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### MINUTE 8 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Request for Comment on Information relating to Koiwi previously found on the site  
Green Steel [FTAA-2506-1074]  
(16 December 2025)

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[1] On 5th December 2025 the Panel issued Minute 5 requesting further information from Harness Downs, a commenter on the application, in relation to historic Urupa and koiwi previously being found on the site. This information was provided by Grant Clune to the Panel, and is attached to this Minute as Appendix 1.

[2] The Panel also received comments from the applicant in response to the information provided by Grant Clune of Harness Downs on 12 December 2025. The applicant indicated that it will provide a report from Clough & Associates responding more fully to the information from Grant Clune.

[3] The Panel now invites all parties who have provided comments on the application to respond to both the original information from Grant Clune and the applicant's comments to this. This will include any response to the expected report from Clough & Associates which will be circulated to parties once it is received.

[4] The Panel is particularly interested in receiving feedback from:

- (a) Ngā Muka Development Trust
- (b) Waikato Tainui

[4] Any response submitted to this request is to be provided to the EPA no later than **2pm on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025** via:

- (c) by email [info@fastrack.govt.nz](mailto:info@fastrack.govt.nz);

- (d) by post to Private Bag 63002, Wellington 6140  
New Zealand; or
- (e) in person to Stewart Dawson's Corner, 366 Lambton Quay,  
Wellington 6011.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "M. Casey", positioned to the left of a vertical line.

**Matthew Casey KC**  
Green Steel Expert Panel Chair

**APPENDIX 1 – Attachments (17 Pages)**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to compile the Museum's records about specific kōiwi. These kōiwi were repatriated in 2001 and reburied on Taupiri.

This information is being compiled following an enquiry as to the location where the kōiwi were found, and what information the Museum holds on this.

## **Background**

On 3 November 2001 Auckland Museum repatriated kōiwi to Ngāti Naho, Tainui. The repatriation included a handover in the Museum foyer at 4am, ahead of travel and reinterment of the kōiwi at Taupiri. Auckland Museum's Tumuaki Director Māori, Paul Tapsell, with the Taumata-ā-Iwi, and Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei kaumatua Dr Takutai Wikiriwhi, accompanied Ngāti Naho to Taupiri then to Waahi Pa (Huntly).

The repatriation was prompted by the building of Springhill Prison. Newspaper articles from the time, held on file at the Museum (and shared in this document), explain residents opposed to its construction learnt the Museum had these kōiwi through researching the area, which ultimately led to their repatriation.

Details of the kōiwi and their donation are below. Transcripts and copies of the Museum's catalogue records follow. Catalogue records provide a map reference for where the kōiwi were found and this is also discussed.

## **Museum records**

Along with an overview of the donation, a chart is given summarising the various Museum catalogue records about the kōiwi. The chart gives all of the catalogue numbers for these tūpuna. As a way to track the collection, catalogue numbers have usually been given to everything in the Museum's collection, including human remains. These numbers usually include an accession number and/or a number assigned by the Museum department that held them – the Ethnology department in the cases of the kōiwi in this report. These kōiwi also have an ID for their records on the Museum's collection management database, Vernon, and a Human Remains Database ID number. Images of originals of the catalogue information and other records (donation acknowledgement letter and 2001 report), copied in chronological order, follow the chart.

## Overview

In 1972 kōiwi from Te Kauwhata were donated to the Museum by Mr R Millen of Te Kauwhata. In 1980 he donated another skull from the same location. Museum records indicate they are the remains of multiple individuals. The location they came from is recorded as Te Kauwhata, "in rock shelter 30ft above swamp" with a map grid reference. More regarding the location is shared on pages 13-14.

The first dated record the Museum has for these kōiwi is their entry in the Accession Register on 10 February 1972. They were given the accession number 1972.16 (which is also written by the Museum as 16/72). In this entry the donor's name is incorrectly recorded as Mr R Miller. This mistake was repeated in a letter sent to the donor on 14 February 1972 acknowledging the donation. The

kōiwi were registered into the Ethnology department and given the Ethnology number 45267. They have both an Ethnology Register entry and an Ethnology catalogue card. These Ethnology records correctly name the donor as Mr R Millen, which has been verified through electoral rolls and information from the 2001 repatriation.

The Ethnology catalogue card also notes that on 1 July 1980 the donor brought another skull to the Museum. This tupuna was given the Ethnology number 45267.1.

These kōiwi also have entries in the Human Remains Store Shelf List. This list was initially written in 1992 with additions in 1995.<sup>1</sup> The list details the kōiwi in each box in the Museum's wāhi tapu at those dates. It is possible to identify when entries were made due to handwriting. The entries for these kōiwi are from both 1992 and 1995 – some have entries exclusively written in 1995 and others entries written in 1992 with more information added in 1995. When that list was written, and at the time of their repatriation, they were kept in 6 boxes. The Human Remains Store Shelf List mentions there were "up to 7 individuals in all" however the descriptions can also be read to describe up to 11 tūpuna and it is not now possible to check the precise number.

