

Tikanga services at Tākina



In Aotearoa New Zealand, we often incorporate indigenous Māori culture — including language, customs, and values — into our events. These practices uphold the mana (spiritual and social power) of the Māori people who first inhabited these lands.

This document outlines the tikanga, or cultural customs, at Tākina Wellington Convention & Exhibition Centre. It also describes the cultural services available to support your event with the appropriate whakatau, or formal welcome.

We use reo Māori (Māori language) terms in this document and provide reo Pākehā (English language) translations.



Tākina means to summon, connect, and bring forth

The name Tākina was gifted to the Wellington City Council by Kura Moeahu, Te Āti Awa. Tākina means to invoke, to summon, to connect, and to bring forth. In Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington), the most powerful force that invigorates us is the wind. Some days, our unique and diverse winds rage across the harbour, blowing everything before them. At other times they are soft, welcoming, and calm.

Those winds express the shift of knowledge from one generation to another. They move things forward. They carry truths and viewpoints here from the universe and move them on to others, thousands of miles away.

Tākina embodies this meaning of the wind by providing an inspirational space for people from all over the world to share, express, and connect.

Understanding tikanga

Tikanga is a broad term to describe customs, protocols, and values in te ao Māori, or the Māori world. Tikanga can vary within Aotearoa New Zealand and is set by mana whenua, the local people with territorial rights.

For Tākina, that means the local iwi, Te Āti Awa, set the tikanga for our space, and work with Tākina partners, stakeholders, staff, and clients to observe it. Our tikanga governs things like:

- whakatau, formal ceremonies to open events
- mātāpono, the values and principles underlying appropriate conduct at Tākina
- other formal protocols, such as pōwhiri (a more formal welcome at a marae, or meeting place) and whakamoe (a ceremony to formally close an exhibition).

As visitors to our space, clients holding events at Tākina must uphold our tikanga. The Tākina Events team is available to help you understand and meet these requirements, to ensure you observe the appropriate practice.





Opening your event with a whakatau

A whakatau, sometimes called a mihi whakatau, is the main way for most kaupapa (events) at Tākina to observe tikanga.

A whakatau is a kind of greeting used to introduce and open a kaupapa. It happens at the very start, before any other proceedings. Whakatau means both to welcome and to settle, so the intention is for a whakatau to make visitors feel welcome and comfortable at Tākina, and ready to join in the kaupapa that's about to begin.

A whakatau is similar to a pōwhiri, but with less formality. A pōwhiri may be appropriate for major events, but this will be at the sole discretion of the resident iwi at Te Papa. If a pōwhiri is recommended, it will be held at Rongomaraeroa Te Marae, Te Papa — not at Tākina.

At Tākina, clients may not bring on an external party to perform their whakatau; a whakatau must be organised through Te Āti Awa. You may choose not to include a whakatau as part of your event, or you may wish to perform your own whakatau. However, if you have your own cultural practice, you'll need to liaise with mana whenua to ensure our tikanga is upheld.

What's involved in a whakatau

A whakatau can be held in any of our event spaces, but always inside Tākina — the domain of Rongo (the Māori god of peaceful activity). Our events team will work through the best location with you.

The beginning of the whakatau will be signalled with the sound of a pūtātara (conch shell), inviting people to sit. At this point, mobile phones should be switched to silent mode. Once everyone is settled, a representative of Te Āti Awa will take the stage, and, if appropriate, a Tākina video will play.

The mana whenua speaker should not be introduced by an MC — the whakatau takes place before anyone else speaks. They may be joined by other kaikaranga (people carrying out the welcoming call) and poi manu (singers using poi).

The whakatau may go on for a few minutes, and can involve:

- a karanga — a ceremonial call to welcome visitors
- karakia and kōrero — traditional incantation and a brief address
- a waiata tautoko — a song of support for your kaupapa, often backed by poi manu.

As manuhiri (visitors), you do not need to provide any formal response to the whakatau. Once the formalities are complete, the kaikarakia who leads the karakia will hand over to your MC.

Pricing for a whakatau

There are costs involved for Te Āti Awa to provide this cultural service, as set out in the table below.

We'll agree the services with you and confirm the final costs one month before your event. These costs will be included in your event quote and billing.

Whakatau involvement	Cost
Kaikōrero — one person provides the whakatau.	\$650
Kaikōrero/kaikaranga — two people provide the whakatau.	\$1,300
Pūhā Rikiriki, a group of 15-20 poi manu to support the whakatau. This additional support is for kaupapa deemed significant by Te Āti Awa.	\$2,300
Additional kairuruku (mana whenua coordinators) for kaupapa deemed significant by Te Āti Awa.	\$650 per additional kairuruku
Online pre-event hui (meeting) of up to 60 minutes with Kura and Alishia Moeahu of Te Āti Awa.	\$250, or \$500 if both representatives attend.





General tikanga at Tākina

Aside from the whakatau, there are a few other elements of tikanga for visitors to be aware of:

- No taiaha and rakau — taiaha and rakau are traditional weapons sometimes used in Māori ceremonies. These are not allowed indoors at Tākina, the domain of Rongo.
- Discuss koha with iwi — koha (gifts or donations) are often given by visitors attending marae, and in other contexts. If you want to offer koha as part of the proceedings, this should be discussed with Te Āti Awa in advance.
- Other cultural groups — our tikanga places no restrictions on you inviting other cultural groups to provide entertainment (after the whakatau has taken place).

We welcome photography, videography, and media coverage

We welcome and encourage storytelling and media coverage of events at Tākina, including the use of photography and videography. However, to minimise disruption during whakatau, please observe the following guidance:

- Ensure that camera operators stay to the side or behind formal proceedings, and do not step in front of iwi or between people performing in the whakatau.
- Keep flashes, noise, and other disruption to a minimum throughout formal proceedings.
- If you want to interview iwi, wait until after the close of proceedings to approach them.

If we receive any media requests about your event, we'll refer them to you in the first instance. For events that are expected to attract media attention or publicity, we may nominate a Tākina staff member to manage media enquiries.

Next steps for your event

To plan for a whakatau, please fill out the Cultural Services Request Form and send it to the Tākina Events function coordinator. We'll help coordinate with Te Āti Awa.

If you want to include other cultural performance or event elements from mana whenua (for example, asking them to speak in your event programme), we can help connect you with mana whenua, understand your requirements, and determine costs.

[Download the Cultural Services Request Form](#)



takina.co.nz