



*Te Māori Manaaki
Taonga Trust*



Te Wānanga
o Aotearoa



MEDIA RELEASE

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Inaugural Te Māori Fellows selected for prestigious Oxford University residencies

Digital heritage researcher Chanel Coromandel, master weaver Hamuera Manihera, and cultural interpretation expert Paora Tibble have been selected from more than 100 applicants to undertake a prestigious research residency at Oxford University's Pitt Rivers Museum.

Ngātaiharuru Taepa, Deputy Chair of Te Māori Manaaki Taonga Trust says selecting three recipients for the inaugural Te Māori Fellowship was an incredibly difficult task.

"We were impressed by the extraordinary talent and capability of the applicants. It bodes well for the future care of taonga Māori and the evolution of toi Māori.

"Te Māori Manaaki Taonga Trust sees fellowships as building an enduring pathway for more Māori researchers, practitioners and cultural leaders to connect with taonga Māori collections and institutions around the world."

Launched earlier this year, the Te Māori Fellowship is a partnership between Te Māori Manaaki Taonga Trust, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, and the Pitt Rivers Museum. It gives Māori cultural leaders the opportunity to lead research and apply mātauranga Māori to Pitt Rivers' extensive taonga Māori collections.

Evie O'Brien, Te Kura Toroa (CEO) of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa says pioneering this first cohort represents a major opportunity to return critical knowledge to grassroots communities.

"These taonga carry whakapapa, knowledge and stories that belong to our people, so creating opportunities for Māori researchers and practitioners to engage with them on their own terms is incredibly important.

"We are exceptionally proud to support Chanel, Hamuera and Paora to take up this opportunity. What matters most is the knowledge, relationships and experience they bring home to benefit whānau, hapū, iwi and communities across Aotearoa."

For the host institution, welcoming this inaugural cohort from Aotearoa provides a practical pathway towards decolonisation.

Professor Laura Van Broekhoven, Director of the Pitt Rivers Museum, says, “We are honoured to welcome Chanel, Hamuera, and Paora as our inaugural Te Māori Fellows to Oxford.

“The Pitt Rivers Museum is committed to actively reconciling past museum practices and addressing the ongoing impacts of colonisation on indigenous cultures. Opening our collections and archives to Indigenous Fellows helps address gaps in our knowledge and advance Indigenous-led approaches to interpretation and curation.”

Fellowship Project Focus Areas

Each Te Māori Fellow will focus on a distinct area of research:

Chanel Coromandel (*Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Apakura, Ngāti Whanaunga*) will apply her digital archiving expertise to the historical archives of Mākereti Papakura, investigating safe approaches to digital care and reconnection.

Hamuera Manihera (*Ngāti Kuia, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Ngāti Koata, Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Toa*) will explore early contact textile collections, applying generational knowledge to the design of regional heritage storage facilities.

Paora Tibble (*Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Raukawa, Te Whānau a Apanui*) will examine historic labelling methodologies to design a future Māori Language Interpretation Framework, to support whānau, hapū, and iwi engagement with collecting institutions on his return.

The inaugural Te Māori Fellows will undertake an intensive seven-week residency in Oxford, United Kingdom, from 12 October to 29 November 2026.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. [See biographies](#) of inaugural Te Māori Fellows to Pitt Rivers below.
2. [High-resolution photographs](#) of the Fellows are available for media use via: [Dropbox](#).
3. [Glossary of Māori terms](#)

Kaimahi: Workers, employees.

Mātauranga Māori: Māori knowledge systems, indigenous wisdom and cultural concepts.

Tauira: Students, learners.

Taonga: Valued possessions, heritage, or anything highly prized (in this context, cultural treasures).

Toi Māori: Māori arts, creative expressions, and living cultural practices.

Waikato-Tainui: Tribal organisation representing the people from the Waikato-Tainui region.

Whakapapa: Genealogy, lineage, and the interconnected lineage of the environment, people and objects.

Whānau / Hapū / Iwi: Extended family / sub-tribe / tribe.

4. See background information on the Fellowship partners and the British Council Aotearoa New Zealand (British Council) below for media reference.

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa acknowledges the British Council's support for this opportunity and its role in continuing a legacy of cultural exchange between the UK and Aotearoa.

Inaugural Pitt Rivers Te Māori Fellows

Chanel Coromandel

Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Apakura, Ngāti Whanaunga

An emerging practitioner in digital heritage and the care of taonga Māori, Chanel holds a Master of Digital Business (First Class Honours) from the University of Waikato. Her landmark dissertation, *Acknowledging the Mana of Mahi Toi*, examined how digital technology can support the long-term preservation of taonga while protecting mana and tikanga Māori.



