

17 October 2012

## History and future linked at Heuheu Street

**Large kohatu or rocks from sacred peaks throughout the District have completed the revitalisation of Heuheu Street connecting it to a legacy of leadership.**

Large flat deck trucks filled Heuheu Street on Thursday evening as the 'mauri' stones from both Tauhara and Ruapehu arrived at their final resting places in the central esplanade. The largest of the three kohatu, a five-tonne rock from the headwaters of the Waikato River in Tongariro National Park was delivered to Taupō Thursday by the Army's off-road recovery team to complete the centre piece.

The search began weeks ago with members of the Ngati Tuwharetoa scouring the District for the appropriate rocks before kaumatua were asked to carry out the rites that would allow the logistical preparations to begin. "Recent weather events have hampered our ability to bring this kohatu to Taupō," Bubs Smith of Ngati Hikairo says.

The rock was part of a lava flow at the headwaters of the Waikato River, known to iwi as Waikato-iti. Its smooth shape was created by glacier formations over thousands of years, says Mr Smith. Included with the rock from Waikato-iti are two rocks from the slopes of Tauhara, from an area that is often shrouded in cloud.

Some Heuheu Street retailers and Council representatives joined Ngati Tuwharetoa to complete the installation last week when kaumatua Te Kanawa Pitiroi and Reverend Sonny Garmonsway conducted rites to affirm the rocks' connection to the land.

Mauri stones are used for wharehau or Māori meeting houses and give life force to the area. In this instance, it affirms an unbreakable spiritual connection between the iwi and the surrounding lands. "The works started in April with karakia or prayers and these rocks will be a lasting reminder of those who have gone before us, but also our mokopuna who are yet to come," Mr Pitiroi says.

Heuheu Street is now open. Some remedial work on the second crossing from the Tongariro Street end will be done in the next few days to address issues with the raised cobblestones on one side. At no cost to Council, Fulton Hogan will be lowering them to prevent vehicles catching on them.

END

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