

# Haerenga ki Waitangi - My trip to Waitangi

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## *Na Faith Tupou*

### *Titiro ki muri haere atu ki mua Our past and our future are intertwined*

I felt compelled to visit the birthplace of our nation and attend the events and celebrations first hand at Waitangi, along with my son Gabriel and 59,998 other people.

I heard the karanga of Kiingi Tuuheitia for te iwi Māori to gather under Kotahitanga and wānanga together to come up with a united response. I followed the kōrero at the first hui-a-motu in January at Turangawaewae Marae and another hui soon after at Ratana. We all saw the defacing of the Treaty of Waitangi exhibition at Te Papa.

The Bay of Islands is awe inspiring, the sub-tropical weather, the fauna and the view is just stunningly ātaahua. As we turned the last corner on Puketona Road we saw the sea, glistening straight ahead. On the left there are so many tangata Māori, tangata tiriti, flags flying, tents and marquees, people sitting outside their homes offering kai, inu and parking for a koha, music filled the airwaves. More flags. Traffic jams, gazebos selling their wares. cars and trucks double parked along both sides of the narrow road going towards the Waitangi Treaty grounds, tamariki jumping off the bridge into the moana to cool off, Police walking around in pairs, and Māori wardens giving a friendly wave as they control the traffic.



The [Kiingitanga arrived](#) for the first time in 15 years and were welcomed to Te Whare Runanga ki Waitangi, along with iwi leaders and representatives of Rātana, Parihaka and Te Pāti Māori. The whaikōrero was lively and challenging, and the waiata tautoko included the kuia doing a kopikopi, a style of kanikani.

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Hiko ki Waitangi, Waatea News

The organiser of the Hiko ki Waitangi, Reuben Taipari expected this annual event to be the biggest in 40 years. People joined along the way, running, walking, riding horses, or in a waka. Taking 5 days for a 200 kilometre journey from the far north to Waitangi.

[Government officials visit the Treaty Grounds](#), some felt welcome others unwelcomed by a record number of people. Tautohetohe, robust debate ensued, fierce haka, fiercer kōrero. Those people who disagreed with politicians were drowned out by waiata or told to “e noho, e noho!” The marae ātea is the space of Tūmatauenga, the place for all kōrero to take place. The wero, whaikōrero, waiata and haka, whether at Waitangi, a sports event or Te Matatini are a Māori way to express aroha, mamae, anger and protest.



Tame Iti Hiko, NZ Herald

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Tame Iti, renown activist from the days of Ngā Tamatoa 50 years ago, invited people to join his hikoi carrying white flags. Symbol of a blank canvas, a fresh start. His peaceful are protest was awesome, dramatic and powerful. He is an inspiration for rangatahi to consider other ways of to gain attention. His message is **“Carry on, be who we are”**.



Waka Ngātokimatawhorua being returned to it's whare with haka and karakia



Gabriel(son), Faith, Ross Davis (friend)

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Dame Silvia Cartwright catching up with Gabriel. Dame Silvia encouraged Gabriel to pursue his dreams while he was at intermediate.

Thank you to Ngāpuhi for your manaakitanga, ngā iwi o te Motu and the Kiingitanga for showing unity and leadership reflective of the Chiefs of the United Tribes of NZ. The Crown represented by the gracious and apolitical Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro and the elected Government who will be supporting the introduction of a contentious bill that seeks to define the principles and therefore the intent or interpretation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. An awesome experience of culture, kai, kōrero and kotahitanga (unity). A beautiful day in paradise 🌞