Speech by Mayor Cull to Hui-ā-Iwi 2015 dinner
on Thursday 19 November 2015 at the University of Otago

Mihi

Tēnā koutou katoa e huihui mai nei.

Ki ngā mate, Haere, haere, haere atu rā

Ki te whare e tū nei, e tū, e tū, e tū

Koutou hoki Vice Chancellor Harlene Hayne a ngā ihorei o te whare wānanga o Ōtago, tēnā koutou

E ngā kāhui rangatira o Te Runaka o Ītākou, o Kāti Huirapa Runaka ki Puketeraki, me o Te Runaka o Moeraki Araiteuru runaka

Tēnā koutou katoa

E ngā manuhiri, haere mai ki Ōtepoti.

E ngā Rangatira Tā Mark kōrua ko Tā Tipene, e mihi ana Mō ō kōrua mahi e tuitui nei te iwi o Ngāi Tahu mō te oranga o te iwi, Nō reira tēnā kōrua.

E te Iwi,

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa
Tonight I have been asked to say a few words about Ngai Tahu's contribution to Otago/Southland.

First and foremost, their contribution is in being here in the first place – the amalgamation of Ngati Mamoe, Waitaha and Ngai Tahu that makes up the manawhenua in the south, and were here to welcome the first whalers, sealers, traders and then settlers that came to these shores.

Ngai Tahu in this particular area – the three runaka – are important because they are manawhenua – of this place. And for me it starts with place. Dunedin is a place and Ngai Tahu are the first face of Otepoti/Dunedin, the indigenous face or as I sometimes express it to audiences overseas – the ancestor culture of this place. In that sense the manawhenua represent the whole community.

Increasingly that is the way I would like to see Dunedin City Council and local runaka interact. Manawhenua provided the community welcome to the new Council in 2013 when it was sworn in.

Manawhenua provide a greeting to visiting overseas delegations and also accompanied my delegation to Shanghai earlier this year and offered mihi at the beginning of official meetings.

In that role, manawhenua are not speaking just for Ngai Tahu, but for the whole community.

Obviously there are a number of formal ways DCC interacts with Ngai Tahu: Some are required by law – i.e. Treaty obligations. Some are confined to Dunedin while others are regional. DCC wants to continue and indeed enhance those.

But additionally DCC partners with Ngai Tahu in other significant formal ways.

DCC’s Environment Strategy – Te Ao Turoa - was a very appropriate piece of work to partner on, given that it is entirely about preserving, treasuring and restoring the natural world of this area.

New Zealand is, indeed increasingly so, an Asia/Pacific nation but obviously with strong European antecedents. However the only cultural 'brand' – for want of a better word – that will uniquely identify New Zealand into the future is that of the tangata whenua – the Maori. That is what identifies Aotearoa as US as distinct from our constituent parts.

In Dunedin, the ancestor face of this area is that of Ngai Tahu and that I would like to see strengthened and presented more to the fore.

But Dunedin is also proud of its Scottish whakapapa and the warm connection between manawhenua and our Scottish ancestors is expressed most plainly on the DCC Coat of Arms – the warrior and the Highlander on either side. So on many occasions, waiata and bagpipes will be heard together – the piobroch and the pounamu – the piupiu and the plaid. That’s us. That partnership represents all the other cultural strands in our community too.

My Council and I greatly value the growing warmth and mutual respect of our relationship with the manawhenua of the south. We learn much as we explore how we might strengthen and expand that relationship. We learn things about the history of this place that had been hidden. We re-forge old friendships – as we have with Ngati Ruanui and Ngati Ruahine of Taranaki – one time enforced quests of our community. We find things out about special places like Hereweka/Harbour Cone and Pukekura – places we jointly care for.

I am committed to growing that expression of who we are as a community, to partnering with, presenting and valuing the manawhenua face of our community that is Ngai Tahu.