Chanel has previously supported exhibitions with Āhua Gallery at Te Puia in Rotorua and is currently a taurira in Te Tohu Tiaki Taonga programme at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.

Her research at the Pitt Rivers Museum will focus on photographic and manuscript collections connected to Mākereti Papakura. Applying her digital archiving expertise, Chanel will explore future models for the safe care and reconnection of taonga Māori for iwi.

Hamuera Manihera

Ngāti Kuia, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Ngāti Koata, Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Toa

A recognised kaiwhatu, researcher and curator, Hamuera is known for his work with tīkumu, a distinctive weaving tradition of Te Waipounamu that he has spent many years researching, learning and practising. His work brings together mātauranga Māori, customary practice and the care, research and interpretation of taonga Māori.



As Kaitiaki Taonga Māori Collections Manager at Nelson Provincial Museum, Hamuera has spent more than seven years working closely with iwi, whānau and collections to deepen relationships with taonga and to give back the knowledge generously shared with him throughout his lifetime.

His fellowship research will focus on Māori textiles, particularly earlier examples such as those in the James Cook collection, exploring materials and customary techniques alongside taonga pakohe connected to Te Tauihu o Te Waka a Māui.

Paora Tibble

Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Raukawa, Te Whānau ā Apanui

A specialist in te reo Māori, a takawaenga who connects communities through taonga, Paora works in the National Services Te Paerangi team at Te Papa Tongarewa. For more than thirty years his career has been focused on writing in te reo Māori including a key role as Te Papa's te reo Māori Writer developing and translating exhibition content and object labels.



His practice is grounded in the Mana Taonga principle, recently delivering the 2026 Tūhonohono i ngā Taonga ā-Iwi conference in Hawke's Bay where he championed iwi-led conversations about the whakapapa, conservation and care of taonga.

At the Pitt Rivers Museum, Paora intends to create a sample set of reinterpreted taonga Māori labels, identifying gaps in cultural context to inform a future Māori Language Interpretation Framework that reclaims the indigenous voice of taonga held in overseas collections.

Fellowship Partners and the British Council

About the Pitt Rivers Museum

The [Pitt Rivers Museum](#) is one of the leading museums of anthropology and archaeology in the world.

Part of the University of Oxford, the Pitt Rivers Museum was established in 1884 and now stewards more than 700,000 objects, including photographs, manuscripts and films. The Museum welcomed more than 500,000 visitors in 2024 and carries out world-leading conservation and research.

It is renowned for its innovative public programmes and collaborative work with local and global communities. Recognised for its pioneering work engaging with its colonial past, the Museum is a much-loved Victorian space challenging old perceptions, inspires new audiences and builds lasting relationships, demonstrating the vital role museums can play in contemporary society.

About Te Māori Manaaki Taonga Trust

Established in 1992, [Te Māori Manaaki Taonga Trust](#) carries forward the legacy of Te Māori (1984-87), the groundbreaking exhibition that transformed how the world views our taonga and culture, and how we see ourselves.

The original purpose of the trust was to support the development of Māori professionals involved in the care and display of taonga Māori. For twenty years, the Trust supported the training of many Māori curators, conservators and cultural heritage officers who are also known as Te Māori Fellows.

Through the Te Māori Fellowship, the Trust continues to support and strengthen Māori curatorial leadership, connections with institutions holding taonga Māori, and creating opportunities for research, cultural exchange, and the reconnection of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) associated with taonga.

The restoration of Te Māori Fellowships reflects the Trust's commitment to ensuring Māori voices remain central to the understanding, stewardship and future of taonga, wherever they reside.

About Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa is one of New Zealand's largest tertiary education providers, established to protect, preserve, and advance Māori language, art, and culture. Their origins lie in the [Waipa Kōkiri Arts Centre](#) (1983), where visionary artists and educators sparked a renaissance in Māori creative expression.

Through their programmes in toi Māori, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (Te Wānanga) has nurtured generations of artists, weavers, carvers, performers, designers, and thinkers who uphold the creative legacies of their iwi and hapū. Building on this legacy, Te Wānanga introduced a [Diploma in Tiaki Taonga](#) in 2025 alongside

Waikato-Tainui. The innovative programme dedicated to the protection, care, and curation of taonga.

Te Māori Fellowship extends that commitment by creating international pathways for Māori practitioners to engage with leading cultural institutions, develop specialist skills, and contribute to the future of Māori heritage management.

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa acknowledges the support of British Council Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific for supporting this fellowship.

Acknowledging British Council Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It supports peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries globally.

Through arts and culture, the British Council Aotearoa New Zealand works to connect the people of Aotearoa New Zealand and the UK. Its support has helped enable Te Wānanga o Aotearoa fellow Chanel Coromandel to take part in the inaugural Te Māori Fellowship residency at Pitt Rivers Museum.