

# Students' carving work bound for expo in China

## PM will give 10m waka to host nation in Shanghai

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The work of Rotorua carving students will be gifted to China at this year's World Expo in Shanghai.

Tourism New Zealand and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage have commissioned carvers at Te Puia to complete the Te Kakano project — a 10m-high kauri waka maumahara (ceremonial canoe).

Prime Minister John Key will present the waka at the expo, which runs from May 1 to October 30 and is expected to attract 70 million international visitors.

Te Puia chief executive Te Taru White said the presentation would be made to Chinese officials on July 9 as part of New Zealand's dedicated national day at the expo.

"The engagement of this extraordinary piece encapsulates the spirit of manaakitanga [hospitality] and koha [gifting] — both of which combine to create a lasting bond between the two nations of China and New Zealand."

**"It is constantly changing. As you work on it you see new things."**

James Rickard

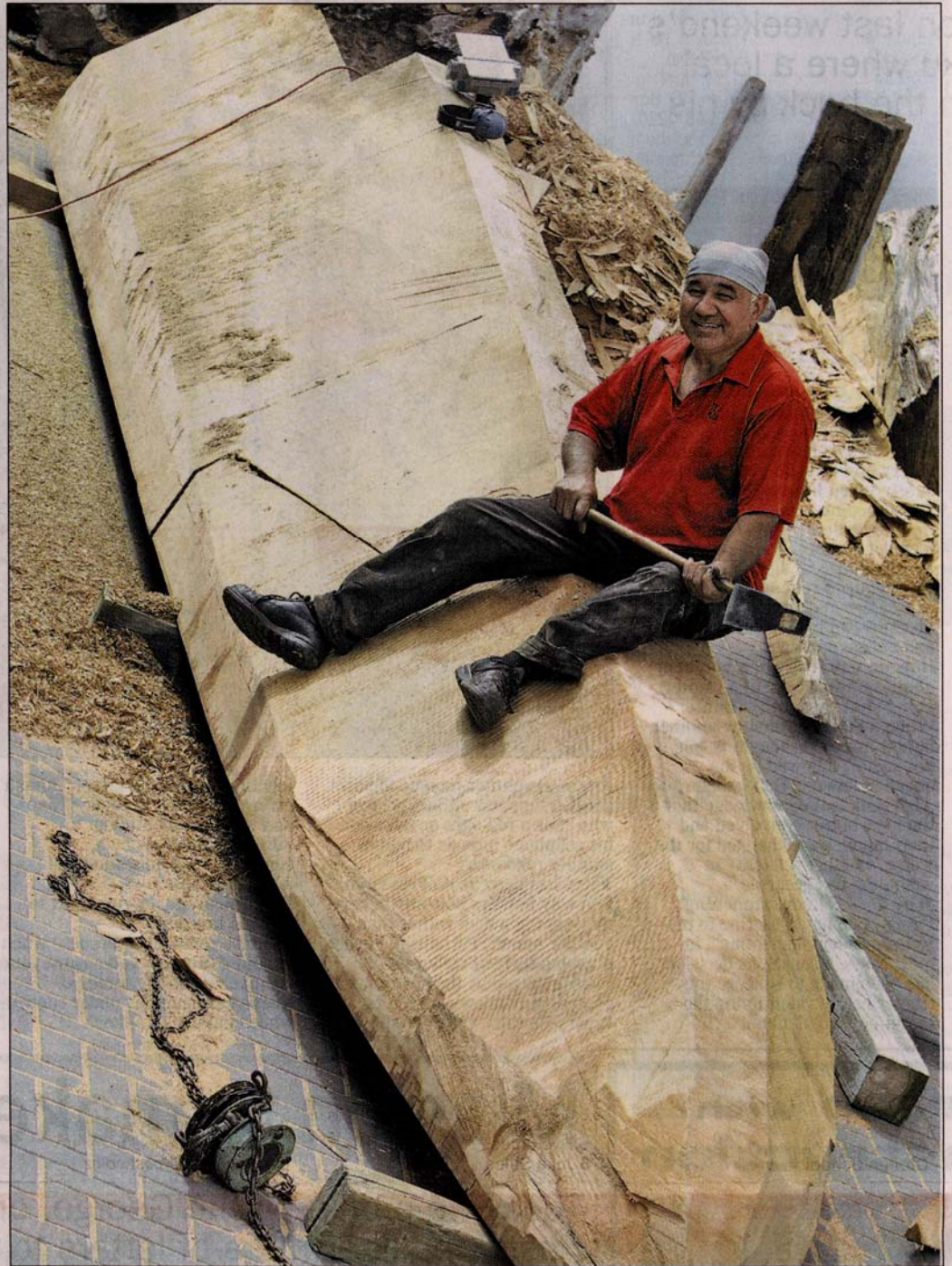
Wood for Te Kakano, which translates as "the original seed", was sourced from a 3500-year-old kauri in Kaihu, Northland, and is an older relative of Waipoua's Tane Mahuta. It was shaped by internationally renowned canoe builder and navigator Hekenukumai Busby before being passed to Te Puia for carving.

Rotorua master carver James Rickard sourced the wood for the project and is overseeing work on the waka that will take five full-time carvers almost 500 hours to complete.

"It is constantly changing. As you work on it you see new things," Mr Rickard said.

The designs aim to capture the tree's history in Northland, with elements from Kupe the navigator, and the history of the Chinese in New Zealand.

"It involves kawē mate — taking the spirit of the deceased back to their homeland in China."



**TE KAKANO:** Master carver James Rickard works on the ceremonial waka that will be presented to China by Prime Minister John Key.

PICTURE / STEPHEN PARKER 150110SP6

There will also be links to Te Puia itself and the master carver said it was tremendous opportunity for the school's students to be involved in the project and for the year two and three students to travel to Shanghai with the waka.

"Our young students will probably never get another opportunity like this to participate on a world stage, to show their skills and work to timeframes."

The inside of the waka has

been finished and the canoe was tipped over yesterday for work to begin on the outer surfaces.

Mr Rickard said this would be the easier part and work should progress quickly between now and its completion and presentation to Mr Key and other senior Government officials on February 18.

In the meantime, members of the public can see work being done on Te Kakano at Te Puia's carving school.

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