

Karanga

A karanga is the formal call used for a variety of occasions and usually precedes the mihi, or speeches.

Steeped in tikanga, the Karanga is more than just a call, but it is a spiritual connection to those who have gone before us. It epitomises mana wahine.

Rules of Karanga

These rules are based on traditional Maori Tikanga.

Know Tikanga especially Marae Protocol. Karanga is an intergral part of Marae protocol and pohiri so you have to know that to be able to karanga, else you may stand in the wrong place or walk to the wrong place or not pause in the right place or other things that could get you into trouble.

The right to karanga is the sole domain of women as whare tangata gives them the ability to open the tapu of Te Maraenui Atea o Tumatauenga to allow safe passage across for the manuhiri. This cannot be done by girls whose whare tangata has not yet awoken.

Before you learn to karanga, you need to check with the senior women in your whanau on the blood lines for permission. If your whanau has women who karanga, they would be the best ones to teach you.

Karanga should be done in one continuous breath, ensuring that the "rope" weaved is not broken

Once the first karanga has started, each consecutive karanga should start before the previous one finishes, again, ensuring that the "rope" that is weaved is not broken

A woman should not karanga when they have their mate wahine or are hapu, as their state has changed and will not allow the atea to be opened

A woman has the right to refuse to karanga and pressure should not be placed on them to do so. They may be saying no because the above has happened, but they do not want to tell everyone their personal business.

The note for the karanga is any note that comes naturally - there is no right or wrong note

If you are at a hui and there are women older than you, wait to see if they organise who will do the karanga - do not overstep them.

Karanga is a practical art and you need the practical practice before you should karanga.

In some areas there are men who "call" when going onto a marae, but this is known by another name with another set of rules and will not be covered in this section.

Types of Karanga

There is an unlimited number of karanga, however, 36 is the minimum that you should know in order to be able to say that you can karanga.

If doing a karanga for a hui, you will be either be on the Tangata Whenua side or the Manuhiri side.

The Kai Karanga is the person who does the karanga for the Tangata Whenua and the Kai Whakaatu is the person who does the karanga for the Manuhiri.

There are usually 3 karanga done for the tangata whenua side and three from the manuhiri in reply, making a total of six.

However, the karanga for an ordinary hui are different from a tangihanga (another six), from taking a tupapaku onto the marae (another six), from going onto an urupa (another six), from going to an unveiling (another six), then there are the ones for kai, koha, being seated etc.

This makes a rough total of 36 Karanga, so in order to say you can karanga, you should know at least 36!

If someone asks you if you can karanga, you could also reply like this if you do not have the 36 under your belt:

'I know 3 basic karanga for the Tangata Whenua for an ordinary hui and 1 basic karanga for Manuhiri for an ordinary hui.'

This way you will not have the experience of being told to karanga a tupapaku onto a marae!

Tangata Whenua Karanga

Out of the two sides in a powhiri, the karanga for the Tangata Whenua is usually the easier to deliver as the other Tangata Whenua will tell you where to stand to do your karanga.

The most basic karanga for the Tangata Whenua is:

Haere Mai, Haere Mai, Haere Mai

, and is delivered in one breath.

Manuhiri Karanga

Out of the two sides in a powhiri, the karanga for the Manuhiri is usually the harder as you need to know the Marae Protocol for the marae that you are visiting, where to walk, where and when to pause and where to go to sit. The most basic karanga for the Manuhiri is

Karanga Mai, Karanga Mai, Karanga Mai

, and is delivered in one breath.