In 2001, ahead of the repatriation, the Curator of Archaeology Nigel Prickett prepared a report summarising information about the donation and details of the tūpuna taken from the Human Remains Store Shelf List. This report was mentioned in one of the newspaper articles the Museum has on file and is reproduced on pages 11-12.

#### Summary chart

**Catalogue numbers:**

45267 – Ethnology number (kōiwi donated 1972)  
45267.1 – Ethnology number (kōiwi donated 1980)  
1972.16 – Accession number (also written as 16/72)  
524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529 – Human Remains Database IDs  
46803 – Vernon Database ID

**Catalogue entries:**

Accession Register: "16/72. 10-2-72. Skulls and other human bones. Loc: Te Kauwhata (ack 14/2)  
Pres: Mr R. Miller, Great South Road, R.D.2., Te Kauwhata."

Ethnology Register: "45267; 16/72; 46803. Skulls and other human bones. Pres: Mr R. Millen,  
Great South Rd, Te Kauwhata. Te Kauwhata Map 52 Grid Ref 592980. In rock shelter 30 ft above  
swamp."

Ethnology Catalogue Card: "45267. 16/72. Skulls and other human bones. Te Kauwhata Map 52  
Grid ref 592980. Mr R. Millen, Great South Rd. Te Kauwhata. In rock shelter 30 ft above swamp. 1  
July 1980 the remaining skull from this material was brought in by Mr Millen & registered as  
45267.1"

<sup>1</sup> The list was written by student volunteers Miriam Young followed by Hallie Buckley.

Human Remains Store Shelf List, 1992 and 1995:

**NB: the entries have been copied here in the following order: kōiwi numbered 45267 based on sequential box number, followed by kōiwi numbered 45267.1. This is not the order in which they appear in the original list.**

**In some cases additional information added in 1995 appears elsewhere in the book from the original entry. For sharing here, that additional information is grouped with the original so all details of kōiwi in a box are shared together.**

45267, box 1: " 45267 (Box 1 of 5). Te Kauwhata. Map 52 Grid Ref 592980 rock shelter 30ft above swamp. [Shelf]31 - Box 2-5 Shelf 8. Repr. multiple burial.

At least 2 individuals represented in this box.

Individual I: (sh 8 B1[Shelf 8, Box 1 ?]) - 1 x femur, 1 x humerus, under 5 yrs (2-3 yrs). 1 x scapula, 2 x ribs, 1 x zygoma, Atlas, 1 x tooth.

-2 x femur (adult) - could be with any of the Te Kauwhata individuals - up to 7 individuals in all.

-1 x femur - if this is human it belongs to an infant.

- Bag of miscellaneous, poorly preserved bone fragments.

- 2 x rat tibia/fibula

- block of soil containing unstable long bone material."

45267, box 2: "Shelf 8. 45267 (Box 2 of 5) Te Kauwhata. Suture: degree 3. Incomplete skull - highly weathered, unstable - probably female (?)."

45267, box 3: "Shelf 8. 45267 (Box 3 of 5). Te Kauwhata. 2 individuals. Skull and fragments of mandible. Cranium and mandible 1 - almost certainly female.

Individual 1: - repres by cranium x 2 mandible fragments.

- Sutures are all nearly completely closed.
- Maxillae: Highly eroded post-mortem - but is evidence of large abcess in right quad probably of M1.
- The 2 central incisors have been lost - with some resorption - left quad M1 lost - with resorption.
- Mandible: left quad - PM2 lost to abcess with resorption.

Individual 2: - repres by 3 mandibular frags.

- Material is highly weathered yet general thinness of the bone, with long ramus angle - and evidence of molar loss (particularly right side) with complete resorption of alveolar & thinning of general matrix, all this suggests an individual of advanced age - post 40 years."

45267, box 4: "Shelf 8. 45267 (Box 4 of 5). Te Kauwhata. Suture: degree 0. 1 M2 present - no wear. Skull only. 12-18 yrs (?). Probably female (juvenile?). Highly weathered, facial bones missing."

45267, box 5: "Shelf 8. 45267 (Box 5 of 5). Te Kauwhata. At least 4 individuals repres.

Fragments of skull - 1 child - repres by 3 thin warped parietal fragments (see back [?]).

\*the placing with individuals is tentative but is based on colour of material & logics.

Indiv 1 Child: repres by parietal frags & M1 crown & incisor crown.

Indiv 2: Adult - 1 large fused fragment consisting of frontal (partial - right orbit missing).

- Left parietal x right parietal fragmented.
- L x R temporal minus squamosal portions.
- 1 occipital with occipital ridge to lambdoidal suture.
- 1 right inferior and posterior parietal fragment with squamosal suture & section of lambdoidal.
- 2 partial maxilla.
- 1 sphenoidal fragment.

Individual 3: 1 large left parietal fragment with squamosal, lambdoidal x sagitals suture portions.

Individual 4: 1 occipital fragment with full nuccal lines (interior) & occipital ridge on exterior - lambdoidal suture (greater portion of it, at superior border). 1 temporal (left) minus petrous & squamosal portions.

