had sustained mana whenua for generations was irrevocably altered. This environmental change directly impacted the availability and accessibility of traditional food sources.

The economy of mana whenua, once based on a rich tapestry of fishing, hunting, gathering, and horticulture, became increasingly marginalised. While there was initial prosperity from trade with settlers, this was short-lived. As settlers became self-sufficient and established their own farms and businesses, the demand for Māori labour and produce diminished.

The loss of land and resources had a cascading effect. Traditional food gathering practices were disrupted, not just by lack of access to land, but also by the depletion of resources due to overharvesting and environmental degradation. The harbour, once teeming with fish and shellfish, saw its populations decline due to sedimentation from land clearance, reclamation, and overfishing.

By 1850, the entire Māori population in Otago had declined to less than 200, largely due to disease epidemics and other factors. This demographic collapse further eroded the economic and social fabric of mana whenua communities.

Resistance & Adaption

Despite these challenges, Kāi Tahu continued to assert their rights and maintain their connections to the harbour. They petitioned authorities, engaged in legal battles, and strove to maintain their cultural practices and economic independence.

The 1850s saw attempts to address some of these issues. In 1852, after petitions from Māori, land was set aside in Dunedin and Port Chalmers for visiting Māori. However, these reserves were contested by settler authorities and ultimately proved inadequate. The Kōpūtai reserve, for instance, was described as being so precipitous that it would only give Māori a small frontage for their boats and a supply of freshwater.

The Ōtākou marae reserve, chosen in 1859 by Taiaroa, Karetai, and Korako, became a focal point for the community. The first building, a church, was opened in 1865, followed by a school in 1869, and finally the wharenui, Te Mahi Tamariki, in 1874. The name Te Mahi Tamariki reflected the understanding that the task of rectifying land-sale grievances would fall to future generations.

The Taranaki Prisoners & Mana Whenua Solidarity

An often-overlooked chapter in the history of Otago Harbour is the story of the Taranaki prisoners and the solidarity shown by local mana whenua. In the 1860s and 1870s, nearly 100 Māori men from Taranaki were transported to Dunedin as prisoners for defending their land rights.

These prisoners arrived in two main groups. The first, in 1869-1871, comprised 74 men from Ngāti Ruanui. They were held until March 1872, with 18 of them dying during their imprisonment. The second group, known as Te Whiti's 'Ploughmen', arrived in 1879-1881. They were followers of the prophets Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi from Parihaka, arrested for their peaceful resistance to land confiscations.

Image: Rongo Memorial Stone, Portobello Rd (Aukaha)

The prisoners were subjected to hard labour, working on various public works projects around Dunedin. They were involved in breaking rocks at the Botanic Garden, laying out the recreation ground at what is now Otago Girls' High School, building the Andersons Bay causeway, and constructing what is now known as Māori Road. They also worked on the sea wall along the Peninsula road.

Local Kāi Tahu families, particularly the Ellison whānau, showed solidarity with these prisoners, maintaining relationships with them during their incarceration and even after their release. This connection between Taranaki, Dunedin, and Ōtākou remains to this day, with some prisoners' remains buried in Dunedin cemeteries, and relationships maintained between mana whenua and the descendants of the prisoners.

The experience of the Taranaki prisoners left a lasting mark on the landscape and memory of Otago. In 1987, a memorial called Rongo was unveiled near the old Portobello Road, commemorating the Pakakohi men who worked on the causeway.

This act of remembrance demonstrates the ongoing connection between Taranaki and Otago Māori and serves as a powerful reminder of the wider impacts of colonisation and land confiscation across New Zealand.

Te Ao Hou: 20th Century & Beyond

As the 20th century dawned, Kāi Tahu communities around Otago Harbour faced the enduring consequences of 19th century land alienation. The once-vast territories had been reduced to a small native reserve, primarily centred at Ōtākou. The harbour continued to play a crucial role in the economic and cultural life of mana whenua. Fishing, particularly for barracouta, emerged as a key economic activity. This persistence in traditional practices not only provided a means of livelihood but also helped maintain cultural connections to the harbour. However, the ability to fully utilise these resources was increasingly constrained by the loss of land and access to traditional fishing grounds.

The mid 20th century brought significant social and economic changes for mana whenua. The foundation stone of the Ōtākou Marae Memorial Centennial Church, a national memorial to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and the establishment of the first Christian mission in the South, was laid in 1940. A new whare Tamatea, opened in 1946, symbolised cultural continuity.

