

TE WHAKATŪWHERATANGA

Introduction

**“Tangi te riroriro tuarua rawa mai
tikina mai tirohia . . . ”³**

*“The cry of the riroriro twice is heard;
draw nigh and observe . . . ”*

This report does not purport to be a definitive study of the language structure of Ngāti Maniapoto it is merely a first hand glimpse and example of the enormity of the varied form and character of the language. It is not intended to lay down rules of grammar and usage. Time has not afforded the documentation of such a study. However this is a beginning, and we consider this report to be the first volume of a series of reports on the kupu of Ngāti Maniapoto.

It has been our intention not to direct the topics found in this book in any particular direction. We followed the flow of information as our kaumātua spent time conversing and pondering over the “deep and meaningful” and laughing and singing through their story telling of childhood events and the dramas of the present, all touched with hopes, dreams, fears, smiles and tears, life and death. Some were approached to write an article on a subject of their own passion so readers might experience the written language of Ngāti Maniapoto and hear the fears, concerns and aspirations for our language and ways of being Ngāti Maniapoto.

It is hoped that the use of letters, marae committee meeting minutes and various written material also allows readers an insight into the style and forms of Ngāti Maniapoto’s written language.

This book does not, nor was it intended to, follow closely the traditional dictionary format. Rather it is a collage of words to give more expression and depth of meaning to the preferred Ngāti Maniapoto words. Hopefully it will also show a way of thinking and a way of being, which is in as great a danger of being lost as the language itself.

For the kaiako of the various Kohanga and the Kura Kaupapa it may provide a resource in the field of guiding our children. For the hungry learner it is a chance to whet the appetite with a little of our own fare. For our kaumātua a talking point to stimulate discussion, debate and create a path to memories of times and people who have gone to the hereafter.

We offer this book to Ngāti Maniapoto with sincere intent for the preservation of the dialect of Ngāti Maniapoto.

This is just a beginning and we hope that this report encourages similar work and that further volumes will follow.

Shane Te Ruki

Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Porou

³ Song by Wheto of Rereahu, Maniapoto and Ngāti Maru of Taranaki.