

Press Release: Whakatohea Workshops inform Settlement Strategies

The Whakatohea Pre Settlement Claims Trust recently completed their latest round of information hui in Opotiki and out in the regions. The aim of the hui was to share information about the process and the negotiation strategy as well as canvas ideas and aspirations from the participants.

Hui were held at Terere marae and venues in Whakatane, Tauranga, Hamilton, Auckland and Wellington. The hui planned for Rotorua had to be aborted because of the weather and that has been rescheduled for next Wednesday 26th April. It was great to see the range of people turning out to hear about progress including a number of rangatahi, some of the WAI claimants, people involved in the 1996 negotiations, whanau working in the upper levels of government departments.

One of the overwhelming messages that emerged from this round of hui is that it is time for Whakatohea to complete the settlement. People didn't want to see another generation of kaumatua pass away without seeing a positive outcome from this negotiation. The participants provided useful feedback on the areas for negotiation and what they wanted to see Whakatohea develop into the future.

Some options for the future included development of trade training courses in Opotiki, student accommodation for University students, supporting the aquaculture development, the return of lands, and co-governance over the DoC estate.

The Whakatohea Pre-settlement Claims Trust appreciated the contributions that the Iwi have made and the ideas and concepts for settlement will contribute to the next round of workshops with Hapu and Marae here in Opotiki. As Graeme Reisterer notes, "It is important to have the opportunity to engage with as many Whakatohea as possible so they see themselves in the settlement process going forward".

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Caption: Whakatohea Whanau connect at Whakatohea Pre Settlement Claims Trust Workshop