- This material is grey - white - with mossy material on it, whereas the other bone fragments are ranging from orangey brown to dark brown.
- Miscellaneous fragments: 8 parietal frags, 2 molar (zygomatic) frags, 5 occipital.
- Individuals these belong to: ??"

45267.1: "Shelf 8. 45267.1. Te Kauwhata. Suture: degree 3 (obscured). Right M3 just erupting.

Skull and mandible – Mandible Wear M2 mod-high. Anterior dentition wear is high - alveolar erosion.

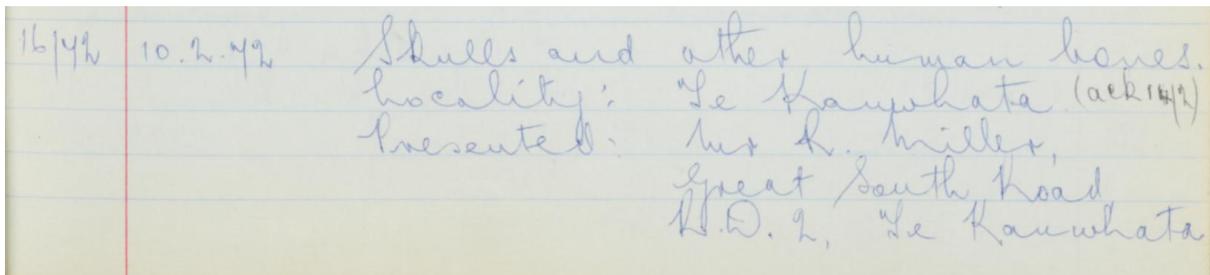
Maxillae: Left, abcess at root of M1.

Right - M1 about to go. M2 wear moderate.

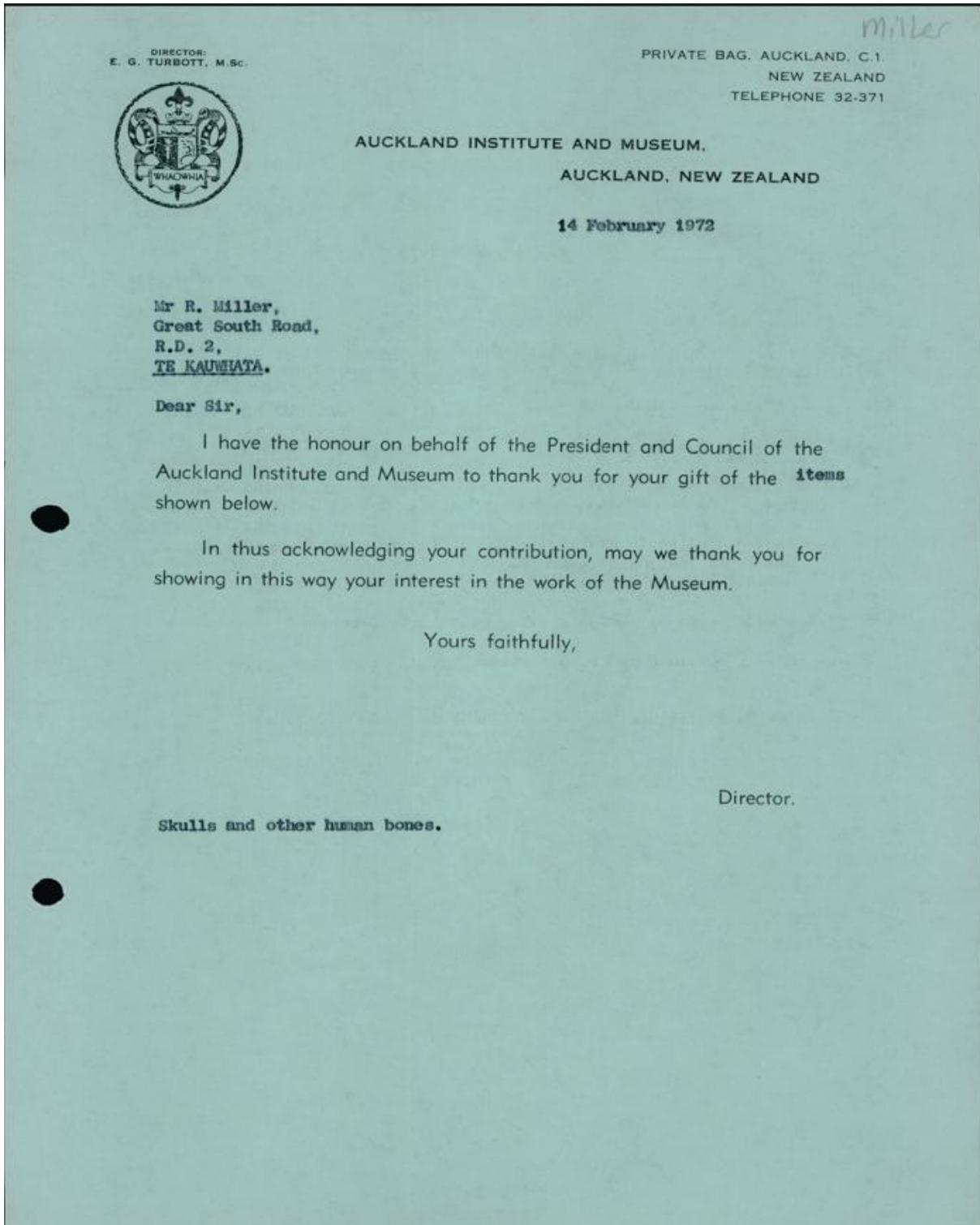
Almost certainly male - c 25 yrs old (prob older)."

