

NGĀ WHAKAMĀRAMA GLOSSARY OF MĀORI TERMS

Disclaimer: This glossary has been produced to support the reader in their understanding of Māori words used in this handbook. With the complex nature of the Māori language, one word can have different meanings depending on the context it is used in. This glossary has endeavoured to provide multiple meanings for these complex words. However, the direct translations used for some of these more complex words may not truly represent the meaning in which the authors were intending.

Waikato-Tainui (tribal people of the Waikato region) use double vowels instead of a macron, i.e. whaanau instead of whānau, hapuu instead of hapū, this style of writing does not change the meaning of the word.

The definitions of the words/terms found in this glossary are based on the [Tai Tumu](#), [Tai Pari](#), [Tai Ao Waikato-Tainui Environmental Plan](#) and the online [Te Aka Māori-English](#), [English-Māori Dictionary](#)

*Indicates definitions from [Tai Tumu](#), [Tai Pari](#), [Tai Ao Waikato-Tainui Environmental Plan](#)

Te Reo Māori	Te Reo Pākeha
A	
Aotearoa	Traditional name for New Zealand
Ahu otaota	Shell middens
Ake, ake	Forever and ever
Ariari	Board used during white-baiting
Ariki	Paramount chief, high chief, chieftain, lord, leader, aristocrat, first-born in a high ranking family – qualities of a leader is a concern for the integrity and prosperity of the people, the land, the language and other cultural treasures
Arohatanga	To love, feel compassionate, empathise
Ātaahua	Beautiful, handsome, pleasant, pretty, lovely
Atua	God
Awa	River, stream, waterways, fresh water bodies
Awahi rito or mātua	The 'parent' leaves of the harakeke (NZ flax); these leaves sit on either side of the youngest leaf (rito) in the fan
H	
Hapū*	Subtribe, usually containing a number of whānau (family unit) and marae (gathering place) with a common ancestor or ancestors
Hauanga kai*	The customary and contemporary gathering and use of naturally occurring and cultivated foods (see mahinga kai)
Haukāinga	Home, true home, local people of a marae, home people
Haumiatiketike	Atua (God) of fernroot and uncultivated food
Hīkoi	To step, stride, march, walk
Hīnaki	Wicker eel basket Fyke net – used in this context as a method for kōura (freshwater crayfish) monitoring
Hongi	To press noses in greeting
Hua rākau	Fruit tree
Hui	To gather, congregate, assemble, meet
I	
Iwi*	Extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, nationality, race; often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor

K		Kete	Handwoven basket
Kai	Eat, food, dine	Kīngitanga	King Movement, developed in the 1850s, and established to stop the loss of land, promote Māori authority, maintain law and order, and promote traditional values and culture
Kaihaukai	Tribal feast	Ki uta ki tai	Recognising the connections across landscape, people and ecosystems. Literally translated as "From the mountains to the sea"
Kaimahi	Worker	Koere	Bracken fern bundles used for kōura (freshwater crayfish) monitoring
Kāinga	Home, settlement, residence	Kōhanga	A nursery for the young – used in this handbook as a reference to the important role of healthy ecosystems in the rearing of important species from juvenile to adult
Kaitiaki*	Caregiver, caretaker, guardian, the role of protecting and nurturing the māuri of all things and the surrounding inanimate environment	Kōiwi	Human bones, corpse
Kaitiakitanga*	The exercise of kaitiaki (guardian) roles and responsibilities. The exercise recognises the intricate balance and integral relationship between all natural resources	Korapa awa	A stop net made of shade cloth
	Sustainable resource management	Kōrari	Generic term for the flowers of the harakeke (NZ flax)
Kaka	Traditional form of the scoop net used to harvest whitebait on the lower Waikato River	Kōrero	Conversation, discussion
Kanohi ki te kanohi	Face to face, in person, in the flesh	Koroneihana	Coronation. The largest annual gathering of followers of the Kingitanga (King movement), celebrating the anniversary of the anointing of the Māori King or Queen
Kāo	No – used only as a negative answer to a question	Korowai	Cloak
Kapa haka	Māori performing group	Kuia	Elder woman
Karakia	To recite ritual chants, say grace, pray, recite a prayer, chant	M	
Karanga	Formal call, ceremonial call, welcome call; a ceremonial call of welcome to visitors onto a marae (gathering place), or equivalent venue, at the start of a pōwhiri (welcome ceremony)	Mahau	Porch of the meeting house
Kaumātua*	Elders (male or female)	Mahi	Work, job, employment, trade (work), practice, occupation, activity, exercise, operation, function
Kaupapa	Topic, policy, matter of discussion, plan, purpose, scheme, proposal, agenda, programme, theme, issue, initiative	Mahinga kai	Customary and contemporary gathering and use of naturally occurring and cultivated foods
Kaupapa Māori research	An approach underpinned by Māori values; generally utilised by researchers who are Māori, and who are undertaking research with, and for Māori	Mahinga mātaitai	Customary seafood gathering site, shellfish bed
Kāuta	Cooking shed, kitchen, cookhouse, house, shack, lean-to	Maimai aroha	Lament, expression or token of affection
Kawa	Protocols and customs	Māmā	Mother
Kawenata	Covenant, testament, charter, contract, agreement, treaty – any undertaking that binds parties in a permanent and morally irrevocable relationship	Mana	Authority, spiritual authority, protective power and prestige
		Manaakitanga	The provision of sustenance, care, and support, particularly in the hospitality shown to manuhiri

