Chapter 2

Waiata tira 'Choral song'

Settling Home

Chapter One outlined some of the history of the Māori, both in New Zealand and in Melbourne, including the loss experienced by the Māori as a direct result of the British occupation of Aotearoa during the nineteenth century and the legacy of the earliest Māori settlers in shaping Melbourne. Reminders of the Māori presence can still be found in the Māori Chief Hotel in South Melbourne and in street names around the inner suburbs of Melbourne. This chapter will examine the Māori as migrants residing in Melbourne during the late 1990s, their motives for leaving their ancestral home and the strategies used by individuals and groups to recreate their sense of 'home' as a minority community. It will then narrow the focus of the study to examine one particular group of Māori who have come together to recreate their culture, identifying issues and problems that face members of the group in their efforts to maintain their traditions and culture. As argued throughout this thesis, the chapter will show how, in attempting to re-create traditional culture in Melbourne, the Māori are, in effect, inventing a new tradition.

The Māori in Melbourne

Rediscovering the culture and what it means to be Māori becomes important once Māori take that extra step away from their home and move to Australia. For many, the culture had little value back 'home' because they either had no interest in

pursuing cultural activities or they took for granted its existence. Once removed from a society where the culture was pervasive, the culture became significant as a result of its absence.

Māori living away from their families and tribes in New Zealand may not have felt the need to pursue culture either through studying *te reo Māori*, or by learning song and dance because it has always been there. There is always a tendency to take for granted those things that are always around us, whether it be terms and phrases or foodstuffs. One Māori residing in Melbourne commented that he first noticed the absence of a Māori presence in his day-to-day life in conversations with his Australian friends. In New Zealand both Māori and non-Māori use Māori words in day-to-day speech. In New Zealand people generally understand the words and accept them as part of the conversation, but in Australia speech needs to be modified to accommodate non-Māori speech patterns.

> Here, you know, it's different. Back home I can say 'Hey, let's get some *kai* ['food']', but here, they don't understand and I got to change what I say. (Johnston, E. Pers. comm., 16 July 1998)

The Māori language is an important marker for Māori identification with their culture. Many Māori living in Australia do not speak the language. *Te reo Māori* was not taught in schools in New Zealand until the late 1970s, and prior to this there was a concerted effort to eliminate the language by punishing those children who spoke the language at school (Wallbridge, G. Pers. comm., 23 January 1995). Consequently, many adults over thirty either do not speak the language at all, or else possess only a smattering of words and phrases. They certainly do not have enough language to speak at a gathering. *Te reo Māori* is now officially the first language of New Zealand and is taught in all schools. Even the New Zealand passport is printed in both English and Māori, and *te reo Māori* is spoken exclusively in Māori colleges and universities in New Zealand. The Māori language

currently being taught in New Zealand is distinct from the tribal dialects of the past. Modern *te reo Māori* is a hybrid language, a pan-Māori language designed to link all Māori with a common tongue in much the same way Bahasa Indonesia was created to link the disparate peoples of Indonesia. While many Māori living in Australia do not *kōrero Māori*, there are those that do, having either come from rural or regional areas where they were taught by older relatives, or as performers, where fluency in the language is considered paramount, and these people find themselves taking on important roles within the Māori community. The Māori of Melbourne generally estimate that their community contains between fifteen hundred and five thousand members, including those who have married into the community[6]. This is impossible to confirm as the population is constantly shifting, even though the 1991 Census records included a question on ancestry. It is also impossible to use "languages spoken at home" as a guide as many Māori do not *korero Māori*. According to the 1991 Census only 1.0% of New Zealand born residents in Australia spoke Māori at home. The Māori themselves estimate that there are between twenty and thirty thousand Māori or people of Māori descent residing in Melbourne (Te Kaahu, M. Pers. comm. 2 November 1998). These Māori have come from all over New Zealand, particularly the North Island and, hence, from many different tribes.

Being removed from their tribal support group, many Māori seek out other Māori regardless of tribal background, and an informal network may become more formal as they incorporate sporting and social events into their network. These new networks may replace existing tribal affiliations in Melbourne taking the place of the

---

[6] The discrepency between the Census figures and the Māori estimates could possibly be explained by the application of the concept of *whānau*. The concept is often extended beyond immediate blood relationships and can include non-Māori who have married Māori and even non-Māori who have ties with the community. During the time of my involvment with *Ngā Hapu Katoa* I experienced this application of *whānau* first-hand in the relationship of my own family, particularly my son, and members of the club. I was, and still am, addressed as 'Auntie'.

absent family. It is rare for any existing tribal conflicts to arise publicly. Those Māori with a background in culture and *te reo Māori*, either through recent education or as a result of their upbringing in New Zealand, may be approached to run a formal *kōhanga reo* for children, and language classes, for both the children and adults, and an informal group may establish itself as a 'culture club', with regular classes timetabled and a permanent venue for the meetings. Attempting to re-create the formal social structures and situations, such as *pōwhiri* and *hui* ('gatherings') back home, these groups can encounter problems when they assign important roles within the formal structure of the club. Many of the people assigned these roles must step forward as spokespeople and official representatives of the club, but many of these people do not have the skills, the knowledge or the experience required in this situation.

Culture Clubs

The more formal approach to Māori social and cultural networking can be observed in the eight or so culture clubs scattered across Melbourne. Each club is located in a different geographic area, although only one club in Melbourne currently caters to one specific tribe. This small family-based club, *Tainui*, is made up exclusively of members of the *Tainui* tribe. The *Tainui* tribe is from the Waikato area and has the Māori 'Queen', Dame Te Atairangikaahu, as its head. The *Tainui* tribe spearheaded the King movement in New Zealand's Waikato region during 1863[7]. Another club, *Te Ao Hurihuri*, has its origins as a family-based club along

[7] In 1863, the *Tainui* tribe of the Waikato region appointed their paramount chief, Te Wherowhero, to the position of *Te Ariikinui Māori* (lit. 'high chief'). The occupying British forces saw this as an attempt to usurp the British crown in New Zealand and sent in troops to quash the movement. Te Wherowhero and his troops fled and waged war on the British during the next two years. In 1865 the British government confiscated 500,000 hectares of land from the *Tainui* as punishment for their perceived treason. To this day the Māori 'royal

similar lines to *Tainui*. In the case of the other clubs, their multi-tribal, or lack of a singular tribal, nature may be celebrated in their names, for example *Te Ruawhenua* ('Second Land'), *Ngā Hapu Katoa* ('Many [sub] Tribes') and *Tāku Mana* ('My Power'). Australian clubs cannot afford the luxury of providing membership on an exclusively tribal basis, and thus tribal diversity becomes a feature of the clubs. In contrast, *Te Rau Aroha* is a church-based club in the western suburbs. *Te Rau Aroha* is unusual for Māori clubs, as church and formal religious worship do not generally feature as a significant aspect in Māori life, although a sense of spirituality through prayer is a feature of many Māori gatherings. Members of a culture club come from various denominations from Anglican through Roman Catholic to the Ratana[8] church. This is in direct contrast to the experience of other Polynesian communities in Melbourne, for example the Tongan and Samoan communities, which are generally centered around their local church, with Sundays being dominated by worship and church-based activities.

