

PRESS RELEASE



NEW ZEALAND MĀORI
ARTS AND CRAFTS INSTITUTE

Rotorua, New Zealand – 22 February 2010. After adding his own carving touch to the magnificent waka maumahara (ceremonial canoe) project at the New Zealand Māori Arts and Crafts Institute – Te Puia, in Rotorua, which is destined for Expo 2010 in Shanghai China, the Prime Minister Hon. John Key then carved a stylised silver fern of his own, which is now up for auction.

Mr Key's carving has just been put on Trade Me for a 10-day auction, and again proceeds from his artistic flair will go to Cure Kids. (The auction number is 273358962).

The Prime Minister and Chinese Ambassador Zhang Limin were among special guests at Te Puia, on Thursday to farewell the Te Kākano project which is now on its way to Shanghai. The 10 metre high (32.8 ft) kauri carving is being crafted as a national gift to China and will be carved in situ at the front of the New Zealand pavilion at Expo 2010 in Shanghai, where more than 70 million visitors are expected to visit.

The New Zealand Māori Arts and Crafts Institute – Te Puia, is New Zealand's oldest and leading cultural tourism attraction and incorporates Te Wānanga Whakairo Rākau (the National Carving School). It is here that the 'Te Kākano' project began and two teams of carvers will soon head to Shanghai to complete the carving which will be presented by Mr Key on the 9 July this year.

Te Puia chief executive Te Taru White says "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.” The project name ‘Te Kakano’ translates in meaning as ‘the original seed’; a reference to the first project of this kind from New Zealand.

Internationally renowned canoe builder and navigator, Hekenukumai Busby first shaped the 3,500 year old kauri (*Agathis australis*) prior to Te Puia taking over its custodianship. The tree, sourced from Kaihu in Northland was 3 metres in diameter and an older relative of Tāne Mahuta, which stands in the Waipoua as New Zealand’s most well-known kauri.

The creation of this gift is being overseen by master carver, James Rickard (Tainui, Ngāti Porou), who has a legacy spanning four decades at Te Puia and who started his own carving career in the first intake of students at Te Wānanga Whakairo Rākau in 1967. Since then, hundreds of young men have fulfilled their apprenticeships to preserve and protect this ancient and culturally significant art form and held what James describes as the ‘unbroken line’ of this ancient art form from ancestor Ruatepupuke to today.

Media Enquiries:

Tracey Mehrtens
Public Affairs Consultant
4pr
Te Puia
Phone: +64 9 489 2229
Mobile: +64 21 430 606
Email: tracey@4pr.co.nz
www.4pr.co.nz