Mana motuhake	Separate identity, autonomy, self-government, self-determination, independence, sovereignty, authority – mana (authority) through self-determination and control over one's own destiny	Mātauranga	Knowledge, wisdom, understanding
Mana whakahaere	The exercise of rights and responsibilities to ensure that the balance and mauri (life force) of the rohe (area) is maintained	Mātauranga Māori*	Traditional and contemporary Māori knowledge, knowledge systems and knowledge bases. This includes the body of knowledge originating from Māori ancestors, including Māori worldview and perspectives, Māori creativity, and cultural and spiritual practices. As an organic and living knowledge base, mātauranga Māori is ever growing and expanding
Mana whenua	The tāngata whenua (indigenous people) group or groups with primary mana whakahaere (rights and responsibilities) over an area	Mātua	Parents
Manuhiri, manuwhiri	Visitor, guest	Maunga	Mountain
Māori	Indigenous New Zealander, indigenous person of Aotearoa New Zealand	Mau rākau	Wielding of weapons
Marae*	Traditional and contemporary gathering places that may contain a wharenuī (meeting house), wharekai (dining room), wharepaku (ablution block), whare (other houses or structures); may also include a papakāinga (communal Māori land) In Māori society, the marae is a place where the culture can be celebrated, where the Māori language can be spoken, where intertribal obligations can be met, where customs can be explored and debated, where family occasions such as birthdays can be held, and where important ceremonies, such as welcoming visitors or farewelling the dead (tangihanga), can be performed. Like the related institutions of old Polynesia, the marae is a wāhi tapu (sacred place) which carries great cultural meaning	Mauri*	Life force. Some hold the view that both animate and inanimate objects have mauri
Māra kai	A place where food is grown, often used in reference to the more contemporary version of a vegetable garden	Mita	Pronunciation, sound of a language distinct to a hapū (subtribe) or iwi (tribe) when compared to others from other rohe (areas)
Maramataka	Planting and fishing calendar	Moana	Sea, ocean, large lake
Maro kuta	Small loincloth worn by women, made from kuta (giant spike rush)	Mokopuna	Descendant, grandchild
Mātaitai	Seafood, shellfish	Mōteatea	Lament, traditional chant
Matariki	Pleiades, the Seven Sisters – an open cluster of many stars in the constellation Taurus, with at least six stars visible to the naked eye	Motu	Island, country
		Muka	Fibre inside the leaf of the harakeke (NZ flax) highly valued for its strength
		N	
		Ngahere	Bush, forest
		Ngā mihi	Acknowledgements
		Ngāti	Prefix for a tribal group
		Nohoanga	Dwelling place, abode
		O	
		Oranga	Health
		P	
		Pā	Inhabitants of a fortified place Large groupings of plants valued by Māori weavers, e.g. pā harakeke, pā kuta, pā raupō
		Pae pae	Dredge net used for kōura (freshwater crayfish) monitoring
		Paimārire	Christian faith still practiced by Waikato Māori
		Pāke	Cape
		Papakāinga	Original home, home base, village, communal Māori land

