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NATIONAL IWI CHAIRS' FORUM RECOGNISES THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THREE OUTSTANDING WĀHINE

The National Iwi Chairs' forum recognised the contributions of three outstanding wāhine in Waikato last night. Kahurangi Tariana Turia (Ngā Waiariki Ngāti Apa, Ngā Rauru, Tūwharetoa, Whanganui Iwi), Tākuta Cathy Dewes (Te Arawa, Ngāti Porou) and Patricia Grace (Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Toa) were all inducted into Te Whare Pūkenga tonight at the Forum's Gala Awards Dinner with 300 attendees from around the Country coming together to celebrate the event.

Te Whare Pūkenga was established by the Iwi Chairs Forum in 2021 to recognise rangatira who have enhanced the lives of all whānau in Aotearoa through their activities. Specifically, the award is given to those whose actions contribute significantly to the revitalisation of the Forum's values including: Rangatiratanga, Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga, Kaitiakitanga, Tikanga and Pono. Te Whare Pūkenga is an honour that was conceived by, is managed and is completely funded by the 80 Iwi that make up the National Iwi Chairs Forum.

Kahurangi Tariana Turia was nominated by her iwi who cited her extraordinary work on behalf of Te Ao Māori through her work in the health and community services sectors and in Parliament where she served for 18 years as a member of the Labour Party and then as the co-founder of Te Paati Māori. Kahurangi Tariana drove the establishment of the Whānau Ora movement saying that "decisions must be made by the family, re-empowering them to take back control over their own situations".

Te Arawa nominated Tākuta Cathy Dewes recognising her lifelong efforts to revitalise te reo Māori through her mahi with kura kaupapa nationally; the 1972 Reo Maori petition; her mahi with Te Ātaarangi; Victoria and Waikato Universities, the Waitangi Tribunal and across Te Arawa.

Ngāti Toa Chair Callum Katene said Whaea Patricia is regarded both nationally and internationally for storytelling of Māori experience through not only her own lived realities, but those of her ancestors. Whaea Pat is someone in whom we see, feel and hear ourselves as iwi, as Māori. She has a significant record of awards and recognition within the literary profession for her work. The National Iwi Chairs' Forum honours Patricia Frances Grace for her commitment and exemplary achievement in bringing contemporary Māori voice to Aotearoa NZ literature.

Professor Margaret Mutu, Chair of Ngāti Kahu and Pou Tikanga rōpū, said it is an honour and privilege for the Forum to be able to recognise and celebrate the achievements of these inspirational wāhine Māori who have spent their lives in service to our people. Mahia te mahi, hei painga mo te iwi. Work for the betterment of the people.

These three Mareikura now join the current members of Te Whare Pūkenga which includes Tākuta Moana Jackson, Tākuta Whatarangi Winiata, Kahurangi Iritanga Tāwhiwhirangi, Tākuta Wally Penetito.

End.

For more information

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