

E ngā mana, e ngā reo  
E ngā pari karangarangatanga puta noa ō te motu  
Tēna koutou, Tēna koutou, Tēna koutou katoa

Tēna koutou ngā kanohi ora ō rātou  
Ngā tūpuna mātua kua taatai atu ki tua ō te ārai.  
Rātou ki ā rātou, whakangaro atu raa.

Tātou ki ā tātou, ngā mihi nunui ki a tātou katoa

*“Ma whero, Ma pango ka tutukia te mahi”*

Tēna koutou e te whānau

I write this letter sincerely from my heart. My heart for Taraika marae. My heart for Wellington High School. I especially write this letter on behalf of those who constructed the fundamental foundations for Māori and Non Māori students to walk with Māori culture in one hand, giving them a sense of belonging and a sense of identity; walking with their academic achievements in the other hand; being able to identify themselves as achievers.

It was 1999 when Wellington High School entered their first kapa haka competition at Manu Ariki in Waikanae. The feeling of receiving second place was only the beginning.

In the year 2000 Wellington High School, along with Hutt Valley High School and Naenae College, became the first Wellington and Hutt secondary schools to enter a national kapa haka school competition hosted by Ngāti Whatua at the Aotea Centre in Auckland. This competition at the time was called Te Ahurei. This was where Wellington High School kapa haka group made history as being the first Wellington Secondary School to perform kapa haka nationally. No one could ever take this away from us or from our school. We were proud, spirited, humbled students representing our school Wellington High. Everyone knew it, and they were out to try and beat us.

Entering the year 2001, weekends became filled with rugby games for the boys, netball for the girls and homework centres on top of practising day and night. The many lunchtime practices and the many hours of dedication, energy and especially weekends was starting to become the norm.

2001 saw Wellington High School become title holder at the Wellington regional kapa haka competitions. Wellington High School was the number one title holder through 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005.

Alongside the Wellington regional kapa haka competitions, Wellington High School won the Wairarapa kapa haka competitions held in Masterton and took part in the Whanganui regionals as well as maintaining number one at Manu Ariki in Taumarunui before the Manu Ariki competitions came to an end.

In 2001, one year after the learning house Taraika was opened by the whānau unit of the time (the mana whenua Te Ati Awa, nanny Grey, aunty Puti Mackey, matua Ben Tangaere), the name of the Wellington High School kapa haka group Te Whānau ā Taraika, Wellington High School was made official by the supporting parents and the supporting teachers.

The decision was made upon the history of Taraika. Son to Whatonga who captained the great canoe Kurahaupō. Whatonga who settled in Heretaunga, Hawkes Bay and made his journey through the Manawatu Gorge over the Rimutaka and settled in the place we now know as Te Whanganui ā Tara.

Taraika, son to his mother Hotuwaipara who gave birth to him while cleaning the fish which her husband Whatonga caught one day. While cleaning the fish she slit her palm on the back of the rock cod. Hotuwaipara was startled as she started to have contractions, leading her to the birth of her son. This incident led her to name her son Tara-ika: the origins of the learning house "Taraika" situated at Wellington High School. Standing next to "Hineakau" the house of hospitality of Taraika's first wife.

From 1999 to 2019 Te Whānau ā Taraika have competed in all the Wellington Regional kapa haka competitions. Te Whānau ā Taraika would not have come this far without the supporting parents and especially the supporting staff who have supported their kapa haka group since its beginnings.

Over the years participation has declined in kapa haka. While Rangi, Baden and I have collated a bracket that could potentially see Wellington High School reclaim their title as number one, we cannot achieve this without a full team of 40 Wellington High School performers.

Our main objective for Te Whānau ā Taraika Kapa Haka is to have our number one kapa haka title returned to where it belongs, at Wellington High School.

I write this letter to ask for more students to join Kapa Haka to help us reach our objective and deliver our bracket to the Wellington Kapa Haka regionals.

We are aiming for 20 boys and 20 girls. Practices start on Saturday 4 May at 2pm giving students time enough to attend their sports, and Taraika will be open as a homework centre in the morning. Kapa haka Practice will finish on Sunday 5 May at 12pm.

This is the first of 11 kapa haka live-ins. Parents and teachers are invited to attend on Saturday 4 May at 2pm. This noho will start with a meeting with parents and teachers to outline the forecast for kapa haka for the next 10 noho.

*With your food basket, with my food basket we can feed the multitudes.  
Na tou rourou, na Taku rourou ka ora te iwi*

Nāku iti nei

Shane Aramoana  
Rangi Tangaere  
Baden Ewart  
Kapa Haka Tutors