

E noho ana au i toku taumata i Manaia

Ka titiro whakararo ki te aio o ōku whenua taurikura o Takahiwai,

Whakawhiti atu taku aro ki ngā wai whakariporipo o te rerengaparāoa, tēnei o ngā taonga tuku iho, ko tona mana te take kua tutū ai te puehu i te rangi nei,

Tēnei te tira hou, te rangatahi, te whakaeke mai nei, kia rangona te tangi o ngā reo o ngā uri kua roa e ngaro ano i ēnei momo hui,

Rongo i te pouri, rongo i te hōhā, i te mamae o oku tupuna, o oku kaumatua, ōku matua tae noa kia mātou te uri whakaeke mai nei.

kia kua tonu te takahitanga o te mana o tō tatau Whenua, o tō tatau rohe moana, o to tatau takutai.

Let us be clear that our relationship to Te Rerengaparaoa is an intrinsic one. It is the mauri of our people, a connection inherited through whakapapa.

Our relationship to our takutai moana is not a unique one to Te Ao Māori, it holds our tikanga, our kawa, our pūrakau and is our hononga to our whanaunga who surround the harbour. From a young age, as uri of Patuharakeke we understand this connection and our responsibility as kaitiaki both to te taiao and the taonga moana who seasonally pass through the area.

To further seize our foreshore, to further degrade the harbour, to disconnect and cut us off from our mauri is impeding on our mana as tangatawhenua.

My concerns lie with the mana of my people.

What of our people if more is being taken from us?

My people, who have sacrificed much of Poupouwhenua already?

Who have watched the sand blacken? The landscape change?

Who have had the land cut into for new development?

Who bare witness to our taonga moana dying ashore more and more?

If more is taken from us, if our harbour continues to get sicker so too will our people.

(Mauiui whenua, mauiui moana, mauiui tangata)

and that is the reality that is being proposed, the expansion will make Te Rerengaparaoa sick, and the wellbeing of our people will follow suit.

The reality is the gifts of being raised here at home vary drastically depending on which generation you speak to.

My nan will tell stories on how they use to ride their horses from pirihi road to the One Tree Point store because they were able to, or spend their evenings fishing with Papa Manu because Patuharakeke were once wealthy in kaimoana

My father will reminisce about his many summers returning to Takahiwai spent picking from the once abundant pipi beds, how he learnt to surf the waves that have since dwindled in size at Ruakākā beach.

Even I reflect back to the days we'd spot dolphins on our bus ride to school or pick from the many cockles that dotted the beach at One Tree Point.

And the further forward you go, and listen to the stories told of our harbour by each generation you can begin to see the abrupt decline of our harbour. It is evident in the kōrero of our people.

Because as time went on, a piece of our harbour was taken and with each piece lost, so too became our people.

The reality is the privileges I was afforded by our harbour and the lessons of manaakitanga and katiakitanga I learnt on our moana, are already stories of once was to my little cousins, who come from the same generation.

The reality is I feel robbed and my wairua is riri at the thought that these memories, these recollections remain just that.

How robbed will my children feel? To not fully experience the whakapapa and hononga ki to ratou rohe moana?

My concerns lie with the mana o nga uri whakaeke o Patuharakeke, the generation who will bear the weight of this decision.

What of my generation if more is being taken from us?

When our foreshore is exhausted and resources emptied and you can no longer profit from our shores, our responsibility as kaitiaki remains.

because that is what we learn from a young age,

that for all the privledges and health our harbour gives to us, we return.

and to allow further harm to our mauri, to sit quiet as a rangatahi is to fail my responsibility to my home.

and so I submit to you today, representing the rangatahi voice with the message that enough is enough.

To cause further damage with the promise of economic growth for our area does not provide security for my people.

To promise to fund the environmental restoration does not negate the harm you will cause or in no way compensate for the relationship loss.

It is my generation who have missed out on the rich shellfish beds, who see more of our foreshore eroding, who will have to bury our tohoro and dolphins who strand our shores more and more.

It is my generation who will have to search for their pūrakau, for their tikanga, for their whakapapa should this hononga be cut off.

It is my generation who will have to keep our taiao from reaching the point of no return.

Because that is our responsibility to our harbour, a responsibility inherited and treasured through our whakapapa as manawhenua.

It is my generation and those who follow who will suffer the most. The loss of our mauri will hurt our iwi but it is we as rangatahi, it is our kids who will have to bear the ramifications of actions we had no voice in. A choice forced upon us despite the tireless efforts of our parents, aunties and uncles to prevent this loss.

What of my generation if we no longer have a harbour to return to?

It is not enough for our tupuna, our parents to front our concerns alone anymore.

Because the reality for the rangatahi of Patuharakeke is that we are losing our home.

The vision I see for Patuharakeke is to restore the mana of my people that has been chipped away at for generations. For Patuharakeke to regain their full hononga to Te Rerengaparaoa, to our whanaunga, to our whakapapa, our taonga moana. I want our community, te whanau o Patuharakeke to prosper, to live their right as kaitiaki over our rohe moana.

I want to come home. I want my kids to be able to come home.

This proposal impedes on our mana as tangatawhenua and inserts a mauiui into our moana and that is enough.

Kia kua tonu te takahitanga o te mana o tō tatau Whenua, o tō tatau rohe moana, o to tatau takutai.