



**CHIEF DISTRICT COURT JUDGE FOR NEW ZEALAND
TE KAIWHAKAWĀ MATUA O TE KŌTI-Ā-ROHE
Judge Heemi Taumaunu**

**PRINCIPAL YOUTH COURT JUDGE OF NEW ZEALAND
TE KAIWHAKAWĀ MATUA O TE KŌTI TAIOHI
Judge John Walker**

15 October 2020

A new Rangatahi Court for Hawke's Bay

Te Kōti Rangatahi ki Heretaunga, Hawke's Bay's first Rangatahi Court, was officially launched at Te Aranga Marae in Hastings today.

There was a large turnout and the special guests and dignitaries included the Minister of Justice, Andrew Little.

Hosted by Ngāti Kahungunu at the iwi's Flaxmere marae, it is the 16th Rangatahi Court since the first court was established in Gisborne in 2008.

A first sitting of the court was held after the launch ceremony.

Rangatahi Courts aim to provide the best possible rehabilitative care for young offenders by reconnecting them with their cultural identity, and meaningfully involving local Māori in the process. They are judicially led initiatives.

Principal Youth Court Judge John Walker says the Hastings court is a significant addition to the approaches available to the Youth Court in the region. "Te Kōti Rangatahi offer alternatives for the delivery of effective interventions to address the underlying causes of offending," Judge Walker said. "They provide culturally responsive justice which is vitally important when two thirds of those appearing in the Youth Court are Māori."

Chief District Court Judge Heemi Taumaunu, who established the first Rangatahi Court 12 years ago, said having a court at Te Aranga Marae would provide an alternative pathway for local young people and their whānau, hapū and iwi. "The District Court is where everyone can come to seek justice and it is important that all young people leave feeling they have been heard and understood."

Chief Judge Taumaunu acknowledged the determination of local people to establish a court. "The engagement of local Māori lies at the heart of the success of Te Kōti Rangatahi. The wrap-around support and knowledge of tikanga are vital for ensuring these courts are effective. I thank Ngāti Kahungunu for their commitment and generosity." Chief Judge Taumaunu also thanked the Ministry of Justice for its support.

The National Liaison Judge for Rangatahi Courts, Judge Louis Bidois, presided at the first sitting of the court. Judge Bidois thanked everyone in the community for their hard work and dedication in establishing the Hastings court, including local District Court judges and justice service agencies.

Today's launch was twice delayed by COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

Background:

Rangatahi Courts operate within the Youth Court jurisdiction and are not separate courts.

They are an option for those who have admitted to their offending or had charges proved in the Youth Court and choose to undergo monitoring of their family group conference plans in a marae setting.

Marae social services and kaumātua and kuia provide guidance, under the leadership of a Youth Court judge.

Nine judges have responsibilities for running the 16 Rangatahi and two Pasifika courts. Rangatahi Courts sit on marae around the Auckland region and in Whāngārei, Hamilton, Huntly, Rotorua, Taupo, Whakatāne, Tauranga, Gisborne, New Plymouth and Christchurch. Pasifika courts adapt the same model in a community setting in Mangere and Avondale in Auckland.

Nearly 2500 young people have attended Rangatahi Courts since they were established 12 years ago.

For more information –

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