



waitangi
TREATY GROUNDS
Our birthplace Te pitowhenua
KORERO

*Towards the future
Respecting the Past*



Good Will Guiding

Will Napier has been appointed to coordinate the burgeoning guiding department at the Treaty Grounds. The recent top Qualmark score attests the professionalism and guest care shown by the dedicated, full-time guiding team, whose knowledge of Waitangi is unsurpassed.

Advanced training this year has shared much of the knowledge built up within the team, and formalised courses have equipped them to deal with everything from first aid to foreign language and customs.

The guides provide very personal tours of the estate, as their whakapapa, and a myriad of family and historic connections, ensures that even hidden stories emerge as they interact with guests.

Business manager Andy Larsen says the guiding schedule has been increased to deal with demand. "That's allowed us to offer our local people year-round jobs, and bring the booking of tours totally in-house, to really focus resources on this 'frontline' friendly face of Waitangi."

Taonga to enrich Waitangi

A collection of treasures from the Hone Heke Foundation was received by the Governor-General and Board at the Treaty Grounds before Easter. Board member Pita Paraone says the collection adds richness to the wider tapestry of the Trust estate and its present taonga. "We acknowledge the generosity of Hone Heke's kinsmen of Matarahurahu in sharing what, essentially, is their ancestor's with the rest of the world. It reminds us of the significance of Hone Heke himself, as he saw the value of signing the Treaty and was the first signatory."

These historic items also relate to the family of Hongi Hika, says David Rankin. "He was like the first king of Ngapuhi, the first to be treated as an equal by the king of England." David says the taonga can now be shared with the country, "showing the world our connection with this land and giving us a place to exhibit."

Battalion goes full circle

On Easter Saturday, members of the Maori Battalion, their whanau and supporters, visited the Treaty Grounds where, in 1940, they left for World War II. Pictured are Cameron and Stephen Pene, with other waka crew, welcoming the veterans at the waka korowai.



Lunch was served under the large Waitangi marquee, after which Maori Affairs Minister, Hon Parekura Horomia, took time to waiata and korero, while some younger people met Ngatokimatawhaorua for the first time.

For the second consecutive time, Waitangi Treaty Grounds has scored a near-perfect mark in the rigorous Qualmark quality assessment. Every detail of a business is examined, from staff training and delivery of customer services through to environmental policies and impacts. Attaining such a high score is "quite uncommon" in any industry says Qualmark's national account manager, Ron Russell. "It reflects the effort over the years by the Trust to identify and put into practice huge business improvements."

Chief Executive Jeanette Richardson says the improvements have been made alongside ongoing increases in visitor numbers. A permanent stage, new washrooms and more guides are among the advances made in the last year. Behind the scenes, there's been an increase in support personnel, ongoing development of Treaty education courses for schools and industry, more communication and consultation with the community, and work on major upgrade plans. "There's been a real focus on service and systems needed to deliver a first-class tourism and education experience," says Jeanette.





Building for the future

This used to be the main management office at the back of the Visitor Centre, but now it is a sign of exciting things to come at the Treaty Grounds. The first stage of major enhancement to our building facilities is on track for opening in August. After extensive consultation, which included inviting our wider family to evening briefings, the Board approved plans to proceed with enlarging and modernising the centre. This essential

\$1m project has been funded largely through individual admissions, and income from leases and services such as weddings, corporate seminars and group guided tours.

Project Manager Larry Jacobson says the next step is beginning the resource consent process for a planned new visitors centre. On a vacant promontory north of the historic precinct, it will use the latest technology to enhance the interpretive history of the Treaty, the Grounds, and our stunning location above Pewhairangi, the Bay of Islands. "It will create a more dramatic sense of entry to the Treaty Grounds, and will cater for the growth in visitor numbers into the future," explains Larry.

Annual visitor numbers have grown by an average of 8-10 percent over recent years, and the present annual tally of 170,000 is more than three times the number for which the present visitor centre was designed, over twenty years ago.



Waitangi Day

Plans for Waitangi day 2007 will take account of the amazing doubling of attendance for the second consecutive year. With over 46,000 entries recorded on a peaceful 6 February, 2006, the Treaty Grounds must prepare for up to 60,000 next year, says business manager Andy Larsen. Transport options are being developed, including the Park 'n' Ride put in place from Hawke Farm (Haruru Falls) this year.

The Prime Minister was among celebrity guests who broadcast on Radio Live from the Treaty Grounds, commenting on the increasing attraction of spending our nation's birthday at its birthplace. Hon Parekura Horomia went one further, when he said "If people are going by, they don't know what they're missing!"



"If we can bed in Waitangi Day as a day that's good for families to come out and be part of, particularly here at Waitangi itself, over time we'll put the legacy and the bitterness of past events here behind us. Most kiwis would like to see that."

Helen Clark

A stage we're not going through

The Waitangi Festival this year made good use of our new permanent stage, at the head of the glade by the waka shelter. An unprecedented, non-stop line-up of entertainers utilised the weatherproof structure, which is complete with power for sound and stage lights. It was pronounced a roaring success after standing up to the gymnastics of Circus Kumarani, the percussive powers of drummer Tim Witta (a member of the renowned group "Strike"), Maori Violinist Elena, plus He Tohu, a Ceilidh band, English Morris dancing, and the full band of the Royal New Zealand Navy.

There are plans to coordinate with community groups and local artistes to provide more stage entertainment. The stage will be another venue for resident kapa haka group He Tohu to expand their performances and collaborate with other entertainers. "This will be especially exciting as we plan holiday and festival entertainment," says Waitangi kapa haka compere Anthony Piripo.



Frequently asked questions

Q: Why do we have to pay to visit Waitangi?

A: Lord and Lady Bledisloe vested the Waitangi Estate in the Trust in 1932 with the express intention that it should be self supporting, and that administration, guardianship and management should "not be a burden on the taxpayer". The Trust is prohibited from raising money, using the estate as security, by the Deed of Gift, which is enshrined in an Act of Parliament.

The first admission charge of one shilling was imposed in 1937 after the former Busby residence, now known as the Treaty House, was restored. The charge contributes to the cost of restoring, preserving and maintaining the historic precincts and buildings and to develop the Treaty Grounds and their facilities.

TIP OF THE SEASON: Membership of Friends of Waitangi is free to Northland residents, entitling them to one free admission when accompanying one other fully-paying adult. It also entitles members to a 50% discount on any guided tours or entertainment operated by the Trust. A 10-year pass is available to anyone, at a cost of \$20 single or \$30 double, allowing the adult whose name it is issued in to enter the Treaty Grounds free of charge for 10 years.