Copies in chronological order:

Accession Register, 10 February 1972, (Museum Archive reference MUS-2015-14, pg 66):



Acknowledgement letter, 14 April 1972:



Ethnology Register, circa 1972:

45267 46803 16/72	Skulls and other human bones	Pres. Mr R. Miller Great South Rd. Te Kauwhata
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(left side of facing pages)

Te Kauwhata Map 52 Grid Ref. 592 980	In rock shelter 30ft above swamp Returned to Iwi 23/06/2001
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(right side of facing pages)

Catalogue card, circa 1972:

AUCKLAND MUSEUM — Ethnology Department		REGISTER NO. 45267
NAME OR DESCRIPTION Skulls and other human bones.		MUSEUM LOCALITY
LOCALITY Te Kauwhata Map 52 Grid ref. 592 980		ACCESSION NO. 16/72
ACQUIRED BY GIFT PURCHASE EXCHANGE DEPOSIT		DATE OF ACCESSION
FROM Mr R. Miller, Great South Rd. Te Kauwhata		PHOTO REFERENCE
REMARKS In rock shelter 30ft above swamp. 1 July 1980 the remaining skull from this material was brought in by Mr Miller & registered as 45267.1 RR. 2RR. Returned to Iwi, 23/06/2001		

Human Remains Store Shelf List, 1992 and 1995:

(NB: the entries have been copied here in the following order: kōiwi numbered 45267 based on sequential box number, followed by kōiwi numbered 45267.1. This is not the order in which they appear in the original list. + symbol indicates there is additional detail added in 1995 written elsewhere in the list. This additional detail has been provided here below the relevant entries)

Col. N°	locality	Shelf & associations.	SR
45267. (Box 1 of 5)	Te Kawahata: "map SR Geid. ref S92980. rock shelter 30ft above swamp.	31 - Box 2.5 - Shelf 8. repr. multiple burial.	SR

45267, Box 1 of 5. Left side of facing pages

SR  
Inventory, description etc.

At least 2 individuals represented in this box.

- Individual ♂ - (sh 8 - BI) - 1 x femur, 1 x humerus  
under 5 yrs (2-3 yrs). 1 x Scapula, 2 x ribs,  
(adult). 1 x Zygoma, \* \* Atlas, 1 x tooth.
- 2 x femur - could be with any of the Te Kawahata  
individuals - up to 7 individuals in all.
- 1 x femur - if this is human it belongs to an infant.
- Bag of miscellaneous, poorly preserved bone  
fragments.
- 2 x rat tibia/fibula.
- Block of soil containing untable long bone material.

45267, Box 1 of 5. Right side of facing pages

45267 (Box 2 of 5)	TE KAUWHATA	Subs. degree 3.
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45267, Box 2 of 5. Left side of facing pages

INCOMPLETE SKULL - highly weathered, suitable - probably female (?).
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45267, Box 2 of 5. Right side of facing pages

45267 (Box 3 of 5)	TE KAUWHATA	2 Individuals.
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45267, Box 3 of 5. Left side of facing pages

† SKULL + FRAGMENTS OF MANDIBLAE - Cranium & Mandible 1 - Almost certainly female.
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45267, Box 3 of 5. Right side of facing pages

45267. ShS - Individual 1 - repes. by Cranium & 2 mandible fragments.  
(2 of 5).

- Subsces are all nearly completely closed.
- Mandible: highly eroded post-Morvern. - But is evidence of large abcess in left quad probably of M1:
- The 2 central incisors have been lost - with some resorption. - left quad M1 lost - with resorption.
- Mandible - left quad - PM2 lost to abcess with resorption.

Individual 2 - repes. by 5 Mandibular frags:  
- material is highly weathered.  
yet general thickness of the bone, with big Ramus angle - and evidence of Molar loss (particularly of right side), suggest with complete resorption of alveolar & thinning of general matrix, all this suggests an individual of advanced age - post 40 yrs.

45267, Box 3 of 5. Notes page

45267 (Box 4 of 5)	TE KAUIHATA	Subse: degree 0. 1 M2 Present - No Weens.
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45267, Box 4 of 5. Left side of facing pages

SKULL ONLY - 12-18 yrs. (?) - Probably female (Juvenile?).  
- highly weathered - facial bones missing.

45267, Box 4 of 5. Right side of facing pages

45267 (Box 5 of 5)	TE KAUIHATA	At least 5 individuals repres.
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45267, Box 5 of 5. Left side of facing pages

FRAGMENTS OF SKULL - 1 child - repres. by 5 full wrapped parietal fragments (see back).

