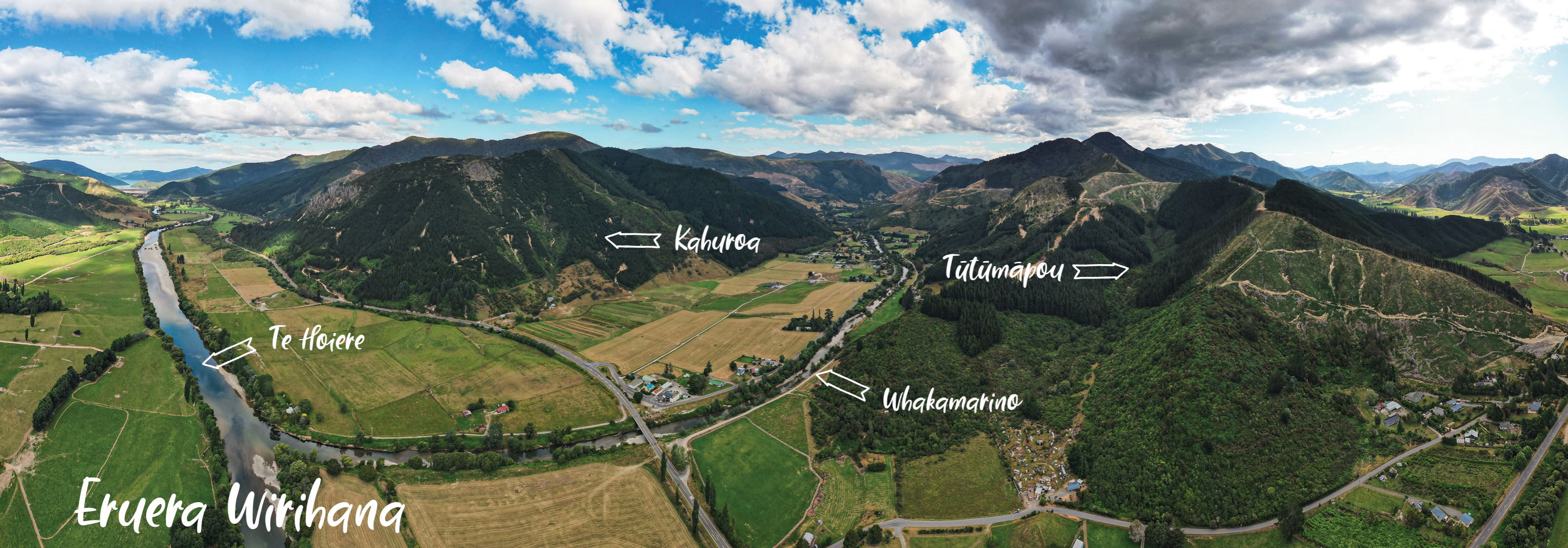




Ngāti Kuia

E Koro Pāroa Whakarauora Waiata





Eruera Wirihana is a Ngāti Kuia ancestor, best known for sharing the pūrākau (stories), waiata (songs), and karakia (incantations) of Ngāti Kuia with Stephenson Percy Smith.

His parents were Wirihana Kaipara and Kunari, and his paternal grandfather was the chief Pākauwera.¹ He was baptised Eruera Nui, later becoming known as Eruera Wirihana or Edwin Wilson and was married to Miriama Huriwai, of Ngāi Tūāhuriri.²

As a child, Eruera survived the raids by the northern iwi fleeing into the hills with his father from the battle of Hikapu. This battle was at Pinohia Pā, where the Kenepuru Sound meets Te Hoiere.³ The chiefs of the pā were brothers Maihi and Pākauwera. Pākauwera was also the grandfather

of Eruera. Both rangatira were killed during the battle.⁴ Kunari, the mother of Eruera was taken captive and married to Apitia of Te Ātiawa.⁵ Later in life, Eruera would “relate, with great gusto, how he managed to escape to the bush during the raid.”⁶

Eruera signed the Ngāti Kuia and Rangitāne Deed of Sale in 1856.⁷ He was also on the Ngāti Kuia Te Hora committee for Te Kerēme (claim) with Ngāti Māmoe and Ngāi Tahu.⁸ During his lifetime he worked as a ferryman until a bridge was built over the Whakamarino River.⁹

He also worked as an “agent for a Nelson firm of storekeepers”, and in his later life, he operated the store at Canvastown for around 32 years until his death in 1902.¹⁰

Before this, he lived in Wellington for a time, where he would visit Smith.¹¹

The manuscript of information created with Smith is one of the most significant sources of Ngāti Kuia. It contains a wealth of pūrākau, waiata, and karakia and is held in the Alexander Turnbull Library.¹² He told the pūrākau of Māui and Tāwhaki from a Ngāti Kuia perspective and “had evidently learnt them by rote from the teaching of his grandfather Pakauwera, and was careful to repeat them in the exact words he had been taught.”¹³ He was also said to be particularly knowledgeable on bird catching.¹⁴

Smith described how Eruera “had an astonishing memory for his native songs; it was only necessary to quote

any one line, and he would immediately begin droning the rest of it.”¹⁵ Eruera shared approximately 150 waiata and karakia, which were mostly labelled “He waiata nā Ngāti Kuia”.¹⁶

The widely sung Ngāti Kuia waiata tangi E Koro Pāroa was recorded in this manuscript. It was written by Tai Te Ariki (who was a great uncle of Eruera) for his brother, Pākauwera after his death in the battle of Hikapu.¹⁷

Eruera passed away on Sunday, November 30th 1902 after an “illness that the old man has fought against with wonderful doggedness.”¹⁸ He was buried at Canvastown on Tuesday 2 December, leaving behind no children or will.¹⁹

E koro! Pāroa, tirohia iho au,
 Ka waiho nga pu harakeke,
 I tua i te hoki nei
 Mo Kahuroa, e tū nei
 He wehi nōku,
 Tūtūmāpou, e tū mai ra,
 Kia whakōrero mai,
 I te tākiritanga i te ata,
 I whanatu ai Koutou.

