

Bid to keep guardian at Matiatia

A community fundraising campaign is being launched this week to purchase Chris Bailey's sculpture *Te Werowero* and make it a permanent fixture at Matiatia Wharf.

The bronze figure was originally installed at Matiatia as a temporary artwork in *Sculpture on the Gulf 2019* but many residents are so taken with the piece they want to make Matiatia Wharf its permanent home so it can continue to greet all who arrive here.

"The figure in the artwork," says Chris Bailey "represents all people who choose to live on Waiheke and it does not represent any one particular ancestor or tribal group. This figure is on guard acting as a kaitiaki - guardian - for all who live on Waiheke.

"The artwork both welcomes and challenges the visitors arriving to Waiheke to respect the island's culture, wāhi tapu (sacred places) and the fragile environment of Waiheke," he says.

"During the formal Māori pōwhiri welcome process, the wero is the first thing to occur before the karanga, it is a questioning process by which the local people of an area establish the intent of their visitors."

Mr Bailey is of Ngāti Hako, Ngāti Pāoa, Ngāti Porou and Te Aupouri ancestry. He says the creation of this work was very personal to him, having worked for several years to protect the various urupa (Māori burial grounds) within Matiatia Bay and Waiheke generally.

Dan Harrop and Barry Fenton are behind the fundraising effort and hope to see the sculpture purchased by the community, for the community. This week they are launching a Give A Little campaign to make it happen.

"As a local, I have always felt the wharf needed something significant to properly welcome people to this beautiful island, whether they are returning from a daily commute or arriving here for the first time," says Mr Harrop.

"So when I saw *Te Werowero* for the first time, the connection was instant.

"I not only thought it was visually fantastic, but also totally loved the cultural and symbolic message behind it," he says. "I quickly posted on the Waiheke Facebook community page that we should find a way to keep it here permanently by, say, chipping in as little or as much money as possible.

"Over 1000 people felt exactly the same as me, and so we have now progressed that idea into a community-driven fundraising campaign."

Auckland Transport, which administers the wharf, Waiheke Local Board members,



Dan Harrop and Barry Fenton with Chris Bailey's *Te Werowero*.

mana whenua, Ngāti Paoa and Piritahi Marae, have all given their support for the work to stay on the wharf and a poll amongst locals saw 97 percent of respondents voting for the piece to be permanent.

"Local board members are enthusiastic supporters of the crowd funding and the ongoing commitment by Auckland Transport to placement of *Te Werowero* on the wharf", says local board chair Cath Handley.

"I've spoken to AT leaders about the project and am hopeful AT will also contribute to the costs - they are certainly inspired by the community initiative."

Once purchased, it is planned that the sculpture will become part of the Auckland Council Public Art Collection with an agreement that it will stay at Matiatia. Mr

Harrop and Mr Fenton are in discussions with AT about relocating the work to a more prominent position at the wharf.

The total cost of the project will be \$50,000. This sum will fund the purchase of the artwork, a new stone plinth, foundation work, structural design and consents. The Sculpture on the Gulf Trust has waived the commission on the work to reduce the cost to the community.

Anyone wishing to contribute towards the purchase of *Te Werowero* can make a donation at the Give A Little page: givealittle.co.nz/cause/te-werowero-sculpture-purchase.

Mr Harrop and Mr Fenton say that all amounts paid will be held in a council or council-approved account until the project budget has been met. •



Debbie Shuttleworth
027 2500 160

**My name is DEBBIE SHUTTLEWORTH.
I am a REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL.**

Are you looking for someone ...

- ★ who will listen
- ★ work hard for you
- ★ keep you in touch and well informed

If the answer is YES, call me to discuss how
WE CAN WORK TOGETHER.



first national
REAL ESTATE
Waiheke
Licensed under REAA 2008