

H2R Guide to Powhiri Mihi Whakatau



Congratulations on securing your new role! We know there are many things to prepare for when joining a new employer. One of those things is being welcomed into your new organisation at the start of your employment. With the emergence of tikanga Māori practices becoming more and more prevalent, you may be welcomed to your new organisation with a pōwhiri, mihi whakatau and you maybe required to mihimihi / recite a pepeha as part of the process.

The whanau at **H2R Technology** and **H2R Consulting** have created this guide to providing you some insight to processes and as well support you to respond if you would like the opportunity to do so.

The use of **pōwhiri** and **mihi whakatau** is a formal way to acknowledge and foster new relationships and although traditionally held on a marae (Māori meeting house) the welcome is now frequently used in the workplace to welcome new kaimahi (staff) to an organisation.

There are three variations of Māori welcome that can be used:

Pōwhiri – Is a formal welcome, ceremony where the key aspects are the karanga (greeting call), whaikōrero (speeches); and a waiata (song) delivered at the end of the whaikōrero to tautoko (support) what has been discussed.

Mihi Whakatau - is less formal welcome in Māori, a key difference is it doesn't require a response from the visitors. The option is available if there is someone in the visitor's party who can respond appropriately. Everyone will be gathered together (without the karanga) and the process starts with a whaikōrero.

Mihimihi – This is the opportunity for everyone involved to introduce themselves (whakawhānaungatanga).

While pōwhiri may differ from iwi area to iwi area, Te Reo Māori is always use to pōwhiri. Below are each of the stages you will experience in either in pōwhiri or a mihi whakatau:

Karanga: (wāhine call) is a female form of oratory in which women bring a range of cultural expression and imagery to the primary calls of welcome (and reply). At this stage key information is exchanged between each group which could outline aspects of where the group is from and the reason for their visit.

Whaikōrero: (tāne speech) is the formal speech part or the exchange of greetings made from speakers across each side. Oratory is a way to uphold the mana (prestige/authority) on behalf of the group that is being represented by the speaker. Oratory experts will present their knowledge of whakapapa (genealogy) and mythology, mastery of language, as well as dramatic and rhetoric presentation. During whaikōrero, connection between ancestors and those present are made, with genealogical links between the manuhiri (visitors) and mana whenua (local people) are highlighted.

Te kaupapa o te rā (the purpose of the day / occasion) is also discussed, as well as current issues and concerns.

Waiata: Is the song that follows each kaikōrero (speaker) has finished. Often you will hear traditional waiata during pōwhiri. The intent of the waiata is crucial, as it upholds the mana of that group and enhances the exchanges made during the whaikōrero.

Pōwhiri / Mihi Whakatau - Koha: (gift) An envelope is placed on the ground by the last speaker for the manuhiri, it is common to hear a kaikaranga (woman performing the karanga) this is acknowledgement from mana whenua for the koha from the visitors. A male from the mana whenua will then pick up the koha.

Hariru/hongi: is the unification of the tangata whenua and the manuhiri, this is done by pressing of noses. Tangata whenua invite the manuhiri to come forward to hariru (shake hands) and hongiri (to press noses) which signifies the breath of life.

Karakia: A prayer or an incantation is used to close off the formal process of a pōwhiri or mihi whakatau. Māori prayers or incantations are used to involve protection through spiritual guidance. Karakia are generally used to promote the spiritual goodwill of a gathering, so as to increase the likelihood of an outcome to be favourable for all involved. A karakia is also performed over the hākari (food) to give thanks.

Hākari: is the feast that completes the pōwhiri / mihi whakatau procedures. The act of eating food is another way to remove the restrictions of the ceremonial processes. It is also another way to showcase the unification of both parties and shows the appreciation of receiving your guests (manaaki).

Mihimihi:

A mihimihi is when all participants at an event introduce themselves (whakawhānaungatanga) and establish links with each other. Mihimihi greetings can be formal or informal, and are usually done at the beginning of any hui or gathering.

Pepeha:

Introducing yourself is an important aspect of te ao Māori, as it lets us draw connections with each other. You can introduce yourself with a pepeha as part of your mihimihi. The link provided can help you to learn / create a pepeha of your own.

<https://www.reomaori.co.nz/learn-your-mihi>

We hope that is a positive experience and that it helps you to feel welcomed and connected to your new employer. At any stage should you need support or guidance on any aspects related to the content above, please reach out to the team at H2R as we are happy to help.

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