45267, Box 5 of 5. Right side of facing pages

45267. Sh 8. (Box 5 of 5).

Indiv. 1. Child - repres. by Parietal Frag & ML crown. & Incisor crown.

\*the placing with individual is located - but is based on order of weathered or holes.

Indiv. 2. Adult. - 1 large - fused Fragment consisting of Frontal (partial - right orbit missing), left parietal. & Right parietal. Fragmented. Max & temporal - minus squamosal portion. Occipital - with occipital ridge - to lambdoidal suture.

1 Right inferior and posterior Parietal Fragment with Squamosal suture & section of lambdoidal & Partial Maxilla.

1 Sphenoidal. Fragment.

Individuals 3. - 1 large left parietal Fragment with Squamosal, lambdoidal & Sagittal suture portions.

45267, Box 5 of 5. 1<sup>st</sup> notes page

45267 Contd.  
(S&S).

Individual 4. 1 occipital fragment - with full neural lines (inferior) & occipital ridge on exterior - lambdoidal suture (greater portion of it, at superior border.

↑ Temporal (left) - milled petrous & squamous portion.

- This material is grey-white - with heavy material on it, whereas the other bone fragments are ranging from orangey brown to dark brown.

Miscellaneous fragments: 8 Parietal Frag.  
2 Malas (zygomatic) Frag.  
5 occipital.

- Indecisive these belong to: ?

45267, Box 5 of 5. 2<sup>nd</sup> notes continued

45267.1	TE KAUWHATA	Skull: degree? (obscured). Right MS? just erupting.
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45267.1. Left side of facing pages

† SKULL + MANDIBLE - <sup>maxilla</sup> near MA Mand - high anterior elevation near is high - alveolar erosion.

45267.1. Right side of facing pages

45267 + 45267.1. SRS: Maxilla: left - absent at root of ML.  
Right - ML about to go. - MA near maxilla.  
Almost certainly Male - c 25 yrs old (prob older).

45267.1. Notes pages

## Report by Nigel Prickett, 2001

Halls Road, Te Kauwhata, human remains

Notes on human remains from a rock-shelter 30 ft above a swamp, near Halls Road, Te Kauwhata, which came into the museum in 1972 from Mr R Millen, Great South Road, Te Kauwhata. In 1980 Mr Millen brought in a skull and mandible from the same place (item 6 below). The material was found at grid reference 592980, map N52 'Te Kauwhata'.

Auckland Museum catalogue number 45267

The remains are held in six boxes. The following typed notes are copied from handwritten record made about 10 years ago for the museum by a student of anatomy.

1. At least two individuals represented in this box.

Individual under 5 years (2-3 years): 1 femur; 1 humerus; 1 scapula; 2 ribs; 1 zygoma, atlas, 1 tooth

2 femurs (adult) - could be with any of the Te Kauwhata individuals - up to 7 individuals in all.

1 femur - if this is human it belongs to an infant.

Bag of miscellaneous, poorly preserved bone fragments.

Block of soil containing unstable long bone material.

2. Incomplete skull - highly weathered, unstable - probably female (?)

3. Individual 1. Represented by cranium and 2 mandible fragments.

Sutures are all nearly completely closed.

Maxillae: highly eroded post-mortem - but there is evidence of a large abscess in right quad, probably of M1.

The 2 central incisors have been lost - with some resorption - left quad M1 lost with resorption

Mandible left quad PM2 lost to abscess with resorption.

Individual 2. Represented by 3 mandibular fragments.

Material is highly weathered yet general thinness of the bone, with long ramus angle - and evidence of molar loss (particularly right side), with complete resorption of alveolar and thinning of general matrix, all this suggests an individual of advanced age - post 40 years.

4. Skull only: 12-18 years(?) probably female. Highly weathered. Facial bones missing.

5. (The placing with individuals is tentative - but is based on colour of materials and logic)

Individual 1 Child. Represented by parietal fringe and M1 crown and incisor crown.

Individual 2 Adult - 1 large fused fragment consisting of frontal (partial - right orbit missing).

Left parietal and right parietal - fragmented

Left and right temporal - minus squamosal portions

1 occipital - with occipital ridge - to lambdoidal suture.

1 right inferior and posterior parietal fragment with squamosal suture and section of lambdoidal.

1 sphenoidal fragment.

Individual 3. 1 large parietal fragment with squamosal, lambdoidal and sagittal suture portions.

Individual 4. 1 occipital fragment with full nuchal (lines?) (interior) and occipital ridge on exterior - lambdoidal suture (greater portion of it at superior border).

1 temporal (left): minus portion and squamosal portion

This material is grey-white - with messy materials on it, whereas the other bone fragments are ranging from orangey brown to dark brown.

Miscellaneous fragments: 8 parietal fragments; 2 molar (zygomatic) fragments; 5 occipital fragments.

6. Skull and mandible.

Maxillae: left - abscess at root of M1. Right - M1 about to go. M2 wear moderate. Right M3 just erupting. Almost certainly male - c. 25 years old (probably older).

