

21ST PECERA International Conference

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

3-5 JULY 2020



For an explanation on the Pōhiri and traditions – please see below.

Pōhiri (Māori ritual of welcome)

A pohiri is a formal Māori welcome which is routinely performed at the beginning of Māori events, meetings and celebrations. It is a ritual to formally welcome guests/visitors and establish the purpose of their visit.

Te Herenga Waka Marae (University Māori meeting house)

The primary purpose of Te Herenga Waka Marae is to serve the learning and teaching needs of Victoria University of Wellington's students and staff. It is also used for a range of social gatherings, most importantly to welcome visitors and to show our hospitality.

Preparation for the pōhiri

A briefing for the pōhiri will be provided for conference participants who have not experienced this before. Details of the briefing will be provided in your registration pack.

As the manuhiri (visitors) assemble at the entrance of the marae (Māori community space), the group should arrange themselves to walk on the marae together, with their female elders towards the front, the remaining women and children gathered behind them and the men flanking the group and bringing up the rear.

At Te Herenga Waka Marae, all formal pōhiri procedures are conducted entirely in te reo Māori (the Māori language). After the formalities are over, however, visitors may be invited to give speeches in other languages.

Pōhiri process

Karanga (call): The first voice heard as part of the pōhiri is usually that of Māori women. It is a call of invitation, of welcome, of greeting.

Seating: You will be guided to be seated. The front row of the seating is reserved for the male speakers and other male leaders in the group. For their protection, women and children in the group must sit behind the front row.

Whaikōrero (formal speeches): The whaikōrero is delivered in te reo (Māori language) by men in the group who can fulfil this formal oratory role. It is a speech of respect, of acknowledgement and of course the purpose of the visit.

Waiata (song): Following each speech is a song of support for the words spoken. This is normally led by a woman.

Koha (gift): When the final speaker for the manuhiri has finished, he may place on the ground in front of him a koha for the hosts. Today, the koha is more likely to be in the form of cash. It is a practical response to sharing the cost of coming together for the gathering.

Hongi (pressing of the nose): Finally the host and visiting groups come together for the hongi. This involves the manuhiri lining up and one-by-one, pressing their noses together with members of the host group to symbolise the unity of the group.

Kai (food): A shared kai marks the final formal stage of the pōhiri. Māori believe that the participants in the pōhiri move into a heightened state of tapu (sacredness) and that this sacred state is removed by eating food.