



KATOOMBA, NSW, 1 - 3 NOVEMBER 2017

The Hotunui Preservation Project

Dion Pieta

ABSTRACT

The Hotunui Preservation (now, Conservation) project was, together with the Te Awe project the first of the 'Collection Readiness' projects to be undertaken by the Auckland Museum as part of its Future Museum strategy. The key purpose of the project was to complete previously undertaken Conservation work and to repair and re-lash Tukutuku (woven panels) and gable panels for Hotunui whareniui (Hotunui carved meeting house). The project provided an opportunity to promote co-development in action which combines traditional Māori weaving practises with Conservation expertise.

By virtue of Hotunui taking centre-stage within the Māori court, it was and still continues to be the first viewable project in a public space and represents the start of the journey the Museum is currently on. The intersection between indigenous practice and conservation provides both opportunities and challenges for museums. I will be discussing the dynamics of this project from the perspective of being the Director of the project, a Maori descendant and the Head of Collection Care of the Auckland Museum.

BIOGRAPHY

For over the last two decades, Dion continues to enjoy the challenges, opportunities and encounters that taonga and collections trigger. Cutting his teeth as a Collection manager with Te Papa, Dion experienced a multitude of exhibitions and engagement opportunities which were the impetus for his departure to the Australian Museum in 2008. Dion held the role of Collections Coordinator; managing the ATSI (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander), AAA (Asia, Africa and America) and Oceanic collections and its staff. In late 2015, Dion returned to NZ to join the Auckland War Memorial Museum - Tamaki Paenga Hira in their journey to activate and deliver *Future Museums* – a bold program of gallery renewal and capital projects. Dion is the Head of Collection Care – a team tasked with preventive, monitoring of environs, conservation treatments and Collection management to ensure that the museum's collections are managed to world-class standards. Dion is a board member of Museums Aotearoa; an advocacy body for the Heritage sector in NZ – Aotearoa.