CHI Pepeha template for non-Māori staff.



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At the beginning of meetings, as practised on marae and in meetings across the Ngāi Tahu tribal region, and almost all over the country, a round of introductions and speeches – or mihimihi – usually occurs. During this time, people ordinarily stand to share a little bit about where they come from and who they are [[1]](#footnote-1).

This template has been adapted from Otago University Māori/Indigenous Health Institute (MIHI) for non-Māori staff to be able to participate in a culturally safe pepeha/mihihi using their personal information. If you are Māori and would like assistance to create your own tribal pepeha please contact Karaitiana Taiuru in confidence.

It is advisable that you do not deviate from this template without consultation, as you could risk cultural appropriation, offence to Māori you are speaking to or even be perceived as committing a cultural fraud by claiming you are someone that you are not. For example: Christchurch staff should not state Aoraki is their mountain. Aoraki is an ancestor and a sacred mountain of Ngāi Tahu who each descendant of Ngāi Tahu claims a genealogical, spiritual and intergenerational connection to as stated below.

The Ngāi Tahu story of creation states that Aoraki is the eldest child of Ranginui (Earth father). Aoraki and his brothers brought the canoe called Te Waka o Aoraki (Ngāi Tahu name of the South Island) down from the skies to visit Papatūānuku (the Earth Mother) – their stepmother. When Aoraki and his brothers saw that they would not be able to separate their father from his new-found love, they decided to return to the heavens to be with their, own, mother Pokoharua-te-pō. However, when Aoraki was reciting the karakia for the journey back he made a mistake in his words. The waka stranded on a rock and he and his brothers were marooned. As time passed they turned to stone, their hair turned white and they became the highest peaks of Kā Tiritiri o te Moana – the Southern Alps. This story is currently a play with the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra called Tūmahana[[2]](#footnote-2).

Another example: some Māori upon hearing that an AirNZ flight is included as a waka in a mihimihi, may take offence, as the plane trip, a comfortable/luxurious trip where you were likely served food and beverages and made to feel welcome and relaxed is being compared to the sacrifice and scientific knowledge of the early Māori explorers/settlers who voyaged in open seas on their waka. To hear a debate and hear of some of the risks associated with mihimihi for non-Māori is online podcast[[3]](#footnote-3).

This template is an editable word document so you can add and delete as appropriate. Your own pepeha can then be used at any appropriate time.

|  |  |
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| Tēnā koutou (may be said up to three times) katoa. | Formal greetings to everyone (more than 2 people) |
|  |
| Ko (insert name of mountain) te maungaKa mihi au ki te maunga ō (insert name of mountain)Replace maunga with puke (hill) if there is a hill of significance. | Insert the name of the mountain from your home region that you and your family have links to/ or that is of significance to you all.If there are no mountain of immediate significance to your whānau, choose another mountain to acknowledge and use the alternative version provided. This acknowledges the significance of this mountain to you, while not claiming guardianship or whakapapa connections. |
|  |
| Ko (insert name of river) te awa (river)ORKo (insert name of lake) te roto (lake)ORKo (insert name of ocean) te moana (ocean)OR Ka mihi au ki te (awa /roto OR moana) ō (insert name of body of water) | Insert the name of the river, lake or ocean (from your home region) that you and your whānau have links to/ or that is of significance to you all.If you have not been able to identify a body of water which is of immediate significance to your family, choose another, to acknowledge and use the alternative version provided This acknowledges the significance of this place to you, while not claiming guardianship or whakapapa connections. |
|  |  |
| Ko (insert name of country) te whenua ō ōku tīpunaEngari, i tipu ake au ki (insert county here) | My ancestors come from (country of significance to your ancestor(s)Include this line if you grew up in a different region/ country. |
|  |  |
| I te tau (insert year) I haere mai au (replace au with ia if referring to someone else) ki Aotearoa | I migrated/came to Aotearoa in the year |
| Ko te (Country/Place name) whenua ō ōku tīpuna | My ancestors come from (country of significance to your ancestor(s) |
| I te tau (Year) i haere mai a (Name) ki Aotearoa | (Name of ancestor) came to Aotearoa in (the year) |
| Ko (insert place name here) te wā kāinga ō tōku whānauEngari, i tipu ake au ki (insert region here) | Think about where your ancestor settled, and or where you and or your whānau have been based i.e. town/city.Include this line if you grew up in a different region. |
|  |  |
| Ko (insert your first and last name) tōku ingoa | My name is |
|  |  |
| Nō reira, Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa. | Therefore, and so I give you all formal greetings once, twice and thrice. |

1. <https://www.otago.ac.nz/maori/world/te-reo-maori/mihi-introductions/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://cso.co.nz/events/tumahana> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/teahikaa/audio/2018772487/urupounamu-episode-eight-a-korero-about-pepeha> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)