

# TOHU WHENUA

*Landmarks that tell our stories*



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ***What is Tohu Whenua?***

Tohu Whenua is a visitor programme that connects New Zealanders with their heritage and enhances their sense of national identity by promoting significant historical and cultural sites.

Launched in 2016, the programme is successfully operating in three regions – Te Tai Tokerau Northland, Otago and Te Tai Poutini West Coast. The goal is to roll the programme out in all regions of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The programme is a partnership between Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, with support from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment Hīkina Whakatutuki and Te Puni Kokiri Ministry of Māori Development.

### ***What is Tohu Whenua's matakitenga vision?***

A network of sites that connects New Zealanders with their heritage and the defining stories of Aotearoa New Zealand.

### ***Who is Tohu Whenua for?***

Tohu Whenua is for anyone with an interest in Aotearoa New Zealand's heritage and culture. New Zealanders can connect with their own heritage and identity, and international visitors will learn more about what makes Aotearoa New Zealand unique.

### ***What does the name mean?***

Loosely translated, Tohu Whenua means 'landmarks' in te reo Māori. The words Tohu Whenua acknowledge memories of the land, marking places made significant by our forebears and telling their stories. (The programme was originally called 'Landmarks Whenua Tohunga'. In 2018 this was changed to 'Tohu Whenua: Landmarks that tell our stories' because it better reflects the increasingly national focus).

### ***Where is Tohu Whenua?***

Tohu Whenua has been launched in three regions so far – Te Tai Tokerau Northland (9 sites, 2016), Otago (11 sites, 2017) and Te Tai Poutini West Coast (5 sites launched in 2018 and 2020). You can see all 25 Tohu Whenua places at [www.tohuwhenua.nz](http://www.tohuwhenua.nz)

### ***What makes these regions special?***

Each region has its unique stories, largely based on how the whenua (land) has shaped the stories of the people who lived here.

#### *Te Tai Tokerau Northland - The birth of a bi-cultural nation*

Northland's Tohu Whenua, and the interweaving journeys, tell the stories of our beginnings. These are the places where both our Māori and European ancestors arrived, centuries apart, and where their identities were defined.

#### *Te Tai Poutini West Coast - The rise of a resourceful nation*

The West Coast's Tohu Whenua tell the stories of the hardships endured for our country's most prized resources. A region known for its incredible beauty and rich bounty, these are the places where our people's limits were tested and rewarded.

#### *Otago - The proof of a pioneering nation*

Otago's Tohu Whenua are places that tell the stories of our people's pioneering spirit – some of the cornerstones of our economic and entrepreneurial livelihood.

### ***Are there any other regions in the planning?***

The goal is to roll out Tohu Whenua in all regions of New Zealand.

### ***Who decides which places are included in the programme?***

The Tohu Whenua programme works closely with iwi and communities to identify the places that are most significant to their rohe and then these are assessed against the programme's criteria.

The final selections or approvals are made by the Tohu Whenua Governance Group, which is made up of senior staff from the partner agencies.

### ***What is Tohu Whenua's role?***

- To showcase important places and their stories that contribute to our national identity.
- To connect New Zealanders with their heritage.
- To create a framework within which site owners/managers and their communities are enabled to tell their stories.

- To support site owners/managers to make these places ready for visitors and to realise the economic, social and cultural benefits of being part of the network.

### ***What are the Tohu Whenua criteria?***

Tohu Whenua has a set of criteria and potential sites are assessed against these. They are:

- Significance
  - To New Zealand
  - Storytelling potential
- Iwi and community
  - Iwi and community benefit
  - Stories that matter to people
- Visitor experience
  - Accessibility
  - Family friendly
  - Potential to grow
- Suitability
  - Willing owner
  - Presentation

### ***Who operates Tohu Whenua sites?***

Tohu Whenua are publicly and privately owned places. Some are owned/managed by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga or Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai. Others are managed by councils, trusts, iwi, private individuals or a combination. The important thing is that the sites' owners or managers are on board.

### ***Is Tohu Whenua the same as National Historic Landmarks?***

No.

National Historic Landmarks is a statutory programme that is focused on heritage protection, risk management and resilience. It adds a layer to the recognition and safeguarding of our country's most valuable built and land-based taonga.

Tohu Whenua is a visitor-focused programme that tells stories and promotes heritage.

Some places will be both National Historic Landmarks and Tohu Whenua but it is not a pre-requisite or guarantee. The first National Historic Landmark was launched in June 2019, Waitangi Treaty Grounds, which happens to also be a Tohu Whenua site.

### ***Who runs Tohu Whenua?***

Tohu Whenua is a partnership between Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai and Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage with support from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment Hīkina Whakatutuki and

Te Puni Kokiri Ministry for Māori Development. Representatives from all five agencies are part of the Governance Group.

At a working level, a Steering Group with members from HNZPT, DOC, MCH and TPK oversees operations. The programme employs one permanent staff member, Programme Manager, Caroline Toplis, as well as regional coordinators and contractors on an as-needs basis.

***Who do I contact if I have a question?***

The main contact for Tohu Whenua is Caroline Toplis, Programme Manager, based at HNZPT in Wellington:

Email: [ctoplis@heritage.org.nz](mailto:ctoplis@heritage.org.nz)

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***Where do I send visitors for more information about Tohu Whenua?***

Website: [tohuwhenua.nz](http://tohuwhenua.nz)

Social media: We are active on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) @tohuwhenua