These clubs have become formalised in that they have a committee with an executive consisting of a president, a secretary and a treasurer, and those that have sought incorporation have a public officer. Each club generally operates as an umbrella group, supporting social and sporting as well as cultural activities. At least two clubs have a *kaumātua* ('elder') to whom the club members turn for advice and guidance. In the case of *Ngā Hapu Katoa*, the *kaumātua* leads the *karakia* ('prayers'), is the central figure at all formal gatherings, and runs the *te reo Māori* classes. Club members always make a point of greeting their *kaumātua* as soon as they arrive at any function, and children are encouraged to be particularly respectful.

---

family' reside in Ngaruawahia in the midst of the Waikato region, an area known colloquially as 'King Country'.

[8] Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana was a healer and founded the Ratana Established Church of New Zealand in 1925. It is a non-denominational Māori variant of Christianity. There are numerous websites dealing with the Church and its beliefs.

The *kaumātua* is viewed as an important link with Māori culture and maintaining that culture within Melbourne. The *kaumātua* is an honorary position offered to an older person who has any knowledge of the language and etiquette associated with formal Māori gatherings. The people who hold the positions of *kaumātua* in Melbourne, however, would not necessarily be acknowledged or accorded the same degree of respect of *kaumātua* back in New Zealand.

> Back home these guys wouldn't get the rspect they get out here because they're not real *kaumātua*, they didn't earn it like back home. They get asked to be our *kaumātua* because they know the culture and they can speak the language. (Pouwhare, K. Pers. comm. 21 January 1999)

The decision of a *Ngāti Porou kaumātua* from New Zealand to settle in Melbourne to be with his family in September 1999 was greeted with considerable excitement by the entire Māori community. The fact that his family was closely involved with *Ngā Hapu Katoa* also gave this club the prestige of having two *kaumātua*.

Another central figure inextricably linked with the culture is the tutor. The tutor runs the culture classes, teaching the club members songs and dances. Only the tutor's imagination and the opportunities for the club members to perform limit the variety of songs and dances. In many cases, it is the tutors who exert the single, most powerful influence on the club members, as it is their experience and knowledge that determines the style and quality of the performance presented by the culture group. Tutors invariably teach from their personal repertoire of song and dance, and this is directly related to their tribes and where they grew up. Each tribe has its own repertoire of song and dance, which is taught to members of the tribe. The tutor in each club will teach what they have learned, but many will create new songs and dances from the material available to them in Melbourne. As with the position of *kaumātua*, the tutor is an honorary position. In contrast, tutors in New Zealand are

paid professionals. Although a number of tutors in Melbourne may have been brought up with *kapa haka* as an integral part of their lives, not all tutors have a background in culture. They may not even *kōrero Māori*, but enjoy performing and teaching.

Culture clubs are a relatively new phenomenon for the Māori. As urban Māori in New Zealand have become more dislocated from their tribal lands, there has been a need for a substitute to fill the void once filled by the tribe. The first official culture club, the *Ngāti Pōneke* Club, was formed in Wellington in 1935, catered to urban Māori in Wellington and became the focus for Māori social life. Other clubs were soon established throughout New Zealand (Katene 1998). Funding and opportunities for performance are high enough in New Zealand for all Māori, including urban Māori, to have access to *kapa haka* groups. *Rōpū* are provided with many opportunities to perform and compete against each other at the many school and Regional Festivals held every year, in addition to the biennial Aotearoa Festival. Professional *kapa haka* groups perform nightly at tourist venues in such places as Rotorua. The 'culture club', however, is a product of the urban Māori's isolation from cultural and social activity in their tribal regions. For Māori in Melbourne, even more isolated from these activities than the urban Māori in New Zealand, these formal clubs act have become both substitute *whānau* and *iwi*.

"Cultural Dance as Life Experience"

Participation in 'culture', through language classes or performing arts, is one part of the experience of being Māori. In 1993 Kim Dunphy, a dance teacher and researcher in Melbourne, observed the culture club *Te Ruawhenua* performing at a Jewish cultural festival in Melbourne's southeast. Impressed by what she perceived as their "tremendous self-confidence and positive body projection" (1996:54) she

embarked upon a study to identify the function of "cultural dance" in their lives. Her study took place over a period of several months and included interviews and observations of rehearsals and performances. Dunphy modelled her approach on several studies of Indigenous Australians and the role of traditional culture in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. These studies worked on the premise that involvement in traditional culture reduced substance abuse. Dunphy examined statistics from New Zealand, looking at records for incarceration of Māori and substance abuse. Working with this, she developed a framework for her study of the members of *Te Ruawhenua*.

The participants surveyed in this study overwhelmingly responded positively to the role of "cultural dance" in their lives. One respondent explained that this was the only thing that he could do with his whole family:

> He also places importance on being involved in activities that can involve his whole family, of wife and six children (from a toddler right through to adolescents). When he spent his weekends playing sport, only his older boys were involved, but while he spends his time with Te Ruawhenua, his whole family can actively participate. (Dunphy 1996:55)

Others in the group commented on the role of the club and its significance to them as members. The club, for them, had become a *whanau*, an extended family, replacing the absent biological family, and providing social as well as cultural opportunities:

> ...community organizations [are important] for Polynesian people who, because of migration and urbanization, no longer have close family networks...(Dunphy 1994:102)

Likewise, the club provided opportunities for adolescents to experience cultural dance in an environment that was supportive and fun. The idea that culture and dance was fun was a fundamental reason for the number of children and adolescents

participating in the club. A significant factor in this enthusiasm for culture came from the tutor. The tutor teaches all aspects of *kapa haka*, the melody or rhythm, intonation, language and gestures. At the time of Dunphy's research, the club's tutor was Nana Rollo. Nana had founded the group when she arrived in Melbourne in 1985, and was instrumental in the club's success in performances. She created many new songs and *waiata-a-ringa*, dealing with issues that had meaning for the club, its members, and the wider Māori community (Dunphy 1994:79). Nana's teaching style was supportive, and she encouraged her performers to do their best:

> She doesn't make you do things if you're shy. She'll help you out, help you understand. Like... if we can't get a note, Nana will help with the guitar and break words up if you can't understand. (Dunphy 1994:80)

Dunphy witnessed the club's decline towards the end of her study, and concluded that the dynamics of the club were closely tied to the tutor and his or her commitment to the club. When Nana left Melbourne seeking work, morale dropped. Members began to skip rehearsals and some joined other clubs. Nana, the "backbone of the group" (Dunphy 1994:80) returned briefly, but left permanently when offered work in Sydney. She has since returned to New Zealand, and *Te Ruawhenua* has survived and continues to perform in Melbourne.