Ōtākou Fisheries

A pivotal development during this era was the establishment of Ōtākou Fisheries, a venture that would become emblematic of mana whenua's economic resilience and innovation. This enterprise quickly grew from local markets to international trade, becoming the world's largest processor of crayfish tails in the 1950s. The seeds of this enterprise were sown in 1946 when Raniera Ellison, looking out over Taiaroa Head, saw an opportunity to create a new economic future for his community.

RANI ELLISON - Maori Crayfish Tycoon

Story: E. SCHWIMMER Photos: N. M. BEAUMONT

One of the biggest fishing enterprises in New Zealand is owned by Maoris and has a Maori as its manager. It is the Otakou Fisheries of Dunedin, run by Mr Rani Ellison who must be one of New Zealand's most unusual businessmen.

Before 1946, the people of Otakou Heads were farmers or worked in town. A few made some money out of line fishing and caught barracouta along the coast. The people also have interests in the muttonbird islands, particularly Kaihuka, and go there every year.

They belong to Ngati Mamoe and Ngaitahu and their canoe is Takitimu which according to their tradition was wrecked at the mouth of the Waihao River. They travelled south from there to where they now live.

Elder of the tribe at present is Dr Pohau Ellison, who is among the last survivors of the famous "Young Maori Party" which arose at Te Aute College before the end of the last century. The community has a meeting house called Tamatea and a Maori church and gate with copies of ancient carvings in concrete.

Fish is unloaded on the wharf and stored at once in freezing chambers. Show McEwen works in the chamber at Otakou. (Photograph: N. M. Beaumont).

One of the boats supplying Otakou Fisheries is the oyster dredger Ariel (Otago Daily Times Photograph).

Back from the sea: Messrs Taiaroa and Russell on board M.V. Foam, another boat supplying Otakou Fisheries (Photo: N. M. Beaumont)

Bowen Oysters is one of Mr Ellison's recent business ventures. The oysters are flown north from Invercargill as soon as they are landed.

After the last war, Rani Ellison, with two of his brothers, started a transport business at Otakou. They soon decided that business would be brisker if they could stimulate a little more fishing at the Otakou Heads. That would provide them with some extra loads.

They bought a shed and started to build a landing ramp. Most of the timber came from the family farm on which Rani had worked before the war. (Rani Ellison had tried for a university degree when young, but he found the academic life did not suit him and he went farming instead.) The harbour board lent the three men a punt which was anchored just in front of the ramp. They ran a wire from the punt to the factory, and attached a bin to the wire. This bin, filled with fish, was drawn by a horse into the factory where it was emptied out by various devices. Later, when the landing ramp was completed, with the help of a harbour board pile driver, they put a railway on the wharf. The small capital needed for the project was borrowed from relations and friends at Otakou. The primary object (apart from stimulating their own cartage business) was to employ Maori men with work near their homes, so they would not all have to travel to Dunedin.

These were the foundations of Otakou Fisheries which last year had a turnover of close to one million pounds. The whole enterprise was like a businessman's dream, except that those who dream about large sums of money do not usually get them. When Mr Ellison describes how it all happened it sounds like a series of phenomenally lucky breaks, all of them quite unexpected. Yet such a long list of lucky accidents is rather unlikely, to say the least.

Mr Ellison produces an almost constant plan of brainwaves. In the company as it is now, he has a good number of able and systematic executives indispensable to the success of the enterprise, but he stands slightly aloof as the artist who plays with financial combinations, thinks up new ways of processing and selling fish, or the many other products in which he is interested. It is very strange to think only ten years ago he was totally ignorant of the world of business and finance.

Stranger still is how little he personally has become infected with the affectations and the

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Image: Rangi Ellison - Maori Crayfish Tycoon (NZ National Library)

Initially operating as a cooperative, Ōtākou Fisheries was formally incorporated in 1948, with Ellison serving as managing director for the rest of his life. The company's founding reflected a deep commitment to community and place. Capital was raised from friends and whānau at Ōtākou, with investors profiting equally as the business grew. This approach ensured that the benefits of the enterprise were shared widely within the community.

Ōtākou Fisheries quickly grew from supplying local markets to becoming a significant player in international trade. In April 1947, the company made its first shipment to Sydney, followed by exports of crayfish to Melbourne later that year. By 1953, recognizing the potential of direct trade, Ōtākou Fisheries began dealing directly with American importers. This expansion was not without risk, but it demonstrated the ambition and business acumen of Ellison and his team.

