Discovery of Raw Pounamu and Pounamu Artifacts

Occasionally erosion, land movement and development can unearth raw pounamu and pounamu artifacts. Any raw pounamu, such as a boulder, discovered outside the areas open to public fossicking and/or larger than what one can carry is the property of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and should be notified to the Pounamu Management Officer immediately.

Any artifact discovered, such as a Toki (adze) or Heitiki (stylized pendant) is the property of the Crown and is of particular significance to Ngāi Tahu. It is illegal to remove or interfere in any way with the artifact or the site where it was found.

If discovery of an artifact is made on DOC land, DOC should be notified and they will notify Ngāi Tahu. On all other land the local regional museum should be notified who will in turn notify Ngāi Tahu.

Ngāi Tahu works with DOC and the Department of Culture and Heritage to make sure that all artifacts are protected to safeguard heritage, cultural values and learning for future generations. That is why it is important to leave artifacts where they are found (unless they are under immediate threat such as erosion) and notify the appropriate government department who will work with the Kaitiaki Rūnanga to ensure the artifact’s conservation and safety.

Extraction

Extraction and mining of pounamu will only be undertaken by the Kaitiaki Rūnanga of Ngāi Tahu and will be based on comprehensive research and monitoring of pounamu deposits. Therefore, no mining rights will be extended to external parties at this stage. It is intended that some areas of particular importance will be placed under rāhui to protect them for future generations.

In certain areas where extraction may be feasible, Kaitiaki Rūnanga have decided to undertake further research with the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences to assess the sustainability of the pounamu deposits before commercial extraction is decided upon.

Indirect Extraction and Accidental Discovery

When pounamu is unearthed as a result of another permitted activity, such as gold mining or building developments, it cannot be removed without consultation with and the approval of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and the appropriate Kaitiaki Rūnanga. Should you discover pounamu in this way it is important to contact the Pounamu Management Officer immediately.

Supply

Apart from allowing for public fossicking on West Coast beaches, Ngāi Tahu is also committed to supplying pounamu to the commercial pounamu industry and making it available for tribal cultural purposes such as kohanga and the gifting of mauri stones.

Kaitiaki Rūnanga will undertake all supply of pounamu to the commercial industry and will also make pounamu available to the Ngāi Tahu Pātaka Pounamu (tribal storehouse). Those interested in obtaining pounamu in this way should contact the Pounamu Management Officer.

The Ngāi Tahu Pounamu Trademark

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu is developing a pounamu trademark to guarantee authentic Ngāi Tahu pounamu and to protect pounamu from foreign imported jades that may be traded as pounamu. This trademark will identify Ngāi Tahu pounamu in the marketplace through stickers, swing tags and registered manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers.

Export of Pounamu

When taking pounamu out of New Zealand, it is important to be aware that pounamu in excess of 5 kilograms is prohibited from being exported. This is enforced by the New Zealand Customs Service at the border. Crafted articles such as pendants and sculptures are allowed to be taken out of the country along with raw pounamu and stones under 5 kilograms. Those wishing to take pounamu out of the country above this limit must apply in writing to:

The New Zealand Customs Service
PO Box 2218
Wellington

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

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WHAT IS THE POUNAMU RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN?

Te Rūnanga o Ngā Tahu is the kaitiaki (guardian) of pounamu, the prized greenstone found in Te Waiopounamu (the South Island of New Zealand).

The Ngā Tahu (Pounamu Vesting) Act 1997 formally made Te Rūnanga o Ngā Tahu responsible for the ownership and management of pounamu.

In September 2002 Te Rūnanga o Ngā Tahu approved the Pounamu Resource Management Plan – our blueprint of how best to look after pounamu to ensure its sustainability for the future. This plan is of considerable significance for Ngā Tahu, it demonstrates our ability to manage a taonga, a natural resource and a commercially valuable commodity while upholding its cultural importance along with the mana and rangatiratanga of the iwi. It has taken five years and many hui but we now have a positive and powerful tool to move forward, mā tāiao, mā kāuri a muri ake nei.

Mark Solomon (Kaiwhakahaere)

The Pounamu Resource Management Plan therefore relates to all pounamu vested in Te Rūnanga o Ngā Tahu within the Ngā Tahu tribal taking area, excluding the Arahura River Catchment, and explains what this means for the public regarding the collection of pounamu within this area.

WHO ADMINISTERS THE PLAN?

Te Rūnanga o Ngā Tahu works closely with the Kaitiaki Rūnanga to manage pounamu. A Pounamu Management Officer is employed by Te Rūnanga o Ngā Tahu to liaise between Kaitiaki Rūnanga and external agencies. This person is the first point of contact on all matters relating to the pounamu management plan.

Public Fossicking

Ngā Tahu recognises that fossicking for small amounts of pounamu is an important cultural activity for all New Zealanders. Public fossicking for pounamu is allowed on the beaches of Te Tai o Poutini (the West Coast of the South Island) and is limited to what an individual can carry on their person or backpack within a 24 hour period – this means what an individual can physically lift by themselves and take unaided to their mode of transport and the key is ‘can carry’ on their person.

Rūnanga

Te Rūnanga o Ngā Tahu

No restrictions.

Beyond the Ngā Tahu tribal area, Kaitiaki Rūnanga pounamu and restrictions for the collection of pounamu.

The Ngā Tahu Pounamu Resource Management Plan

- Overarching policies and processes for the management of pounamu developed by the Ngā Tahu Pounamu Resource Management Group; including:
  - Roles, responsibilities and relationships.
  - Protection mechanisms and policy.
  - Fossicking and collection policy.
  - Sustainable extraction policy.
  - Supply mechanisms.

Kāti Waewae

Pounamu Management Plan

- Specific policies and processes for the management of pounamu in the takuwhā of Kāti Waewae Rūnanga.

Makaawhio

Pounamu Management Plan

- Specific policies and processes for the management of pounamu in the takuwhā of Makaawhio Rūnanga.

Otago

Pounamu Management Plan

- Specific policies and processes for the management of pounamu in the takuwhā of Otago Rūnanga.

Mushiku

Pounamu Management Plan

- Specific policies and processes for the management of pounamu in the takuwhā of Mushiku Rūnanga.

HOW CAN I COLLECT POUNAMU?

Public Fossicking

Ngā Tahu recognises that fossicking for small amounts of pounamu is an important cultural activity for all New Zealanders. Public fossicking for pounamu is allowed on the beaches of Te Tai o Poutini (the West Coast of the South Island) and is limited to what an individual can carry on their person or backpack within a 24 hour period – this means what an individual can physically lift by themselves and take unaided to their mode of transport and the key is ‘can carry’ on their person.

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- Specific policies and processes for the management of pounamu in the takuwhā of Mushiku Rūnanga.

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Public fossicking, including rivers and lands administered by DOC, customary and cultural collection of pounamu may take place under the korowai (protective cloak) of the Kaitiaki Rūnanga, Ngā Tahu who are not members of the Kaitiaki Rūnanga wishing to collect pounamu in these areas must first contact the Kaitiaki Rūnanga.

Customary and Cultural Collection

In areas outside those open to public fossicking, including rivers and lands administered by DOC, customary and cultural collection of pounamu may take place under the korowai (protective cloak) of the Kaitiaki Rūnanga, Ngā Tahu who are not members of the Kaitiaki Rūnanga wishing to collect pounamu in these areas must first contact the Kaitiaki Rūnanga.

Cultural collection for other (wi) and the public will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis via the Kaitiaki Rūnanga.