From her study with *Te Ruawhenua*, Dunphy concluded that the participation in *kapa haka*, or 'cultural dance' as she defined it, was significant in developing and maintaining a sense of 'Māoriness'. Performers participated for many personal reasons. For some it was to socialise with other Māori, for others it was to learn about culture. For Nana, it was about passing on her love of Māori culture:

> ... seeing our children love and enjoying the culture... seeing some of our children in the culture group grow up ... A lot of our ex-members

> have actually gone on to teaching their own groups. That pleases me. (Dunphy 1994:78)

The club served as a *whanau* for members by "assist[ing] in the promulgation of Māori cultural values such as respect, discipline and in the perpetuation of traditional gender roles" (Dunphy 1994:55), setting examples that could be found in a family setting back home. Whether involvement in the club prevented members becoming involved in crime or substance abuse is unclear, although it is a widely held belief among Māori that this is often the case (cf.. Dunphy 1994:63-64)

At any one time there may be up to seven or eight culture clubs operating in and around Melbourne, but this number is very flexible as, for varying reasons, not all clubs are active at any one time. At the time this thesis was concluded, *Ngā Hapu Katoa* had not met formally for three years, and *Ngā Tangi e te Iwi* and *Ngā Taonga e Whitu* had been disbanded for several years. Three clubs, *Ngā Hapu Katoa*, the subject of this study, *Tāku Mana*, and *Te Ao Hurihuri*, had been together for more than ten years. The oldest Māori culture club in Melbourne is *Tāku Mana*, founded by George Hallett in 1976. George is from the *Ngāti Tuwharetoa* tribe and had migrated to Melbourne from near Turangi, south of Lake Taupo in the central North Island. He soon became involved with other Māori already here. He believed that there was a need for these Māori to have access to language and culture and founded *Tāku Mana* as a club to teach langauge and 'culture'. In 1987 he approached Sonny Abraham, a respected tutor in New Zealand, and arranged for him to come to Melbourne to teach *kapa haka*. At the time Sonny was teaching *kapa haka* at Queen Victoria High School in New Zealand. George began teaching *te reo Māori* to adults and children in the Altona area, west of Melbourne. As a club *Tāku Mana* developed its own uniform and club colours, using navy and pale blue with a *manaia*, a stylised bird-like design, in the centre of the bodice. Viewed by members of the Māori

community as a tremendous supporter of culture, he actively promoted culture, recruiting Māori from all over Melbourne and as far to the east of Melbourne as Gippsland (Smith, S. Pers. comm. 6 June 1998). *Tāku Mana* experienced a significant set back in 1998 when its then treasurer embezzled the club's funds. *Koro*[9] George maintained his position as *kaumātua* and supported the establishment of the *Tāku Mana* Youth Club, which was set up exclusively for the teenagers of *Tāku Mana* to maintain their involvement 'in culture'. Following the dissolution of *Tāku Mana* many members joined *Te Ao Hurihuri*, another northern suburbs club, based in the Altona area and established in 1986. George also became involved with *Te Ao Hurihuri*, although he still hoped to see *Tāku Mana* revived in the near future. *Tāku Mana* reformed in mid-1999 when Sonny Abraham returned to Melbourne from Sydney to take over the position of club tutor. Membership swelled as both the Mehana family and the Taiawa family, who had previously resigned their membership from *Ngā Hapu Katoa*, joined. *Tāku Mana* began rehearsing in East St. Kilda but soon relocated to a hall in Richmond. The club remained active throughout 2000 and competed in the 2000 Victorian Regional Festival.

Table 2.1: Māori clubs in the Melbourne area (from 1995-2001).

Club	**Locality**
Ngā Hapu Katoa	Dandenong
Te Ruawhenua	Broadmeadows
Taku Mana	Richmond/St. Kilda
Te Ao Hurihuri	Altona
Te Tiritiri O te Moana	Frankston
Tainui	Northwestern suburbs

[9] George is frequently referred to and addressed as "*Koro* George". *Koro* is a term of endearment used when addressing men and translates as 'father' or 'old man' (Williams 1971:143).

Te Rau Aroha	Western suburbs
Ngā Tangi e te Iwi	Dandenong
Ngā Taonga e Whitu	Melbourne-wide

In 1983 a group of Māori families in Melbourne's southeast approached George Hallett about establishing a new culture club. Although the families had been meeting informally they wanted a more structured organisation. George assisted them in establishing Melbourne's second culture club, lending them *Tāku Mana*'s uniforms when they performed. This second club took the name *Ngā Hapu Katoa*, reflecting the tribal diversity of its members, and by 1987 had designed and made its own club uniform. Adopting the traditional Māori colours of black, white and red, the bodice design features four white diamonds with black centres, each diamond representing *ngā hau i whā* ('the four winds'), designed by two founding members Carol Pirihi and Dawn Kakahi, the sister of Karlene Pouwhare.

Other clubs soon followed. Nana Rollo founded *Te Ruawhenua*, the subject of Dunphy's study, in 1985 in the St.Kilda area. Nana was not only the club founder but also the club tutor. Nana used the colours of the Australian Aboriginal flag, black, red and yellow, in the uniform as a mark of respect towards indigenous Australians. Soon after the club moved to its current location in Broadmeadows, north of Melbourne. Its membership includes families and singles. Next Tuini Dennis formed *Te Ao Hurihuri* in 1986. Catering to families in the western suburbs, the club draws most of its membership from Sunshine, Altona, Footscray and Spotswood. Tuini is still involved as the club's *kaumātua*. The club has been active in Māori culture, and the *rōpū* has toured interstate and overseas as entertainers.

> We're a busy club. We've done concert tours here and overseas. We've performed in New Zealand and Canada, and we've been to the United States. (Dennis, T. Pers. comm., 7 November 1999)

Ngā Tangi A Te Iwi was established in early 1996 to cater for younger people from the Dandenong area. By 1999 it had dissolved as its members had found other interests. At around the same time that *Ngā Tangi a te Iwi* was formed *Te Tiritiri ō te Moana* was formed to cater for families in the Frankston area. Unlike *Ngā Tangi a te Iwi*, *Te Tiritiri ō te Moana* has never been involved in competitions and only comes together when they are preparing for a performance. These smaller clubs, such as *Te Tiritiri ō te Moana*, operate *exclusively* as *rōpū*. They are not run by a committee, as are the larger clubs. Instead, the tutors run them, and their sole purpose is to perform. These clubs generally do not exist for long. In the case of one such club, *Ngā Tangi a te Iwi*, the tutor, Tom Rangihuna, established the club in Dandenong to cater for teenage Māori. The membership, however, dwindled after two years as the members grew older and developed other interests.

> When Tom [Ranihuna] started *Ngā Tangi a te Iwi* he wanted to pull in the kids [in Dandenong] but the kids got busy with other things and didn't want to do culture when their friends were out and having a good time. This happens a lot with kids. Their mates don't do culture and they want to be with their friends. (Smith B. Pers comm. October 31, 1998)

The Frankston club *Te Tiritiri ō te Moana* is also run exclusively as a *rōpū*, but caters to a wider range of age groups. Members of the club only meet to rehearse when they have a performance for which to prepare. Then the tutor arranges the rehearsal schedule, plans the program and runs the practices.

