

The Arakite Charitable Trust helped establish and oversee the Mangahawea Bay Partnership project. This project is a partnership between Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha, the Department of Conservation, the University of Otago and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga. The project is not solely led through its archaeological component, but is enhanced through the archaeological excavation of the early settlement site at Mangahawea Bay on Moturua Island in the Bay of Islands.

In 2017 a partnership project between the Department of Conservation, tangata whenua Ngāti Kuta, Patukeha, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga and the University of Otago revisited an unpublished 1981 excavation of an early settlement site in Mangahawea Bay on Moturua Island in the Bay of Islands. This project was run under the tikanga of Matutaera Te Nana Clendon. During the project much kōrero occurred between the parties and a confluence of interest was found in both Māori and European perspectives on Pacific voyaging, and specifically on how, when and why Polynesians settled New Zealand.

The project is a large ongoing programme with a focus on recognising and understanding early settlement of Aotearoa through archaeology and traditional knowledge. When combined, archaeology and traditional knowledge provide a powerful tool to explore the past including Austronesian, Polynesian, Māori and European voyaging, settlement and adaptation. The basis of this project is around community involvement, opportunities to tell their stories and recognition of these stories. The project was awarded funds from the Tuia 250 Encounters funding scheme.

In terms of the archaeology, for 10 years Andrew Blanshard had been pulling together all the excavation notebooks, boxes of artefacts and photographs, which were dispersed around various institutions and private individuals from the original excavations at the bay. Following the death of Jan Makay the last of this material came to DOC. On examination it was confirmed that the boxes of material contained significant artefacts to the early history of New Zealand. In partnership, Andrew and Dr James Robinson have now run two field seasons at the site, on the direction of Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha, to further investigate these early settlement indicators and contribute the archaeological findings to the broader project goals of understanding voyaging and early settlement in Aotearoa.

These investigations have been widely publicised, with multiple, positive news stories in Stuff, the *New Zealand Herald*, Māori Television, TVNZ, Newshub and Radio New Zealand. It is some of the widest exposure archaeological investigations have had in years. Public open days have also exposed the archaeology and the history of the Bay of Islands to the local community, and even had visits from a Member of Parliament. Tours around the site were led by site directors James and Andrew. The excavations have also provided an opportunity for archaeologists around the country to come together to dig on this highly significant and special site. The result of this work will not only provide highly significant information in terms of archaeology, but will provide a blueprint on how public archaeology can be successfully carried out for the years to come.