



Karaka

Māori hold to the tradition that the karaka is sacred and makes a very special contribution to the marae. The karaka constitutes the first words spoken between takata whenua and manuhiri. It is the first expression of welcome. It is the way by which the takata whenua first make contact with the manuhiri, across the physical space that exists between the two groups. The karaka provides a safe word pathway, along which the manuhiri may pass with out fear.

As soon as the takata whenua see that the manuhiri are ready to proceed, a woman – kaikaraka – (the caller) will karaka(call). The karaka will incorporate a welcome to the particular marae, both to the manuhiri(visitors) and to the spirits of the dead.

The manuhiri will have a kaikaraka to respond. The kaikaraka should be at the front of the group. Following is a basic karaka.

Part 1

Karaka mai ra e te iwi e Karaka mai, karaka mai Karaka mai

Thank you people for your very warm welcome Thank you

More literally "Call us people call to us call to us"

After the first call the kaikaraka would respond. The second part is a response after the second call from the takata whenua.

Part 2

Karaka mai ra ki a matou o _____ kua tau nei e Otakou/Puketeraki e

Thank you for receiving us from _____ who have arrived onto your marae

When walking onto the marae the manuhiri move silently as one body. The group should remain as close together as possible. It is poor taste to talk or gaze around at the view or at the people on the marae.

(In the case where the manuhiri do not have a kaikaraka and/or a kaikorero the welcome process would be mihiwhakatau where a more informal process takes place. This can also be required when the takata whenua cannot provide appropriate personnel.)