Members of each club demonstrate considerable loyalty to the club and to each other. As such, *te kākahu* ('uniforms') have become an important aspect of both club identity and of performance. Each uniform is made of a pattern and colours, and both have symbolic meaning. These patterns and colours are featured on the bodices worn by the women performers. Many clubs also have T-shirts or polo shirts made up in club colours. *Ngā Hapu Katoa* had a tracksuit in black with red and white trim made up for members of their sporting teams and a white polo

top with the club logo and name emblazoned in red across the back and in the left breast. All club members wear the club shirts to festivals, and teams are easily recognisable by their colours. *Tāku Mana*'s colours were originally navy and pale blue tapestry bodices with a pale blue *manaia* ('a beaked figure'), but at the 1999 Regional Festival the women wore royal blue cloth dresses under their *piupiu* ('flax skirt'). The *manaia* design was printed onto the bodice and hem, and the dresses covered one shoulder. This new uniform proved to be controversial, with several former members complaining that the design of this uniform was inappropriate and that the *manaia* design was inaccurate.

> It was all wrong. The *manaia* didn't even look like a *manaia*. It looked like a squashed *tiki*, like an alien or something. (Hallett, G. Pers. comm. November 3, 1999)

Te Ao Hurihuri uses purple and yellow diamonds in its bodice design, and the club wears purple shirts with 'Te Ao Hurihuri' printed in yellow. The purple represents the *kumara* ('sweet potato'), and the yellow represents the sun. According to Māori mythology the first *kumara*, which can be purple, orange or white, came to New Zealand through Gisborne, on the east coast. Tuini Dennis, the club founder, is originally from Gisborne. *Te Tiritiri ō te Moana* uses yellow and blue to represent the sun and the sea. *Te Ruawhenua* have adopted the colours of the Aboriginal flag, red, black and yellow, as a tribute to Australia's indigenous people, and have also incorporated these colours into cloaks worn by all members of the *rōpū*. In its own tribute to Australia's indigenous people, *Ngā Hapu Katoa* incorporated the boomerang into its club logo and letterhead, which is used for all club correspondence.

Te kākahu are not only integral to club identity, but are also judged as part of the annual Regional Festivals both in Australia and in New Zealand (see also Chapter Five). The uniform has many components, and includes the women's tunic,

a plain fabric skirt attached to an intricately patterned tapestry bodice, *piupiu*, *whitiki* (men's tapestry 'girdle') and the tapestry headband. It also includes such ornamentation as feather earrings and feather clusters tucked into the women's headbands and single feathers braided into the men's hair. An integral part of the overall uniform is the *moko*. *Moko* are applied prior to the performance, either full or half-face for the men, and chin and lips only for the women. Many Māori who do not have a particular family *moko* may turn to Māori visual arts such as painting and carving for inspiration in creating a *moko*. Māori visual arts are full of symbols, most notably the *koru* ('bulbed motif') in its many varieties and the spiral. Both of these symbols feature prominently in *moko* designs on carvings and in illustrations from the nineteenth century. Many *moko* designs and their histories are featured in *Ta Moko: The Art of Māori Tattoo* (Simmons 1986), and members of the *Ngā Hapu Katoa rōpū* generally use this book as reference.

Te moko are as essential a part of the club uniform as the colours and designs of the tunics, *whitiki* and *piupiu*. Each *moko* has a different meaning, and can be used to detail one's personal history. Particular *moko* were reserved for important positions within a tribe. A tattooist, for example, would have his own design. Similarly, a half *moko* indicates that the full ancestry of that particular man is unknown. The Mehana family can only trace their ancestry back three generations, so Stacey wears a half *moko*.

> Kids have got to have permission from their parents to wear the *moko*. I can wear a full *moko*, but if Stacey wants to wear a *moko* he's got to wear a half *moko* because he's got *pākeha* and we can't go back further on that side. (Mehana. C. Pers. comm. 24 October 1998)

Men only wear full and half face *moko*. In the past the *moko* was a proper tattoo, applied with great formality and ceremony by an official tribal tattooist, using bone applicators to pierce the skin and special pigments. Indeed, the tattoo effect was as

much a product of scarring as it was the discoloration of the skin. With the decline of the influence of the *marae* and government policy on Māori language and customs in the early twentieth century, facial tattooing ceased. Facial and body tattoos, using traditional designs, are now only used for competitions and special performances, and are applied using black kohl pencils, a considerably less painful process. Women's *moko* were applied in the same way as men's, but only covered the chin and lips. Some women's *moko* extended above the upper lip, but very rarely. A *moko wahine* indicated rank in the tribe and, as with *moko tāne*, each line and shape has a particular meaning. Not all competitors, however, possess knowledge of their ancestry or have a particular family *moko* that they can use. Many Māori will refer to books that deal exclusively with *moko*, for example Simmons, using a design that they like. Others will use a design that has some particular meaning or is well known. Karen Matthews uses the double *koru* design used by Air New Zealand, while Trish Graham wears a design created for her by her brother in New Zealand. In a competition it is an expectation of the judges that each competitor will have an understanding of his or her *moko*. Judges may speak to individuals to ascertain their knowledge, and will judge the *rōpū* accordingly.

The Māori community in Melbourne is small. Everyone knows someone or is related to someone, and rivalry between the clubs and their supporters is intense. There are longstanding friendly rivalries between the older clubs, particularly between *Ngā Hapu Katoa* and *Te Ruawhenua*. But other rivalries are not so friendly. Some of this rivalry stems from tribal affiliations back home. But an even greater source of irritation in the Māori community is a parcel of land owned by the Māori community. The land, near Digger's Rest, north of Melbourne, was purchased during the early 1980s with money donated by the various clubs and some individuals and families. It was the intention of the community to build a *marae* on

the land to serve the ritual needs of all Māori in Melbourne, to give them a place to hold their *pōwhiri*, *hui* and, most importantly, *tangi* ('funerals'). The existing practice is for the body to be laid out for two or three days in the home of the family. Here the family and friends of the deceased spend time with the body, talking, singing and paying their last respects.

> In New Zealand the body is taken to the *marae* and people sit with the person and talk to them and sing. They tell the person the news and how much they love them and miss them. It's better at the *marae* because it's bigger. Having the body at home is not good. There's not enough room for everyone, but we don't have a *marae* yet. (Pirere. M. Pers. comm. 3 March 1999)

Ngā Hapu Katoa donated money towards the purchase of the land, but objected to the location. Their objection was based on the belief that the *marae* should be built in a more central location rather than on the northwestern side of Melbourne where the majority of the clubs are located. The land was duly purchased but the building never commenced. Rumors have circulated since then that the funds have been mismanaged and have been used elsewhere. However, the freehold for the land belongs to the Māori community (Hallett. G. Pers. comm. 9 March 1999). In the meantime *Ngā Hapu Katoa* signed the lease on *Te Amorangi*, effectively giving them a *marae* for their own private use. This caused a degree of resentment among the other clubs who perceived this as an attempt by *Ngā Hapu Katoa* to establish themselves in isolation from the rest of the Māori community. To this end, while friendships and kinship links many across the Māori community, club membership (and therefore a de-facto *iwi* alliance) can cause heightened tensions at the competitions, where pride and club loyalties are on display for all to see.

