



Aukaha

Cultural Narrative Précis

Prepared for: Ministry of Health

Project Name: New Dunedin Hospital

Introduction and overview

Mana whenua, led by Aukaha Limited, are deeply invested in the New Dunedin Hospital (NDH) project. This interest is driven primarily by the NDH's *location* and *function*. Aukaha is therefore hopeful that the NDH, though ultimately a utilitarian facility, can thoughtfully reflect Kāi Tahu history before and since 1848, especially as it relates to the upper harbour area. By such means, we seek to avoid a continuation of the worst parts of that history: namely, the active obstruction of a collective Kāi Tahu presence in and around Dunedin – and consequent Māori health inequities that continue to burden Māori lives and households in southern Te Waipounamu.

Location

From a Kāi Tahu vantage, the NDH site is a window into the harsh realities of Dunedin's colonial settlement. Put differently, the post-1848 history of this general area illustrates the process by which nineteenth century Kāi Tahu became strangers and trespassers in their own lands.



This process of subjugation happened quite quickly. In 1848 local Kāi Tahu boat crews helped pilot British immigrant ships into Otago Harbour. These people taught colonists how to fish, ferried their families and goods from Koputai to Ōtepoti, and assisted colonists with their first buildings. As Thomas Hocken wrote, “The Maoris helped their new comrades

with all the good humour of the race; indeed their assistance was invaluable in the erection of these primitive dwellings.”ⁱ However, as occurred with Māori in other parts of New Zealand – and indeed indigenous people throughout the Anglo-settler world – as soon as colonists were independent of Kāi Tahu, the former looked upon the latter with a mixture of indifference and contempt. This occurred as early as 1851 when colonial authorities physically removed Kāi Tahu from a favoured campsite in Rattray Street; an evening of haka apparently being the final straw.ⁱⁱ

The seeds of this situation were sewn in 1844 when colonial officials rejected attempts by Kāi Tahu leaders to secure boat landings and adjacent reserves in the upper harbour. This was despite colonial officials noting longstanding Māori occupation and use of this area.ⁱⁱⁱ Undeterred, Kāi Tahu continued to lobby Crown officials for land in the upper harbour after 1848 and central government granted a Māori reserve on Dunedin's foreshore in 1852. Otago's provincial council bitterly opposed this course of action and worked hard to overturn it. This was achieved in 1866 when the government vested the reserve in the council, effectively ending collective Kāi Tahu land ownership within Dunedin city.^{iv}

Central government also intervened in the late 1850s to erect a residence for Kāi Tahu visiting Dunedin after the provincial council consistently failed to do so. Until then, men and women, young and old, mainly from Ōtākou, were reduced to sleeping under upturned boats, even in the depths of winter with snow on



the ground.^v Built on council-owned land at the foot of High Street, this modest "Native Hostel" was completed in early 1860 and became a popular marketplace. It was here that Kāi Tahu groups continued to sell fish and potatoes to colonists in mutually beneficial exchanges. However, the building was literally buried and then dismantled a mere five years later as Princes Street was backfilled and widened during the gold-rush.^{vi} Promises of a replacement facility were not honoured.^{vii} As one historian recently put it, "Ōtākou Māori...effectively lost access to the Dunedin market, just as it boomed."^{viii}

The process of land reclamation that consumed the Native Hostel, especially after Bell Hill was quarried and spread out over the adjoining foreshore, continued in patchworked fits and bursts in the upper harbour over the next hundred years. This land was given over to mainly industrial uses, including the former Cadbury site which is at the heart of the NDH. In any event,

reclamation negatively impacted upon the ecology of Otago Harbour, which is a key mahika kai (food source) for Kāi Tahu. The harbour's fish and shellfish also came under huge pressure as colonists began commercial fishing. By 1876, for example, 16 boats and 40 men worked the inner harbour alone.^{ix} This overfishing undermined traditional Kāi Tahu reliance on maritime resources,^x but did so precisely as colonial settlement severely restricted access to land-based mahika kai. As a government commissioner wrote in 1891:

In olden times, before the advent of the Europeans and the settlement of the country, [Kāi Tahu] were at liberty to go at will in search of food, but now, should they chance to go fishing or bird-catching in any locality where they have no reserve, they are frequently ordered off by the settlers.^{xi}

In summary, for Kāi Tahu, colonial land loss and the attendant erosion of political power and mahika kai, which began in 1848, are all observable at and through the NDH site. While these are undeniably difficult aspects of Dunedin's past, this history also shows that our Kāi Tahu ancestors were, as with colonial-era Māori more generally, "adaptive and...influential survivors, rather than perpetual victims."^{xii} Aukaha believes that the NDH project presents multiple opportunities to thoughtfully reflect that tenaciousness.