E koro Pāroa tirohia iho au

My Elder, Pāroa, look upon me

Ka waiho ngā pū harakeke

The flax bushes have been set aside

I tua i te hoki nei

To be woven on your return

Mō Kahuroa; e tū nei

The mountain Kahuroa, stands there

He wehi nōku

Giving me a sense of awe

Tūtūmāpou e tū mai rā

The mountain Tūtūmāpou stands before me

Kia whaikōrero mai

With the intention of speaking to me

I te tākiritanga i te ata

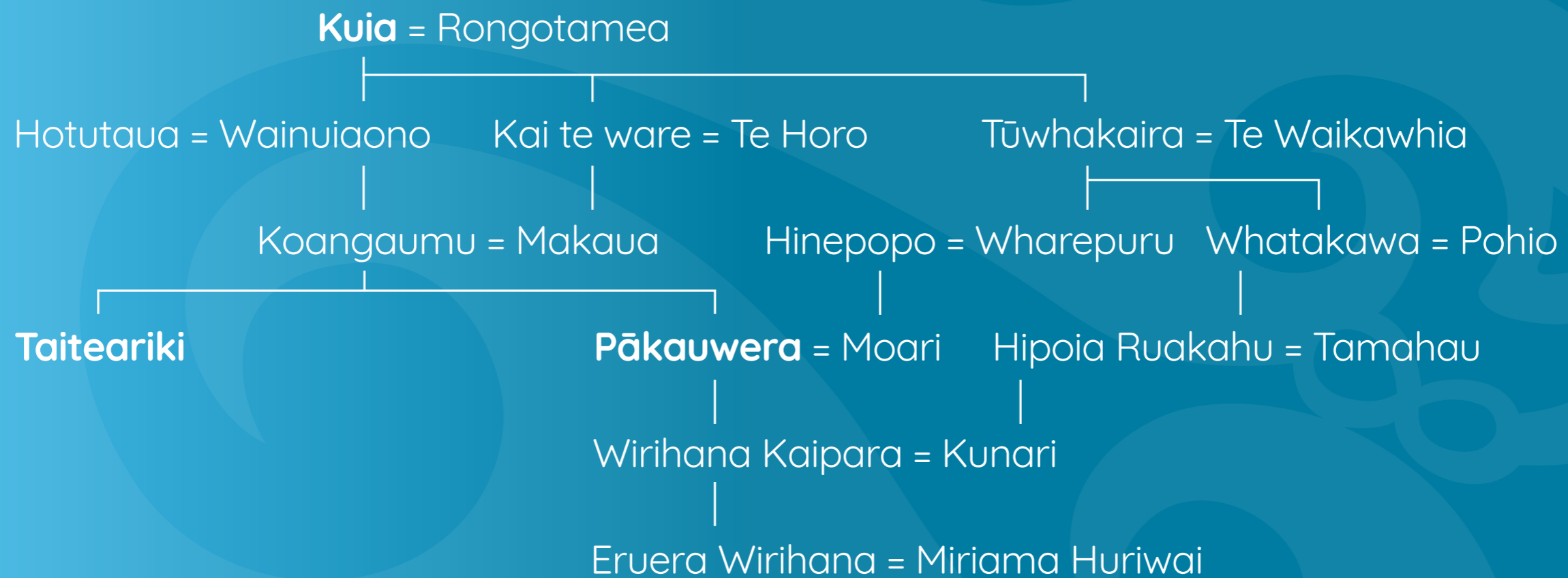
At the break of dawn

I whanatu ai koutou

Your spirit will arise to depart

Pāroa above is another name for Pōkaiwhiri, Kahuroa is the name of a mountain in Moirua
 on Pelorus Sound. Tūtūmāpou is another, and if the lightning was seen to play about its sides, it
 was a sign that a woman was coming as a visitor, if seen on the inland side there it was a man,
 but of no consequence. If seen on the top of the hill, then it was the sign of a chief.

Whakapapa





Pinohia

Kaiuma

Motuweka

Mahakipaoa

Revitalising E Koro Pāroa

As part of the lead up to the Waitangi Tribunal claims, Ngāti Kuia revived a number of waiata.

The first of the waiata revived was E Koro Pāroa, during a wānanga led by Mark Moses around the mid 1990s at Te Hora Marae. Exponents of Kapa haka and Te Reo, Wayne Hippolite and Huataki Whareaitu came together with others to translate and give a tune to E Koro Pāroa as a way of revitalising and bringing life to the kōrero within. This waiata is still used regularly and often when representing the iwi at various kaupapa.

In 2022, Tom Alesna and Wayne Hippolite gave a second life to the waiata in remembrance of late kaumātua, Kereopa Ratapu. It was unveiled at the national secondary school kapa haka competitions held in Tāmaki Makaurau by Ngā Aho Rau Kapa Haka (Nelson College & Nelson College for Girls).

GLOSSARY

rote – to learn something off by heart

droning – a style of singing

CREDITS

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