Ngā Hapu Katoa

The *Ngā Hapu Katoa* Māori Culture Club was based in Dandenong, a suburb southeast of Melbourne. The membership drew on a wide range of ages and socio-economic backgrounds, and on many tribes, from the *Ngā Puhi* (and sub-tribes) in the north to *Ngāti Porou* in the east and the *Ngāti Tuwharetoa* in the centre. This diversity of membership was vital to the viability, both socially and financially, of the club (Pirere, M. Pers. comm. 12 July 1998), as there are too few Māori from one particular tribe to create a large, exclusive club. Also, friendship groups often cross tribal boundaries. *Ngā Hapu Katoa* was a prime example of tribal diversity in a culture club, and the name, which means many sub-tribes, was chosen for this very reason. *Ngā Hapu Katoa* was established in 1983 by a group of four Māori families. These families first established *Ngā Hapu Katoa* as a social group, providing support for Māori members through sporting, social and cultural activities and the club held its meetings and rehearsals at the Waverley Rugby League clubhouse, and then later at Huntingdale Technical School. The primary concern was to provide the children who were born in Australia with the opportunity to experience Māori culture through dance. In 1985 the group sought incorporation and set up a constitution in which they set out their philosophy. A committee structure was established, with a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary and a public officer. The committee (generally) met monthly and an AGM was held at the start of each new financial year. All positions would be vacated and elections for the new office bearers held at the AGM. The committee generally consisted of members from most of the families who were most involved in the general club activities. Eventually it was decided to rent a factory or a warehouse space to provide a permanent base for both the Club and its members. This venue would then be

permanently available whenever it was required for practice, formal gatherings or social functions.

A small factory in Dandenong was leased and *Te Amorangi* ('Halo of Heaven') was established as the club's home base. The building was renovated to provide secure storage for their collection of *taonga* ('treasures'), including wooden carvings and *tukutuku* ('lattice panels'), trophies won in competitions, uniforms, including *piupiu*, and the men's *taiaha*. The club attempted to purchase the building when it was put up for sale in 1996. They attempted to raise funds through a 'Buy a Brick' scheme, where members would purchase a brick for $100 per family member, but the building was sold before the funds could be raised. Further renovations were undertaken in mid-1998 to make *Te Amorangi* more profitable as a venue for hire by outside groups. The kitchen and toilet facilities were upgraded, and the mezzanine storage room was made more secure. The building was put up for sale again in October 1999, and again the club considered purchasing the building but was unable to raise the funds. The building was sold soon after and the club's lease terminated. *Te Amorangi* was formally closed on December 30, 1999. *Ngā Hapu Katoa* was unique among the Melbourne Māori culture clubs, as it was the only club with its own rehearsal space[10]. Other groups either rely on community centres or rehearse at members' homes.

A small but active group of families have made up the core of *Ngā Hapu Katoa* members during the 1990s. This core of people was involved in either catering or performance, which were the two prime revenue-making activities, and most were also involved on the committee. Five or so families formed this core: the

[10] The decision to obtain their own space, with *Te Amorangi* serving as a de-facto *marae*, caused resentment among in the wider Māori community. The decision to establish a club house was perceived as an attempt by *Ngā Hapu Katoa* to undermine the efforts of the whole Māori community to establish a joint *marae* on community-owned land at Digger's Rest, north of Melbourne (Hallett, G. Pers. comm. 9 March 1999).

Grahams, the Brittliffs, the Pouwhares, the Panionas, the Pireres and the Smith/Tuais, although membership and degree of involvement varied from year to year. In addition there were a number of single members and couples, including Leeanne Roa, Jasmine Patuwairua, and Maadi and Molly Te Kahu. From 1995 the club witnessed the departure of at least six families and the arrival of several more including familes who were rejoining the club. Added to this was the addition of teenagers from the children's *rōpū* to the adult's *rōpū*, seeing a constant injection of youth and enthusiasm. Of the families involved in the many club activities, approximately half were *Ngā Puhi* or the *Ngā Puhi* sub-tribes, *Te Rarawa* and *Te Aupouri*. There were two *Ngāti Porou* families, and the remaining tribal makeup consisted of *Ngāti Rangi*, *Ngāti Maniapota* and *Ngāti Kahungungu*. This type of tribal variation is reflected in the other culture clubs around Melbourne.

Table 2.2: *Ngā Hapu Katoa* tribal make-up.

FAMILY	***IWI* (Tribe)**	***KATOA* (sub-tribe)**	**REGION**
Brittliff (Aston Sr.)	Ngā Puhi		Whangarei
Brittliff (Aston Jr.)	Ngā Puhi		Whangarei
Graham	Ngā Puhi	Te Rarawa	Northlands
Matthews	Ngāti Rangi		Bay of Plenty
Mehana	Ngā Puhi		Whangarei
Paniona	Ngā Puhi		Whangarei
Pirere (Willy)	Ngāti Porou	Ngāti Kahungungu	Hastings
Pirere (Moana)	Ngāti Porou		Hastings
Pouwhare	Ngāti Tuwharetoa		Turangi
Roa	Tainui		Waikato
Smith/Tuai	Ngā Puhi/Samoan		Auckland
Smith (Frank)	Ngā Puhi		Auckland
Taiawa	Unknown		Auckland
Te Kahu	Ngāti Porou	Ngāti Kahungungu	Auckland
Tuhi	Ngāti Porou	Ngāti Maniapota	Hawkes Bay

Tribal make-up was a contributing factor to the overall behaviour of *Ngā Hapu Katoa*, and the way the club dealt with not just its own members, but with outsiders as well (Smith. S. Pers. comm. 6 June 1998). *Ngā Hapu Katoa* had a diverse membership over the years, including non-Māori New Zealanders, non-Māori Australians, Greeks, Poles and Samoans. A significant indicator of this behaviour is that each culture club refers to itself as a *whānau* and views itself in this way, with the club taking on the wider role of substitute tribe, with its wider family relationships, made up of smaller family units. This multi-tribal membership has special significance for *Ngā Hapu Katoa*, which took the name to reflect this diversity. The founding members were themselves from many tribal as well as non-Māori backgrounds and wished this to be reflected in the name of the club. Of these founders, only Carol Pirihi, a *Pākehā* ('non-Māori') from New Zealand, and her husband Kelly still lived in Melbourne at the time of this research. Illness, however, kept Carol's involvement to a minimum until her death on August 30th 1998. Carol was the only founding member to die while still involved with the club (her husband, Kelly, had tutored the children until the mid 1990s) and her death was as significant for the club as the death of any parent in a family.