Papatipu rūnanga	Uphold the mana (authority) of Ngāi Tahu (South Island tribal group) people over the land, sea, and natural resources	Rangatiratanga	Chieftainship, right to exercise authority, chiefly autonomy, chiefly authority, ownership, leadership of a social group, domain of the rangatira (chief), attributes of a chief
Papatūānuku	Earth, Earth mother and wife of rangi-nui – all living things originate from them	Rangi-nui	Atua (God) of the sky and husband of Papatūānuku (Earth mother)
Paru	Muds valued by Māori weavers for their dyeing properties	Raranga	To weave
Pā tuna	Eel weir, weir for catching eels	Raupatu	Confiscation, conquered, overcome. Often used in relation to forceful land acquisition
Pēpe	Baby, infant	Repo	Swamp, bog, marsh
Pepeha	Formulaic expression, saying of the ancestors	Reporepo	Swamp
Piupiu	Woven garment	Ringawera	Kitchen workers
Poi	Lightweight ball on a string of varying length that is swung or twirled rhythmically to sung accompaniment Poi dance – songs performed in which the poi is swung in various movements to accompany the singing	Ritenga	Custom, customary practice, habit, practice, resemblance, implication
Pōtae	Hat	Rito	Growing shoot of the harakeke (NZ flax)
Pōtae taua	Mourning cap or wreath	Rohe	District, area, territory, vicinity, region (see takiwā)
Pou	Post, pole, pillar	Rongoā	Traditional medicine, remedy
Poukai	King movement gathering – hui (gathering) held on marae (gathering place) where people who support the Kingitanga (King movement) demonstrate their loyalty, contribute to funds, and discuss movement affairs	Rongo mā Tāne	Atua (God) of the kūmara and cultivated food
Pōwhiri	Welcome ceremony on a marae	Rōpū	Group, party of people, company, gang, association, entourage, committee, organisation
Puku	Stomach	Rūnanga	Tribal council, iwi authority
Puna	Spring, well, pool	T	
Pūtaiao	Science	Takiwā	District, area, territory, vicinity, region (see rohe)
R		Take	Topic, subject, matter, issue, concern
Rākau	Tree, stick, timber, wood, spar, mast, plant	Taiao	Earth, natural world, environment
Rama kōura	Hand nets	Tangata kaitiaki	Resource manager
Rangahau	Research	Tangata whenua*	Local people, hosts, indigenous people – Māori and their whānau (families), hapū (subtribe), iwi (tribe) that whakapapa, or have genealogical connections, back to the land by virtue of first or primary occupation of the land by ancestor(s) through a variety of mechanisms such as maintaining ahi kā roa (long term occupation) or conquest
Rangatahi	Youth, younger generation	Tangaroa	Atua (God) of the sea and fish
Rangatira	Chief (male or female), chieftain (male or female), master, mistress, boss, supervisor, employer, landlord, owner, proprietor. The qualities of a leader are of concern to the integrity and prosperity of the people, the land, the language, and other cultural treasures (e.g. oratory and song poetry); an aggressive and sustained response to outside forces that may threaten these	Tāne mahuta	Atua (God) of the forests and birds

Taniwha	Powerful creature, leader, chief	W	
Taonga	Treasure – applied to anything considered to be of value including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and techniques	Wāhi tapu	Sacred site, sacred place
Taonga species	Native birds, plants, and animals of cultural significance	Wai	Water
Taonga tuku iho	Heirloom, something handed down, cultural property	Waiora	Healing waters
Tāpau	Floor mat (see also tuwhara)	Waiata	Song
Tapu	Sacred, prohibited, restricted – a supernatural condition	Waikato-Tainui*	People who descend from or affiliate to a recognised Waikato-Tainui (tribal people of the Waikato Region) marae, hapū, or iwi
Tapu noa	To be free from the extensions of tapu (sacred), ordinary, unrestricted, void	Wairua	Spirit
Taruke	Fern bundles used for kōura (freshwater crayfish) monitoring	Wairuatanga	Spirituality
Taua	War party	Waka taua	War canoe
Tau kōura	Method of catching kōura (freshwater crayfish)	Wānanga	Seminar, conference, forum, educational seminar Tribal knowledge, lore, learning
Tāwhirimātea	Atua (God) of the winds, clouds, rain, hail, snow and storms	Wero	Challenge
Te Ika-a-Māui	North Island of New Zealand	Whaiora	Pursuit of wellness
Te Reo Māori	Māori language	Whakaaro*	Thought, opinion, plan, understanding, idea, intention, gift – philosophy
Te tira hoe o Waikato	The paddling crew of Waikato	Whakaaroaroa	To ponder, consider carefully, logic
Te Wai Pounamu	South Island of New Zealand	Whakakotahitanga	To unify, integrate, unite
Tikanga	The customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context	Whakapapa	Genealogy, lineage, descent, layers of kin relationships Connections between and within flora/fauna species
Tohu	Sign, mark, symbol, indicators of an event	Whakaponotanga	Epistemology
Tohunga	Chosen expert, healer	Whakatauāki	Proverb, significant saying; where the person who said it first is known
Tohunga whakairo	Master carver	Whakatauki	Proverb, significant saying; where the person who said it first, is not known
Toi whenua	Customary designation for hapū (subtribe) holding ancestral rights to a particular area	Whakaweku	Bracken fern bundles used for kōura (freshwater crayfish) monitoring
Tūmatauenga	Atua (God) of war	Whānau*	Family unit, not always immediate family, and may include those that are family by marriage, adoption, fostering, or other close relationship
Tupuna/tūpuna	Ancestor/ancestors	Whanaungatanga	Relationship, kinship, sense of family connection
Tupuna awa	Ancestral river	Whānui*	Broad, wide, extensive
Tuwhara	Floor mat (see also tāpau)	Whare	House
U		Whenua	Land
Uenuku	Atua (God) of the rainbow	Whetūrangī	To appear above the horizon (a star or the moon)
Urupā	Burial grounds		