Function

The colonial state purchased land from Kāi Tahu in essentially eight large transactions.^{xiii} The biggest of these, by a huge margin, was Kemp's Deed, which was hurriedly and haphazardly undertaken in mid-1848. This covers the bulk of Te Waipounamu, including most of present-day Canterbury and Otago. During negotiations for this block, and so too the later Murihiku Deed in 1853, government agents held out the promise of schools and hospitals to Kāi Tahu communities as part payment for tribal lands. Indeed, a government agent involved in both transactions later attested that:

[I]n making purchases from the natives I ever represented to them that though the money payment might be small, their chief recompense would lie in the kindness of the Govt. towards them, the erection & maintenance of schools & hospitals for their benefit.^{xiv}

This official thought regional hospitals should be established and made available to Kāi Tahu people. He further thought these facilities would be supplemented by roaming medical attendants who visited Kāi Tahu villages. The Ōtākou-based chief, Te Matenga Taiaroa confirmed that during land purchase negotiations “there were other words referring to schools [and] hospitals...on account of which the land was given.”^{xv} Likewise, in 1879 the Ruapuke Island-based chief, Teone Topi Patuki recalled that he and other Kāi Tahu representatives assented to purchase terms presented to them decades earlier due to mention of health and education facilities.^{xvi} Indeed, the aforementioned government agent explained that, “I found these promises of great weight in inducing the Natives to come in-but these promises have not yet been fulfilled.”^{xvii} These “promises” of schools and hospitals, in his words, were “of great use” in breaking “down their strong and most justifiable opposition...and in facilitating the acquisition of...lands ...nearly as large as England.”^{xviii}

Kāi Tahu appeals for schools and hospitals throughout and beyond the 1850s thus became part and parcel of Te Kerēme, the so-called Ngāi Tahu Claim. As the Waitangi Tribunal wrote in 1991, this became “an essential part of [the] overall claim for recognition that the Crown had yet to fulfil the terms of the purchases.”^{xix} The Tribunal noted that government built a hospital in Dunedin in the 1850s, “apparently as a direct response to Ngai Tahu [sic] representations.”^{xx}



However, it found that after the Otago province took this facility over in 1856, central government provided minimal financial assistance for Māori patients who “soon found themselves unwelcome there.”^{xxi} A Crown historian thus admitted to the Tribunal that the government’s

provision of medical care to Kāi Tahu was “woefully inadequate.”^{xxii} This historical context also helps to explain the significance of the NDH to Kāi Tahu.

In addition to these underlying features – of place and of history – Kāi Tahu interest in the NDH is motivated by contemporary challenges. We refer here to a range of negative health outcomes experienced by Kāi Tahu and mātāwaka in southern Te Waipounamu, compared with the region’s non-Māori population. Reducing these health inequities is a key concern for Aukaha and requires ongoing and coordinated input from iwi and whānau as well as the state and health practitioners. In so doing, the NDH building itself will play a crucial role. For example, physical expression of values such as tapu, mana, whakapapa and mauri will have a direct bearing on the utility and efficacy of the NDH for Māori users and Māori staff alike. Aukaha is therefore committed to creative design processes that achieve this in ways that are culturally relevant but also fiscally prudent and operationally practical.

Conclusion

Demolition of the former Cadbury factory, which forms the corpus of the NDH site, will shortly begin. Those tasked with building the NDH, and indeed the public at large, will soon view this block of land as a blank slate – in much the same way as Dunedin’s earliest Pākehā colonists viewed the upper harbour in the 1840s. However, then, as now, Kāi Tahu history lays beneath and Kāi Tahu hopes for the future hang in the air. Aukaha, on behalf of Mana whenua and Papatipu Rūnaka, looks forward to refining these aspirations and weaving them into the NDH.

ⁱ Thomas Hocken, *Contributions to the Early History of New Zealand [Settlement of Otago]*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1898), pp. 95-97.

ⁱⁱ Jonathan West, *The Face of Nature: An Environmental History of the Otago Peninsula*, (Dunedin, N.Z.: Otago University Press, 2017), p. 180; Bill Dacker, *Te Mamae me te Aroha – The Pain and the Love: A history of Kāi Tahu Whānui in Otago, 1844 – 1994*, (Dunedin, N.Z.: Otago University Press, 1994), pp. 31-32.
and Dacker

ⁱⁱⁱ See for example, Edward Shortland, *The Southern Districts of New Zealand: A Journal with Passing Notices of the Customs of the Aborigines*, (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1851), pp. 174-76; “THE OTAKOU NATIVE LAND CLAIMS: THEIR ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND DEVELOPMENT,” *Otago Daily Times*, 12 November 1892, p. 5.

^{iv} Dacker, pp. 32, 37-38; West, p. 329.

^v Dacker, p. 42; West, pp. 180-81; Shrader, pp. 197.

^{vi} Schrader, pp. 197-98; West, p. 181.

^{vii} West, p. 181.

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} West, p. 216.

^x See *Ibid.*, pp. 215-17; 264-65.

^{xi} Alexander Mackay, Report on Middle Island Native Land Question, *AJHR* (1888), p.8. See also West, p. 264.

^{xii} After Hautahi Kingi, “The Past Matters: Reflections on Tangata Whenua,” *The Pantograph Punch*, 15 April 2015: <https://www.pantograph-punch.com/post/past-matters-tangata-whenua>, and K. R. Howe, “Review of Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*,” *New Zealand Herald*, 23 October 2003: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=3530379

^{xiii} There were technically 10 land purchases, but three of these – the Port Cooper Deed, Port Levy Deed and Akaroa Deed (entered into between 1849 and 1856) – relate to Banks Peninsula.

^{xiv} Waitangi Tribunal, *Ngāi Tahu Land Report 1991*, 19.2.1.

^{xv} *Ibid.*, 8.10.13.

^{xvi} *Ibid.*, 10.6.4.

^{xvii} *Ibid.*, 8.8.21.

^{xviii} *Ibid.*, 19.2.2.

^{xix} *Ibid.*, 2.13.

^{xx} *Ibid.*

^{xxi} *Ibid.*

^{xxii} *Ibid.*