The culture club fulfils the role of the (absent) extended family that has remained in New Zealand. Club members refer to themselves as a *whānau*, and engaged in familial terms of address. All adult females are addressed as 'auntie' and all adult males as 'uncle' irrespective of the actual family relationship, although many of the club members were indeed related by marriage or tribal ties back home. This extending of kinship ties probably extends outside of the club framework and can be found in other cultures, such as the Cook Islanders, and even in the indigenous Australian community. *Ngā Hapu Katoa* was willing to adopt many non-Māori into their *whānau*, and adults and children are treated with as much *aroha*

('love') as the Māori members and familial terms of address were extended to include them as well. This phenomenon is perhaps indicative of the way in which the Māori in Melbourne are creating a 'new home', including people from outside of their culture, but who are willing to share their culture. These non-Māori members are also regarded as 'honorary Māori', and the view is taken that the colour of their skin doesn't matter[11]. For *Ngā Hapu Katoa* children and family events were the focus of many activities. Each year, special events were held for the children, but the main event was the annual Christmas party. The committee would decide on a venue, generally at a park near a beach or on the foreshore, and a small gift was provided for each child, with 'Father Christmas' arriving during the party to distribute the gifts. The club, however, had very strong views about the presence of the children at functions where alcohol was being consumed, and forbade members from providing children under eighteen with alcohol of any kind. Every member took responsibility for the children. At any social event the children were always under the watchful eye of the adults at the scene, and any adult present would administer comfort and discipline as the situation arose.

The *whānau* is not, however, merely a symbolic concept for the Māori in Melbourne. The *whānau* provides real support, emotionally, socially and financially for its members, and comes into its own in times of crisis, and this was clearly illustrated by *Ngā Hapu Katoa* on two occasions during the course of this study, when Carol Pirihi died at the end of August 1998 after a long battle with Multiple Sclerosis, and later when one of the children, Erin Pirere, died unexpectedly in February 1999. Carol's status as a founder of the club meant she was accorded a great deal of love and respect. As her illness progressed over a number of years the women of the club would visit Carol at home and assist her if she needed help.

---

[11] Gina Mehana addressed the author in this way in early 1996, saying that it didn't matter

When Carol was admitted to hospital, members of the club took turns to visit her each day so that she wasn't alone. When her condition worsened, two days before she passed away, club members began a round-the-clock vigil, both in her room at the hospital and at the Pirihi family home. On the Sunday morning of her death, most club members and associates were informed via the phone-tree, a system used to share the responsibility for communicating between members of the club, and within hours almost every club member had assembled at Kelly's house to continue the vigil and comfort the family. On the Tuesday night a service was held at a chapel near to the Pirihi home. Two days later Kelly took Carol home to New Zealand to be buried next to her father at Wellsford on the North Island.

Carol's death, though expected, was not easy for the club. The grieving still continued several weeks later. The club found itself in a limbo similar to one experienced when Karlene Pouwhare resigned as tutor earlier in the year (see Chapter Four). When the date for the 1998 Regional competition was announced at the end of September, the *rōpū* still hadn't started back at rehearsals. At the first practice since Carol's death, nearly thirty performers attended, including several who had pulled out earlier in the year. The tutors had selected a program, with the performance dedicated to the memory of Carol. The tutors were keen to express the grief felt by the club, but also to show through the performance that the club was getting on with life, so they created a *waiata tira Moe Mai Ra Kara Pirihi* ('Everlasting Sleep Carol Pirihi') to be the *whakaeke*. Using very potent Māori symbols such as *waka*, a reference to the canoes that brought the Māori to New Zealand, and the *piki* ('feathers') of the *amokura* bird, Tangi wrote:

Me nga iwi o nga waka tangata
E tautoko nei i te ra whakahirahira
Tukua mai ra to amokura

---

what colour her skin was, as long as she was "black on the inside".

Hei piki kura mo tenei ra

And to the people from all canoes
Who support this important day
Send the *amokura* birds [sic]
Feathers for this day.

The *amokura* bird is a tropical bird that has red tail feathers. Tangi hoped that the amokura bird and its feathers would serve to symbolize *Ngā Hapu Katoa* and its situation at this time.

> The *amokura* bird is a legend, and it pulls out its feathers when it is stressed or worried about something. People send *amokura* feathers to show support for each other when things are bad. (Mehana, G. Pers. comm., 29 October 1998)

But the use of the bird as a spiritual reference would not be lost on a Māori audience. Birds act as vessels for the spirits of the dead, taking them on their journey to Te Reinga in the north of Aotearoa, from whence they would depart to Hawaiki, the ancestral home of the Māori (Barrow 1984:36, 101). The red of the feathers is also a potent Māori symbol, red being one of the three traditional colours used in Māori art, the other two colours being black and white. That Tangi created a song in Carol's honour was no surprise, nor is the fact that the *rōpū* dedicated their performance to her at the next Regional Festival, the annual Victorian *kapa haka* competition. The large number of performers who participated that year was testimony both to the love for Carol and the grief at her passing, not just as a founding member of *Ngā Hapu Katoa* but as an 'auntie' and as a friend to many in the club. The club's response to Carol's death was also significant as Carol was a non-Māori. This was not an issue for any member. To them, Carol was loved and respected for herself and her relationship with the club, not because she was married to a Māori.

In recent years the club was not approached to perform at festivals as frequently as it had been in the past. From 1996 they were no longer booked to

perform at Norlane, and had not been approached to perform at either Hastings or Springvale since 1997, leading to a decline in both confidence and membership. One possible reason can be deduced from the appearance of *Ngā Tangi a te Iwi* at this time. *Ngā Tangi a te Iwi* actively sought work with the Dandenong Council, promoting itself as the premier Māori club in the area and implying that *Ngā Hapu Katoa* was in decline. By October 1998 *Ngā Tangi a te Iwi* had folded. However, the damage to *Ngā Hapu Katoa*'s reputation had been done, and the club experienced a second crisis of confidence in early 1999 following the unexpected death of Erin, the second eldest daughter of Willy and Mere Pirere, and the separation and subsequent resignation of tutors Gina and Cedric Mehana. By the end of 1999 Karlene had resigned again, and she relocated to Sydney with her family several months later. By mid-2000 the *rōpū* still had not reformed, nor had a replacement tutor been found. *Ngā Hapu Katoa* did not participate in the Victorian Regional Festival in October 2000. This was the first time the club had ever missed the festival. The same thing happened in 2001. By early 2002 many members had joined other clubs. Membership of culture clubs is rarely stable, and for *Ngā Hapu Katoa* this is very much the case. By 1999 approximately fifty per cent of the members had joined since 1995, when this study commenced. Other members had rejoined after a short absence. The following table outlines the club's officials for the senior *rōpū* between 1996 and 1999, indicating the change in personnel within the club.

Table 2.3: *Ngā Hapu Katoa* Club officials, 1996 - 1999 Regional Festivals.