Particularly notable was the company's success in the crayfish industry. During the 1950s, Ōtākou Fisheries became the largest single processor of crayfish tails in the world, a testament to its rapid growth and efficient operations.

The story of Ōtākou Fisheries is emblematic of mana whenua's efforts to maintain economic self-determination while adapting to changing markets and technologies. It represented a successful blending of traditional knowledge, innovation, and modern business practices, all while remaining deeply rooted in the local community and environment. It also had profound implications for the local Māori community, providing employment opportunities close to home, allowing people to remain connected to their ancestral lands rather than seeking work in urban areas. The company enabled local people to buy boats and obtain fishing licenses, fostering a sense of economic empowerment and self-determination.

The late 20th century marked an intensification of efforts to address historical injustices. The lodgement of the Ngāi Tahu Claim (WAI 27) in 1986 initiated a long process of negotiation for redress for the loss of land and mahika kai. This period also saw increased environmental advocacy, exemplified by the successful opposition to the proposed Aramoana aluminium smelter. As the new millennium approached, mana whenua involvement in resource management and environmental advocacy grew. The establishment of Kāi Tahu ki Otago (now Aukaha) in 1997 and the implementation of the Ngāi Tahu Settlement Act 1998 provided new avenues for participation in decision-making processes.

In recent years, focus has shifted towards sustainable practices aligned with cultural values. Key initiatives, such as the 2008 application for a Mātaitai Reserve over part of the Otago Harbour and the development of co-management agreements for significant reserves, signal a growing integration of the Kāi Tahu worldview into resource management. This holistic approach to development considers the long-term health of the harbour and its ecosystems, recognizing the interconnectedness of environmental, cultural, and economic well-being.

Present Day

The health of the harbour is of growing concern to both mana whenua and local government. The impacts of climate change and industrial and urban development has not spared our corner of the world and has caused substantial damage to our shorelines and our marine life. In response to these growing concerns, mana whenua have assumed roles in developing measures of environmental conservation.

These environmental changes have been acknowledged by mana whenua in more ways than one.

In 1987, C. Ellison recognised the pollution of the Otago Harbour via industrial and municipal discharges from the greater Dunedin area.

A coastal Takiwā Inventory Project conducted by Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou in 2005 revealed various concerns for the changing environment and the implications these had on traditional practice and the ability to transmit these forms of knowledge to future generations.

In 2008, an application was made for Mātaitai status over the entire Otago Harbour. This management tool serves multiple purposes: it enables both the local community and Kāi Tahu Whānui to access the harbour for recreational actvities and exercise their customary rights; it safeguards fisheries resources to maintain abundant mahika kai for both Kāi Tahu Whānui and the wider community; and it protects the mauri and wairua of the Ōtākou fishery from further degradation. The application for the entire harbour was ultimately unsuccessful, however in 2014, the Mātaitai was gazetted for the harbour area bounding the original Ōtākou Native Reserve.

Image: Otago Peninsula (Aukaha)

Te Tahū o te Whāriki, a climate change strategy outlined by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu in 2018 recognises these impacts and has developed an approach to addressing climate change impacts on the iwi's interests, assets, and activities. This forward-thinking strategy emphasises the critical balance between maintaining cultural identity, managing resources wisely, and building resilience among whānau and papatipu rūnaka.

Tau Koroī

"Ka heke ka roimata o kā tīpuna ka pūawai te rakatahi"

"The tears of the ancestors descend, the youth blossom"

Te Awa Ōtākou stands at a crossroad – it's future hinges on our collective ability to blend diverse perspectives into a cohesive vision of restoration and sustainable management. Central to this vision is mana whenua's aspiration to see Te Awa Ōtākou restored to a thriving ecosystem that supports abundant mahika kai, fostering wellbeing for all, and enabling the full expression of kaitiakitaka and cultural identity. To achieve this, we must address historical legacies while navigating current complexities at the intersection of cultural, economic, environmental and social values.

Establishing a genuine Treaty partnership framework for harbour management is recommended, recognising mana whenua not as mere stakeholders, but as equal partners with protected and enabled rakatirataka. This involves implementing a co-governance and co-design model throughout the entire process, ensuring mana whenua decision-making authority is clearly defined and upheld. The management strategy should explicitly incorporate tikaka, mātauraka, and kaitiakitaka, reflecting the deep intergenerational connections between mana whenua and Te Awa Ōtākou.

