

TE WHARE O POU TANGATA

Māori Culture: 20 years on

2024 marks 20 years since the NZOC first began introducing Māori culture across our work.

Athens 2004 was the start of this journey, when the Olympic kākahu (traditional cloak), Te Māhutonga, was worn by flagbearer Beatrice Faumuina (Olympian #706) at the Opening Ceremony. It was the first time such a significant symbol of Māori culture featured prominently and proudly at an Olympic Games.

In 2024 we saw the re-strengthening of our relationship with the Kiingitanga movement, ignited through the blessing of our new kākahu, Te Hono ki Matariki, followed by the Māori King's attendance at the Paris Olympic Games with his whānau, and the attendance of his tangihanga (funeral) by NZOC leadership, staff and athletes.



Te Māhutonga and the Pou Tangata mauri stone are how our relationship with Ngāi Tahu was forged. This connection developed further into the production of Games' pounamu for athletes and performance teams at the Winter and Summer Olympic Games.

From the outset, the NZOC engaged iwi and Māori leaders with national and international recognition, to guide and support us on this journey. The NZOC continues to acknowledge the contributions of past members, including Dave Currie, the late Amster Reedy, and Trevor Shailer, who founded this journey through a culture built on manaaki.

The evolution of that mahi was seen in Tokyo 2020 with the establishment of Te Whare o Pou Tangata framework and the birth of the Pou Tangata haka. By Birmingham 2022, the New Zealand Team had its first kapa haka and Rōpū Tautoko attend in support. The following year, a Waka Hourua model was adopted by the NZOC Board, which paved the way for two dedicated Māori roles at governance and operations levels.

This year, the NZOC welcomed both Dallas Seymour and Oriini Kaipara into the new roles of Pou Tikanga and Pouwhiringa respectively, Jenny-May Clarkson and Joseph Royal to complete the Te Urunga Tū membership, and Harley Wall as NZOC Team Operations Manager.

Since 2004, the NZOC has maintained our respective relationships with three key iwi: Ngāi Tahu (South Island), the Kiingitanga (Waikato) and Ngāti Whātua (Auckland CBD and north-west of Auckland).

The celebration of Māori culture was a highlight of the New Zealand Team's campaign at Paris 2024. Through powerful use of Māori performing arts, te reo Māori, and tikanga, our New Zealand Team shared Māori culture with Aotearoa New Zealand and the world.

From athletes speaking te reo Māori, casting mana waves, performing the haka with passion and pride, to powerful displays of tikanga and teaching French fans to poi, the increased visibility and exposure of Māori culture carried by the New Zealand Team in Paris was the strongest in Olympic history.



- Te Hono ki Matariki Olympic Games debut at Paris 2024 Opening Ceremony
- 27 whakatau – athlete welcome ceremonies – in cities including Paris, Marseilles, St Etienne, Nice, and Versailles.
- 400+ Tahutahi pounamu pendants presented in Paris to the NZ Team
- 1,200 poi used in cultural celebrations across Paris, showcasing Māori culture
- Te Reo Māori ki Parī 2024 launched – the first official Olympic Games glossary in Māori and English
- Whāngārā Mai Tawhiti performances to tens of thousands of fans and Parisians on the world stage
- First attendance of a Māori monarch as an official NZ Team distinguished guest at an Olympic Games
- Inclusion of the first Rōpū Tautoko and Kapa Haka - Whāngārā Mai Tawhiti – at an Olympic Games



New Zealand's First-Ever Olympic Gold Medal Recovered

In 2024, the NZOC recovered the first-ever Olympic gold medal won by swimmer Malcolm Champion, competing for NZ under Australasia at the Stockholm 1912 Olympic Games.

The medal was gifted in private to the NZOC by an Australian donor whose family was given the medal by Malcolm Champion's family in approximately the 1940s. Their wishes were for the medal to be returned to Aotearoa for all New Zealanders to enjoy its significance.

The medal travelled to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games with the New Zealand Team and was displayed in the New Zealand section of the Olympic Village alongside other precious New Zealand Team taonga.

The NZOC intends to put the medal on public display so all New Zealanders can enjoy this piece of sporting history.

The medal is 33mm in diameter, made of gold and gilt silver, and was presented to Malcolm Champion by King Gustaf V of Sweden. On the front, two female figures place a laurel crown on the head of a victorious athlete. On the back, a herald proclaiming the opening of the Stockholm 1912 Olympic Games stands alongside a statue of the host country's physical education pioneer Per Henrik Ling.

Te Hono ki Matariki

The NZOC was honoured to receive a second Olympic kākahu in 2024. NZOC Kuia and Order Holder Ranui Ngarimu led the creation of the new kākahu, which has been entirely hand woven and took around 16 months of work to complete.

She has named the second kākahu 'Te Hono ki Matariki'. Alongside Te Māhutonga, they will be worn by the New Zealand Team's flagbearers at the Opening Ceremony of upcoming Olympic Games (summer and winter).

The late Kiingi Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII gave his blessing to Te Hono ki Matariki at Tūrangawaewae Marae in April.

The NZOC extends our sincere gratitude to Ranui Ngarimu for her leadership and work on the exquisite kākahu which was seen by millions as it was worn in the Opening Ceremony of Paris 2024.

"The kākahu is a symbol of the Māori traditions at the core of our unique team culture. It is worn by the leaders of our team and is seen by millions around the world as the New Zealand Team represents our nation in the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games.

"It is the perfect symbol to represent the New Zealand Team and we extend our heartfelt thanks to Ranui for the creation of this taonga and to Kiingi Tuheitia for his blessing,"

Liz Dawson, NZOC President

Kiingi Pacific Pearl

During his visit to the Olympic Village in Paris, Kiingi Tuheitia presented a new taonga to the New Zealand Team; a large mother of pearl shell, engraved with the following proverb:

Ruia te kakano, kia puawai tatou. Sow the Seed of Unity, so we may blossom together.

The taonga is symbolic of two things; acknowledgement of our inherent ties to Oceania and to acknowledge the New Zealand Team as a testament to kotahitanga, the Māori concept of unity, solidarity, and collective action that is synonymous with the Kiingitanga movement.

This new taonga will be recognised as the official taonga for future Pacific Mini Games and Pacific Games competitions.