Year	***Captain***	**Kaea Tāne**	**Kaea Wahine**	***Men's Tutor***	***Women's Tutor***
1996	Cedric Mehana	Cedric Mehana	Trish Graham	Tangi Tuhi	Karlene Pouwhare
1997	Alan Paniona	Cedric Mehana	Karen Matthews	Cedric Mehana	Gina Mehana
1998	Leeanne Roa	Jason Tuhi	Karen Matthews	Tangi Tuhi	Gina Mehana
1999	Alan Paniona	Alan Paniona	Jasmine Patuwairua	None	Karlene Pouwhare

Performance Events

a. Competitions

Competitive Māori festivals were an important part of *Ngā Hapu Katoa*'s annual calendar. The Regional Festival was perceived as a yardstick by which the viability of the club was assessed and, while winning sections was important, this was almost secondary to actually being involved. In New Zealand, the Aotearoa Festival is held every second year, and culture groups from all over New Zealand compete. In Australia, there are two competitions for Māori *kapa haka*. The National Festival (an Australia-wide competition) is held every second year at Easter, and is hosted by a different state each time, and the Regional Festivals are held annually. All of the competitions are fiercely contested. The tutors prepare a program that includes six accepted Māori musical and cultural forms. These include a *waiata-a-ringa*, a *haka poi*, a *haka*, a *waiata*, a choral song, and a *mōteatea*. The program also features a *whaikōrero*, an oratory in *te reo Māori* performed by the *kaea tane*, the male soloist. *Rōpū* are judged on each item, and other sections judged include entry and exit, uniform, male *kaea* and female *kaea*, and overall

choreography by the tutors. Each *rōpū* is also judged on presentation including appearance, *moko* and facial expressions, and its use of language. Clubs pay an entry fee to participate in competitions, but there is no monetary reward for the winner. Competing *rōpū* are presented with trophies, which they keep until the next Festival. Clubs participate in Festivals for the prestige of winning and to maintain club pride. Competitions are, in themselves, an important feature of Māori *kapa haka* both here and in New Zealand. They are a significant part of the process of cultural invention, contributing to the creation of a unique set of conditions for Māori performance. Competitions and their role in cultural invention will be examined in much greater detail in Chapter Five.

b. Professional performances

In addition to the competitive Māori festivals, many of the culture clubs are involved in the wider community, performing in a wide range of venues and events around Melbourne including non-competitive multicultural festivals. Many clubs are approached to perform at cultural festivals that are held annually by several of the city councils. Clubs do not perform *gratis* at these events, but are paid a fee to attend. Consequently these paid activities are highly sought after to keep the many clubs financially viable. The biggest of these annual festivals is *Moomba*, coordinated by the Melbourne City Council. The *Moomba* celebrations are held on the banks of the Yarra River and in the Alexandra Gardens, on the south bank of the Yarra. Festivities take place over a week and consist of daytime and evening entertainment, rides, water sport, sideshow alley games, fireworks displays, food stalls and product promotions. *Moomba* is a major tourist attraction, with tens of thousands of visitors attending throughout the course of the festival. A distinctive feature of *Moomba* in 1999 was the construction of four thematically specific

'Cultural Villages'. Each village consisted of a central stage and displays of handicrafts from the cultures represented by the title themes of *Asiaasia*, *Ritmo Latino*, *Wadamba Bic* and *Siva Pacifika*, reflecting Asian, South American, Australian Aboriginal and Pacific cultures respectively.

The *Siva Pacifika* village was built in consultation with the Pacific Council, a committee of representatives from all the South Pacific communities in Melbourne, including the Māori. Through these representatives, community groups were approached to supply performers and handcrafts to sell. Craft stalls were built to resemble the ubiquitous thatched hut associated with the Pacific islands, and the presence of four rough-hewn logs designed to resemble outrigger canoes defined the area. Four craft stalls surrounded the stage area, representing two Melanesian cultures, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, and three Polynesian cultures, Samoa, Māori and the Cook Islands. The Cook Islands shared a stall with the Māori. Each stall offered a range of items. Papua New Guinea offered shell bangles, strings of seedpod beads, and a large selection of woven bags, wooden drums and hats. Fiji offered fans and mats woven from palm and pandanus fronds. Samoa had a few woven mats on display, and the joint Māori/Cook Islands stall had *ngā hei* 'carved bone neck ornaments', a few woven baskets, and mini *poi*. Performances were scheduled at intervals of between a half hour to an hour on the *Siva Pacifika* stage throughout the week. A typical day's selection consisted of a variety of stage shows and workshops. The program for the final day included a Samoan lei making workshop, a *poi*-making workshop, a Papua New Guinea group performance, a Tuvalu performance, face painting, a hula skirt making workshop, performances by three different Māori culture clubs, and a Cook Islander dance troupe. Apart from providing the general public with the opportunity to purchase 'authentic' handcrafts,

the program provided the 'traditional' entertainment from the disparate groups represented, as well as financial remuneration for the participants.

Other council-run festivals throughout the year do not offer the huge scope of Moomba, but provide a variety of cultural activities, generally showcasing the smaller community groups that make up their wider community. Among these are the Dandenong Festival and the Springvale Carnivale, both run by the City of Greater Dandenong, and the Kingston Festival, run by the City of Kingston. Major regional festivals include the Festival of the Southern Seas, held at Easter in Mallacoota in the far east of Victoria, and the Hastings Festival, held annually in February in Hastings on the Mornington Peninsula. *Ngā Hapu Katoa* was a regular at the Dandenong Festival, the Springvale Carnivale and the Hastings Festival over the years. The club also had a permanent booking with the Norlane R.S.L. (Returned Services League) in Geelong.

In addition to cultural festivals, the *Ngā Hapu Katoa rōpū* also participated in private performances at weddings, birthday parties and social events. These performances were viewed as an important revenue-making exercise, and the average fee *Ngā Hapu Katoa* charged for a performance was $450, and the duration of the performance averaging from fifteen to thirty minutes. The club performed, on average, at two or three such events each year. As the club never actively promoted itself in the wider community, these types of bookings often came about by recommendation from a previous booking, or because of a public appearance. *Ngā Hapu Katoa* was booked to perform at a wedding in April 1996 by a couple that had attended the January 1995 wedding. The only time the club didn't take payment was when they performed at events for their own members, such as at Karlene's fortieth birthday, or at concerts they had organised such as the Cabaret Night in November 1996 and the Polynesian night in March 1999. The club also had a catering group,

which helped with fundraising. The catering group charged a fee per head, with the costs determined by the type of catering required. The catering specialised in spit-roasts and *hangi*, a traditional method of cooking food in an earth oven.

Ngā Hapu Katoa always relied on fundaising to cover the cost of uniforms, rental on *Te Amorangi* and to subsidize travel and accommodation for the *rōpū* and their *whānau* when performing away from Melbourne. The money came from paid gigs and through membership fees and ticket sales from social events. When the club was formed in 1983, its primary aim was to promote the Māori culture and encourage the children of the members to be involved in performing their traditional songs and dance, but by April 1999, many members were questioning the motives of the committee and the emphasis being placed upon the need for the adults' *rōpū* to perform paid gigs. Many of the parents believed that making money had become the primary motivator in the club, and that fundraising was being pursued at the expense of the children's education in *kapa haka*. At an extraordinary meeting called to discuss the club's future following the exodus of several families, then-president Maadi Te Kahu begged members to speak freely about the direction that they saw *Ngā Hapu Katoa* taking in the future. Gina Mehana spoke in defense of the children's *kapa haka*, pointing out the importance of *kapa haka* in developing their sense of belonging and identity. This, she claimed, was the reason that their children had not been in serious trouble with the police, that it was because they had their culture that they did not need to seek out trouble. She reminded those present that many of their children were now in the seniors *rōpū* and that their grandchildren were now coming through the *tamariki rōpū* and that these children needed the club as much as their parents and grandparents had. In Gina's eyes, *kapa haka*, identity and belonging were intertwined, and all three were needed to give the children a sense of self-worth, but more importantly, a link with their past, and she gave voice

to the beliefs of many of the members of the club, that the culture could only survive if passed on to their children.