It is crucial to address historical injustices related to the harbour and resource management, and through this, to develop specific initiatives for building Māori capacity in leadership roles. It is also advised to integrate Te Reo Māori terms and concepts throughout the framework to authentically reflect mana whenua worldviews. Protection and enhancement of customary rights, such as mahika kai, should be prioritized. It is also recommended that cultural impact assessments be conducted as a standard part of planning and implementation processes. By co-creating this approach with mana whenua, a harbour management framework can be developed that truly ensures the intergenerational wellbeing of both Te Awa Ōtākou and its people, transitioning authentic partnerships and mana whenua-led initiatives from concept to practice.

Te Aka Ōtākou 2024 Project

The collaborative project between Aukaha (1997) Ltd and Morphum Environmental was commenced with the aim of producing a resource reflecting the health of the Otago Harbour. This project is an example of mana whenua engagement in future environmental planning at a time when unfortunately, Te Awa Ōtākou is at its lowest ebb.

The stories shared here are part of a continuum of oral and written tradition for mana whenua ki Ōtepoti. There are more stories and there will always be more stories of the harbour as we continue to live here at the centre of the universe – Ōtākou – Te pito o te ao.

Glossary

Atua: An ancestor or deity.

Awa: River, in this context it is the harbour.

Hapū: Large kinship group and the primary political unit in traditional Māori society.

Iwi: Tribal groupings. A collection of whānau who share descent from a common ancestor.

Kāika: Village, Home, Residence.

Kaimoana: Seafood.

Kaitiaki: Custodian, minder, caregiver, protector.

Kaitiakitaka: The action of guardianship. Custodianship.

Koputai : Port Chalmers.

Kou: End point.

Mahi: Work.

Mahika Kai: Food Workings. Often associated with the traditional gathering traditions.

Mana Whenua: People of place, local authority.

Manu: Bird.

Mātauraka: (Mātauranga) Knowledge.

Mihi: Acknowledgements.

Noa: Unrestricted, void of restrictions.

Ōtepoti: Dunedin.

Pakakohi: Taranaki Tribe.

Pūrākau: Creation narratives that depict people, place and mythological beings of importance.

Rakatira: Chief. A person of significance.

Rakiriri: Goat Island.

Rongoā: Traditional medicine and healing.

Rūnaka: (Rūnanga). Iwi authority and council.

Tapu: Sacred, Restricted, set apart.

Tauraka waka: Waka landing sites.

Te Waipounamu: The South Island of New Zealand.

Tikaka: (Tikanga) traditional practice, custom, procedure.

Glossary cont.

Tikaka: (Tikanga) traditional practice, custom, procedure.

Tuaki: Cockles, a New Zealand endemic shellfish.

Tipuna / Tīpuna : Ancestor / Ancestors.

Waka: Canoe.

Whakapapa: Lineage. Genealogy.

Whare: House, structure, dwelling.

Whata: Raised platform.

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v. Link to 2GP District Plan: (Mana Taiao – Aukaha)
vi. https://2gp.dunedin.govt.nz/plan/pages/plan/book.aspx?exhibit=DCC2GP
vii. Kā Puna Kaukau – Cultural narrative on Kāi Tahu swimming culture (Megan Potiki)
viii. Natural Resources Management Plan for Otago Harbour Catchment (KTKO)
ix. Te Rūnangā o Ōtākou Mataitai Application Submitted 2008
x. Thematic Study of Ōtepoti Dunedin and surrounds (Tahu Potiki)
xi. Te Pātaka kōrero o Āraiteuru (Megan Potiki)
xii. CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PORT OTAGO LIMITED INSHORE DREDGE MATERIAL DISPOSAL (KTKO)
xiii. Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou and Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki Joint Submission on Port Otago Dredging 2016
xiv. Ōtēpoti Narrative Series 2023 – City Booklet (Edward Ellison)
xv. Anderson, A. 1987. WAI27 Mahika Kai evidence to the Waitangi Tribunal
xvi. C. Ellison. Waitangi Tribunal Hearing 1-3 November 1987.
xvi. Wesley, R. (2015) 'A silcrete chaine operatoire at Papanui Inlet, Otago Peninsula'. PGDipArts Dissertation, University of Otago.
xvii. Johns, D., S. Briden, R. Wesley & G. Irwin. (2017) Understanding Aotearoa's Past Through the Recovery and Conservation of a 15th Century Canoe and its Fibrework from Papanui Inlet, Otago Peninsula. The Journal of the Polynesian Society. 126(4): 469 - 494.
xviii. Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou Special Amendment to Otago Harbour Mātaitai Application (2014)


Aukaha
KIA KAHA, AU KAHA