**What is Pōwhiri?**

It is crucial that everyone (staff, students and any other manuhiri) understand the significance of this process. This is the first step of many in terms of making the new students feel like they belong to Whitireia and as we only get one chance at making this first impression we must ensure that it is an extremely positive one that resonates with them throughout their student journey at Whitireia.

The following therefore is a brief explanation of the pōwhiri and the various roles etc.

The pōwhiri process was developed in pre-colonial times so that Māori could determine whether or not visting people came as friend or as enemies (foe). This ritualistic encounter is set out deliberately in very defined stages all geared towards engagement and relationship building between the ***tangata whenua –*** hosts and the **manuhiri -** visitors*.* The stages look like this:

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| **1** | ***Wero***  ***- challenge*** | The process traditionally began with a warrior performing a *wero* or challenge the sole purpose of which was to ascertain whether or not the visitors were coming peacefully or with aggressive intentions. He would lay down a ***taki*** or dart (can be leaves or feathers also) and if the ***manuhiri***picked it up then they showed they were coming in peace. In modern times this is not always done and is more often reserved for special occassions or dignatories. (This will not be happening on the day) |
| **2** | ***Karanga***  ***- call*** | This is a unique form of female oratory in which women bring a range of imagery and cultural expression to the first calls of welcome (and response) in the ***pōwhiri***. This is usually started by the ***tangata whenua*** and is followed by a response by the ***manuhiri****.* |
| **3** | ***Whaikōrero - speeches*** | Formal speech making follows the karanga. Some of the best Māori language orations are given during ***pōwhiri*** when skilled speakers craft the language into a series of verbal images. The protocols for ***whaikōrero*** during ***pōwhiri*** are determined by the ***kawa*** (practices) of the marae or local iwi if the ***pōwhiri*** is not held on a marae. |
| **4** | ***Waiata - song*** | A song is sung after each ***whaikōrero*** by the group the orator represents. It is common to hear traditional waiata during ***pōwhiri***. |
| **5** | ***Koha***  ***- gift*** | In traditional times a gift was given to the ***tangata whenua*** by the ***manuhiri*** usually in the form of food or clothing, woven mats, kits etc. In modern times this more often takes the form of money for the ***tangata whenua***to help with running costs.  This is laid on the ground by the last speaker for the ***manuhiri****.* A local ***kuia*** (female elder) may ***karanga*** as an expression of thanks. A male from the ***tangata whenua*** will pick up the ***koha*** (also known as ***roimata*** *or* ***whakaaro****).* |
| **6** | ***Hongi***  ***- shaking hands*** | The ***manuhiri***physically engage with the ***tangata whenua*** through ***hongi*** *–* pressing of noses and sharing of breath which signifies the joining together of ***tangata whenua*** and ***manuhiri***. ***Tangata whenua*** invite the ***manuhiri*** to come forward to***harirū*** - shake hands and ***hongi***. This is when ***manuhiri*** become like ***tangata whenua***. |
| **7** | ***Hākari***  ***- feasting*** | The final part of the process is to eat food together which signifies that now the ***manuhiri*** and ***tangata whenua***are now one. This signifies the end of the ***pōwhiri*** and completes the process. |
| **8** | Being gradual and graduated, the process is also necessarily sequential. Since each level of understanding and intimacy is constructed on earlier understandings, each segment of the process contains its own degree or level of intimacy, extending from the most alien (as of that between potential aggressors during the wero or challenge) to the most intimate (that of the hongi and food-sharing). Each step, therefore, is more intimate than the last, and it is important to keep the sequence in the correct order. The final act of *hongi -* mutual touching and breath-sharing only comes after a whole process of challenging, remembering the dead, crying, speaking and gifting. Up to this point each step explores and expresses not only a different and increasing level of intimacy but also a different level of sensory experience – fear, grief, respect, empathy, pride, humility, acceptance. In this way, the mutual experience operated not merely in a linguistic or rational domain, but also at a spiritual and emotional level. All aspects of human consciousness are involved and engaged, and the learning is therefore not only at the conscious, but also at the unconscious or sub-conscious level. To aid this process, a variety of media are implemented – ***waiata*** (songs), ***haka*** (dance, movement), ***karakia*** (prayers or incantations), ***whaikōrero*** (poetic oratory) and, finally, ***hongi*** touch and those most intimate of modalities, odour and taste (through ***kai***). | |