Nigel Prickett  
Curator of Archaeology

24 October 2001

## Location

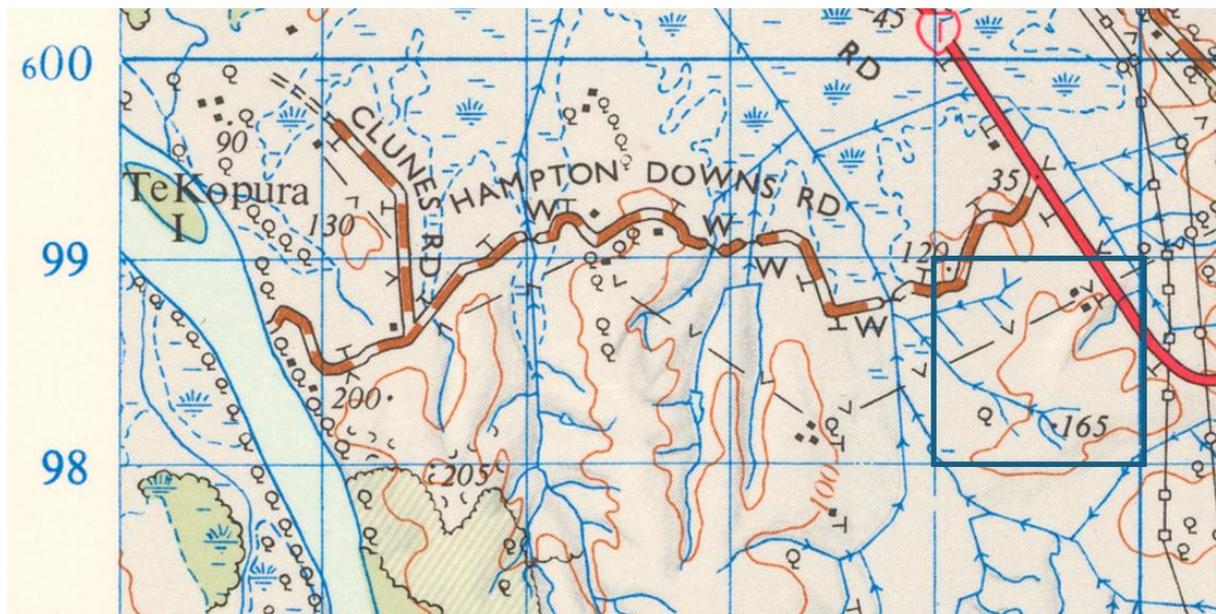
The location where the kōiwi were found is given in Museum records as Te Kauwhata along with a map grid reference and the extra detail “in rock shelter 30ft above swamp.” The map reference provided is “Map 52 Grid ref. 592 980.”

A copy of this map with marked location is not with the files. However, in the New Zealand Mapping Service map series map N52 is Te Kauwhata. There are N52 Te Kauwhata maps for 1942, 1961, 1967 and 1981, which are available online through Auckland University’s Geospatial Data Repository, here: <https://geodatahub.library.auckland.ac.nz/gdr/#maps-nzms>.<sup>2</sup>

Given the dates of donation (1972 and 1980), it is possible that the 1967 map was referred to, though the 1961, 1967 and 1981 maps would appear to identify the same spot using the reference 592 980.

The 1967 N52 Te Kauwhata map uses 4 digit grid references rather than 6 digit ones (such as 592 980) so it is necessary to find the 4 digit reference square (in this case 59 98), then divide it into 100 to find the 6 digit reference spot.

This image shows a selected area of the 1967 map with the 4 digit grid reference square 59 98 highlighted. Other squares are shown for geographical context:



<sup>2</sup> 1942:

[https://geodatahub.library.auckland.ac.nz/public/maps/LINZ/NZMS/NZMS\\_001/jpg/NZMS001\\_N52\\_1942.jpg](https://geodatahub.library.auckland.ac.nz/public/maps/LINZ/NZMS/NZMS_001/jpg/NZMS001_N52_1942.jpg)

1961:

[https://geodatahub.library.auckland.ac.nz/public/maps/LINZ/NZMS/NZMS\\_001/jpg/NZMS001\\_N52\\_1961.jpg](https://geodatahub.library.auckland.ac.nz/public/maps/LINZ/NZMS/NZMS_001/jpg/NZMS001_N52_1961.jpg)

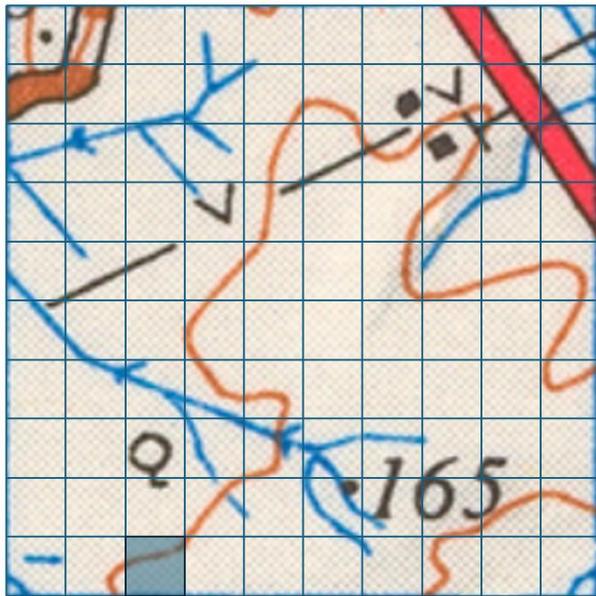
1967:

[https://geodatahub.library.auckland.ac.nz/public/maps/LINZ/NZMS/NZMS\\_001/jpg/NZMS001\\_N52\\_1967.jpg](https://geodatahub.library.auckland.ac.nz/public/maps/LINZ/NZMS/NZMS_001/jpg/NZMS001_N52_1967.jpg)

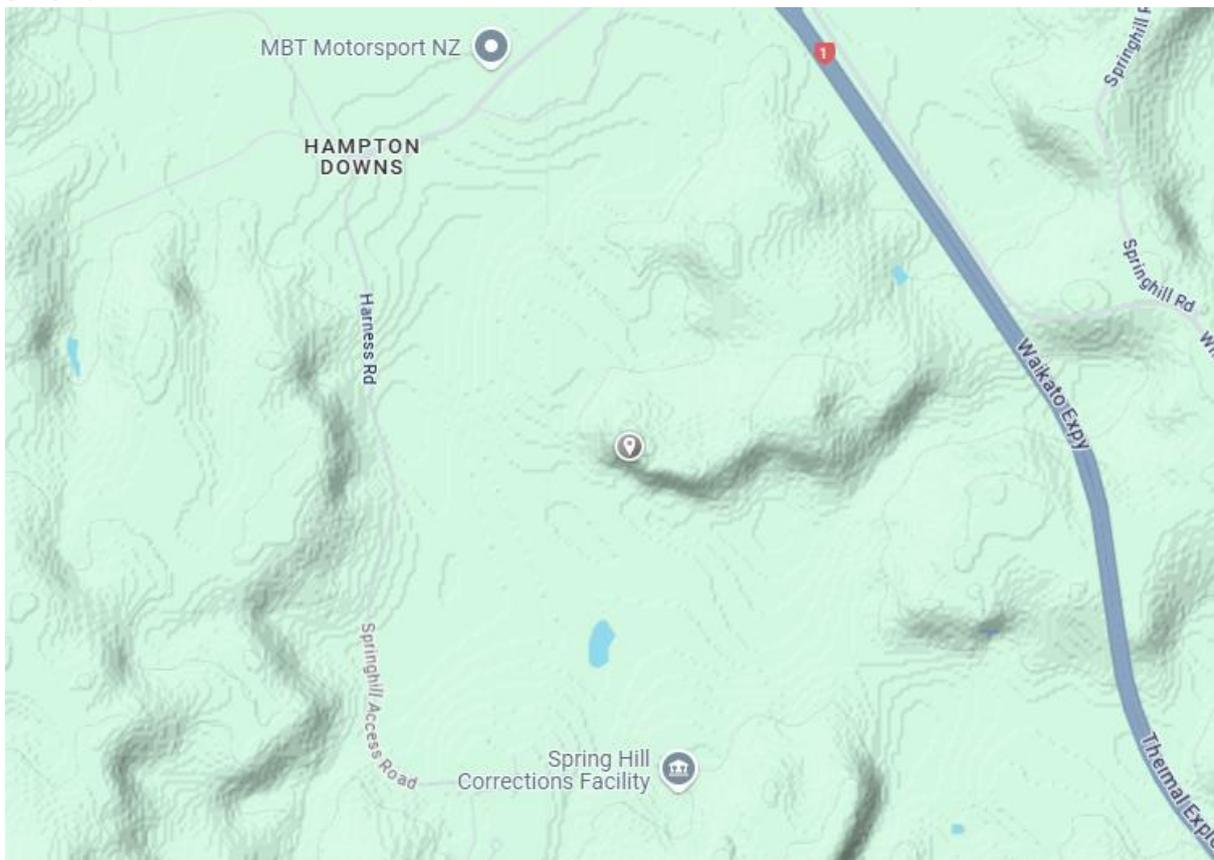
1981:

[https://geodatahub.library.auckland.ac.nz/public/maps/LINZ/NZMS/NZMS\\_001/jpg/NZMS001\\_N52\\_1981.jpg](https://geodatahub.library.auckland.ac.nz/public/maps/LINZ/NZMS/NZMS_001/jpg/NZMS001_N52_1981.jpg)

The below image shows that square divided into 100 squares. The highlighted square is grid reference 592 980:



An estimation of how this translates to Google maps is shown by the small grey location pinpoint in the image below. Please note this is an imperfect placement approximated by looking at surrounding geographical features:



Please also note this site is not registered on Archsite, the national database of recorded archaeological sites in Aotearoa.

## Articles on file

The following newspaper clippings regarding the 2001 repatriation are in the Museum's files:

**Chong**  
PRESS CLIPPINGS BUREAU  
WAIKATO TIMES  
42,000 daily AM  
HAMILTON

28 SEP 2001

PO Box 13-330, Onehunga  
Auckland, New Zealand  
Telephone 634-4469, Fax 636-7677

# Bones on site 'unlikely'

By DANIEL ADAMS

**TE KAUPHATA** — The Corrections Department says it is unlikely that its proposed north Waikato prison site harbours unknown Maori burial sites.