Performance Contexts and Meaning

As each successive generation moves through the culture clubs, the performers become more removed from their roots back home. New blood is always being injected through the arrival of more Māori families seeking the employment opportunities not necessarily available to them back home, and seeking a better standard of living in a country where the cost of living was not taxed beyond the reach of the average worker. But the culture clubs in Melbourne still do not have people with the expertise in Māori culture available to clubs back home. *Kapa haka* groups in New Zealand are economically viable, receiving subsidies to employ full-time, professional tutors, well versed in *kapa haka* and fluent in *te reo Māori*. The members of the very best *rōpū* earning a living as performers and do not need to work nine to five in an office or do night shift as a process worker as do many of the Māori in Melbourne. Culture clubs in Melbourne can never expect to compete on an equal footing with the clubs in New Zealand as the circumstances and backgrounds are too distinct for comparison. Instead, the clubs in Melbourne must rely on the goodwill and commitment of their voluntary tutors who dedicate many unpaid hours each week to the preparation of words, music and choreography for rehearsal and performance, on top of their *mahi* ('work') and family commitments, and this creates a unique set of circumstances with respect to the maintenance of the tradition. The culture becomes a minor, part-time aspect of the lives of the Māori in Melbourne while work and school, friends and other issues dominate.

Some, however, believe that the issue facing the Melbourne culture clubs is not whether they will ever be as good as the *kapa haka* groups back home. The issue

is whether they should be looking to home for inspiration or be developing their own unique styles of performance in their adopted homeland (Hallett, G. Pers. comm. 9 March 1999). The issue of 'home' is significant. All adult Māori migrants talk about 'home'. A holiday is invariably 'back home' to visit the relatives, but many do not intend returning 'home' to live. Many have bought or are buying homes in and around Melbourne. There are plans afoot to build a community *marae*, and for some Māori the only way they will ever return 'home' is in a pine box. For many Māori there is still a spiritual need for the dead to be returned home, so that the spirit can depart the North Island at Spirits Bay to make the long voyage 'home' to Hawaiki, for Aotearoa is not 'home' for the spirits of the Māori. But even this tradition is changing as the next generation, the Australian Māori who are born here, grow up accepting Australia as 'home', and viewing New Zealand as a holiday destination, a foreign country where their grandparents live. When Erin Pirere died in February 1999, her parents chose to keep her cremated remains in Australia in spite of her grandfather's plea to be allowed to take her with him when he returned to New Zealand. Hiki Te Kani, as a *Ngāti Porou kaumātua*, felt that it was his responsibility to see his granddaughter's remains returned 'home'. Mere argued that Erin was 'home', and that she would be buried on the *marae* when it was finally built (Pirere, M. Pers. comm. 3 March 1999). The Māori of Melbourne are seeking to find their way 'home', just as the Māori of Aotearoa are seeking to find their spiritual way 'home'. But in the case of the Australian Māori 'home' is not a geographic location, a three-hour flight east, or an even more distant place for the spirit to rest. It lies in their sense of identity and belonging as Māori.

For many, this concept of 'home' finds expression every weekend in rehearsals all over Melbourne, when Māori who don't *kōrero* Māori and may have never stepped onto a *marae* in their lives, bring a perceived culture to life for a few

hours. As such, the question needs to be asked: how do they know what culture is being brought to life, especially when that culture has been "invisible" all their lives and has been made visible only by its absence (Wagner 1981)? Is it a recreation of traditional *kapa haka*? Is it a conscious attempt to create a link with the "imagined community" back home (Tsounis 1995)? Or is it a new culture that has little to do with what is perceived as 'real' Māori culture, isolated and removed from what is happening in New Zealand – 'plastic' *kapa haka* performed by 'plastic' Māori (Murray 1999)? There appears to be a need for many Māori to seek each other out and re-create culture, and to learn traditional chants and new Māori songs in an effort to rediscover their roots through language and dance. But the context is different from back home. Instruction is invariably in English, with Māori as the 'second' language. The locations are different. The climate is different. The lifestyle is different.

Māori music and performance are an essential part of establishing 'home' and creating an identity, a sense of belonging. But 'traditional' music has undergone many changes since the arrival of Europeans, and even the context of the music in New Zealand has changed. The next chapter will examine traditional Māori music and dance as it has been documented in New Zealand, and discuss the changes in the performance of *kapa haka*.

Plate 5

Te Māori

Plate 6

The club *Te Ruawhenua* ('Second Land') designed its *te kakahu* ('uniform') out of respect for the indigenous people of Australia by incorporating the colours of the Aboriginal flag into their bodices. They redesigned their *kākahu* for the 1997 National Festival and included cloaks. The overall design represents the cross and its spiritual links to the Trinity and the resurrection of Christ. The hourglass in the centre represents the separation of *Rangi* ('Heaven') and *Papa* ('Earth') in Māori mythology.

Plate 7

The club *Ngā Hapu Katoa*'s *kākahu* incorporates the three Māori colours – red, black and white. The bodice pattern of four white diamonds represents the *ngā hau i whā* ('the four winds').

The club logo, which features on the official letterhead, tracksuits and polo shirts, is a Māori warrior, kneeling and wielding a *taiaha* ('long club') framed by two boomerangs. The logo was designed to show that the club is both Māori and Australian.

Plate 8

The *Moomba* Festival is held every March. The 1999 festival featured performances from four cultural regions. *Siva Pacifika* featured musicians and dancers from the Pacific region. Performances were scheduled at hourly intervals and ran all day from 10:00 in the morning until 10:00 at night. The area set aside for *Siva Pacifika* was bounded by four outrigger canoes constructed by the Moomba organisers based on information provided by the Pacific Islands Council (Filihia, M. Pers. comm. 18 January 2000).

Plate 9

Many Māori join clubs to meet and socialise with other Māori, and to give their children an opportunity to learn about the culture. In Australia, however, membership of such clubs is not exclusively Māori and extends to New Zealanders, Australians who may have married Māori or Pākehā, and other interested people. Many of these clubs organise social outings such as Christmas parties and sports days. Such activities reinforce the clubs as de facto *whānau*.

Plate 10

Te Amorangi was a rented factory in the industrial area of Dandenong. *Nga Hapu Katoa* leased it for ten years before it was sold and the lease terminated in December 1999. Te Amorangi served as a clubhouse, rehearsal space, dance venue and hall-for-hire, providing revenue and a 'home' for the club.

Plate 6: Women from *Taku Mana*, lunch break and the audience at the 1999 Regional Festival. Plate 7: Lesley Taiapa from *Te Ruawhwenua*. Plate 8: *Ngā Hapu Katoa* warm up outside the venue for the 1999 Regional Festival, the women's bodice, and the club logo. Plate 9: Members of *Ngā Hapu Katoa* relax at a sports day social while the men tend the barbecue. Plate 10: *Ngā Hapu Katoa tamariki* perform inside Te Amorangi, and outside the building prior to its sale.

All photgraphs by the author.