

Upcoming Exhibition to Tell Stories of Kāi Tahu Wāhine

The Otago Museum is just weeks away from the opening of the *Hākui: Women of Kāi Tahu* exhibition, which shares the stories, achievements and legacies of respected wāhine from the perspective of kā uri whakatipu, today's generations.

The term hākui is an acknowledgement of respect and a form of address to a female elder, and this exhibition celebrates mothers, aunties, grandmothers, taua, great aunts, great grandmothers and tūpuna wāhine.

Fifty women are profiled in the exhibition, and their accomplishments shared through taoka, photographs and memories. Interactive elements also feature, inviting visitors to step inside Auntie's kitchen, hear the pronunciation of te reo Māori words and placenames, and plenty more.

"Hākui: Women of Kāi Tahu celebrates the lives of wāhine Māori," says Otago Museum's Curator, Māori Migoto Eria. "We hope it will encourage visitors to consider the accomplishments and continued relevance of hākui, and inspire them to think about the women who have shaped their own lives."

In August 2013 a major hui was held at Ōtākou Marae, which led to the development of a steering committee representing local rūnaka. This committee met regularly with the Museum team to bring the exhibition to fruition. A call for submissions was sent out in early 2014, inviting whānau, rūnaka and iwi to submit proposals for inclusion in the project. By July 2014, in excess of 50 submissions covering a variety of mediums had been received, and each one was reviewed by the committee and the Museum.

The task of crafting the selected submissions into an exhibition narrative fell to Eria, who stepped into the role of the Museum's first Curator, Māori in June 2014. She has been the driving force behind the exhibition, liaising with the committee, local rūnaka and whānau throughout Aotearoa. This close collaboration has continued as the exhibition has taken shape.

“The hākui featured in this exhibition have facilitated the growth and nourishment of their mokopuna; they have protected and shared their knowledge; and they have provided vital guidance and support to their iwi,” says Eria. “So, it has been an honour to work closely with whānau and rūnaka on this important kaupapa.”

“Without the support, advice and contribution of whānau, rānaka, hapū and iwi, this exhibition would not be possible,” says Museum Director Dr Ian Griffin. “It is a celebration of these wāhine, and also of the communities they have played a vital role in shaping.”

The Museum has produced a publication to accompany the exhibition, which will be available in the Museum Shop.

The free exhibition will open to the public on Friday 20 November.

For further information please contact:

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