Corrections plans to build a 650-bed men's prison on a 214ha property 5km south of Meremere.

The Auckland War Memorial Museum has confirmed it has held koiwi (human bones) recovered from an urupa within metres of the property since at least 1980.

North Waikato Tainui hapu Ngati Naho are seeking the return of the koiwi.

The museum's possession of the remains came to light only through investigations by residents of the area who oppose the prison plans.

But Corrections chief financial officer Mike Martelli said in a statement issued yesterday the property was considered an unlikely site for urupa.

Mr Martelli confirmed Corrections had only learned of the urupa adjacent to its site in recent weeks, despite earlier archaeological scrutiny of the area.

The Times has repeatedly sought comment as to the fate of the koiwi but the museum's Director Maori Dr Paul Tapsell has yet to return any of the calls.

It is understood that Auckland hapu Ngati Whatua will formally return the remains to Waikato iwi.

A Corrections report by archaeology consultants Clough & Associates, released in June, found no apparent impediments to developing the proposed prison site.

Clough & Associates' report is an archaeological evaluation of the property.

It does not consider the presence of waahi tapu or other traditional sites and recommends a detailed assessment of the prison site be carried out.

Mr Martelli said a resident had told Corrections staff of the koiwi held at the museum on September 7.

"The person was concerned that, while this discovery was clearly not on the Corrections site, there may be such sites on the Corrections property," he said.

"While the adjacent property has bluffs suitable for such a burial, the department's site across the stream is swampy land."

Mr Martelli said the proposed building platform for the prison was at least 500 metres from the urupa site.

Chong

PRESS CLIPPINGS BUREAU

WANGANUI CHRONICLE  
16,000 daily  
WANGANUI

1 OCT 2001

PO Box 13-330, Onahunga  
Auckland, New Zealand  
Telephone 634-0463 Fax 636-7607

## Maori want museum to return ancestral bones

HAMILTON — A Tainui hapu wants Auckland Museum to hand back the remains of several ancestors it has had for more than 20 years.

Ngati Naho spokespeople say the museum must explain how it came by the remains of up to seven Maori recovered from an urupa (burial site) in the 1970s.

The museum's possession of the remains only came to light through investigations by North Waikato residents, who oppose plans for a prison on a site 5km south of Meremere.

Ngato Naho spokesman Eru Pokaia said

the hapu learned of the bones' existence about a month ago.

The discovery had generated a lot of ill-feeling, he said, and answers were needed quickly on the history of the remains.

As it was not known which hapu the individuals belong to, their fate was an issue for Tainui kaumatua, he said.

Tainui kaumatua met last week to discuss the matter and whether the remains should be returned to where they were found, or reburied on Taupiri mountain.

Information released by the museum's archaeology curator Dr Nigel Prickett

showed the remains were found within metres of the proposed prison boundary fence.

The remains have been held at the museum since at least 1980 and are believed to include bones from several children and at least one adult male.

Dr Prickett said he understood the bones were given to the museum by a previous owner of the land where they were found.

He said it was "unlikely" that museum staff had participated in the recovery of the bones, but has refused to release site records to the *Waikato Times*.

"I just don't think the iwi would appreciate having the details of human remains that we might hold here put out into the public arena," he said.

"It's a delicate issue."  
He had previously told the *Times* the museum had no plans to return the remains to Tainui.

Mr Pokaia said that elders regarded the potential impact on plans for a prison as irrelevant.

"The main objective here is to get the bones back.

"Anything outside that has to take its own

course.

"If it's a means of putting a halt to the progress of the prison, then so be it," he said.

Conservation Department archaeologist Neville Ritchie said the New Zealand Archaeologists' Association site records held no reference to the site.

The database lists known archaeological sites associated with human activity.

However, if a farmer had found the remains and handed them in to the museum "we would never know that had happened," Mr Ritchie said. — PA

Chong

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## Museum to return bones

**TE KAUPHATA** — Auckland museum and north Waikato hapu Ngati Naho are negotiating the return of human remains found south of Meremere in the 1970s.

The museum currently holds thousands of koiwi (human bones), which date back to the 19th century.

Its possession of the Meremere bones came to light when it was revealed bones had been found within metres of land earmarked by the Corrections Department for a new prison.

North Waikato residents opposed to the new prison discovered the existence of the remains when researching the area's history.

Museum Director Maori Dr Paul Tapsell yesterday said the museum did not hold any other remains from the area. "If there are, they are not known to us."

Dr Tapsell said museum records indicated its staff had no part in the bones' recovery.

He said the museum was discussing the appropriate return of the Meremere koiwi with elders of Ngati Naho.

"It is the museum's stated intention that it no longer wishes to be an urupa (burial site)," said Dr Tapsell.

Corrections' acting chief financial officer Mike Martelli has told the Times the department considered it "unlikely" that further remains lay on its land.

— Daniel Adams