

MAUMAHARA PUBLICITY RELEASE – EPISODE 1: CHILDHOOD
KAUMATUA REMEMBER THEIR CHILDHOOD

Forget play stations, ipods and MP3s for kids' entertainment. Try cricket balls made of cow hair or rugby balls made of sheep's guts – just a few of the home made toys which kept some Maori kids out of mischief in the 1920s and 30s.

These intriguing stories debut tonight Maori Television's new kaumatua show **MAUMAHARA** - a nostalgic programme which celebrates kaumatua and their golden stories of the 1920s to the 1950s. The 13-part half hour bilingual show is presented by Ben Tawhiti (Ngaiterangi) and features archival footage and photos as well as Ben's band 'Nga Kaumatua'.

Brought up during the depression and World War II, the sixteen kaumatua vividly recall their parents, how they lived and their perceptions of the world around them.

Kuia Julie Ranginui (Ngati Tuwharetoa/Ngati Hauaroa) remembers being thrown into the Wanganui River to learn how to swim as a youngster. Those were the days before water diversion by power companies turned the river into the polluted, shallow body of water that it is today.

“The water was so clear that I could see the bubbles from the bottom,” she remembers. “My father was waiting for me when I came to the surface to grab me, and from that time, I could swim. The river was sacred to us, a place where you could get kai or go to if you were sick.”

Dr Ranginui Walker (Whakatohea) says Maori considered children to be the leaders of tomorrow. Children learned about the world around them through their parents and extended family. The former Auckland University lecturer grew up in Rahui Valley near Opotiki and remembers being indulged by his two nannies who lived with his family.

“They both spoiled me,” he says. “On pension day they would both come back from town with lollies for me and they indulged me. My mother didn't dare growl me in front of them.”

Ngati Porou koroua, Hapi Potae, remembers growing up near Sir Apirana Ngata's bungalow in Waioamatani and his grandmother swapping jam and other food supplies with Ngata's household during the depression. A self-proclaimed “champion diver” when he was a boy, Hapi says he knew all the good diving spots in the area. As a boy he spent hours swimming

or playing – but only after completing his long list of household jobs. This included milking the cows and chopping wood for the household fire which was never allowed to go out.

MAUMAHARA means “remember” in English, a fitting title for these 13 half-hour episodes. Produced by renowned singer Hinewehi Mohi, **MAUMAHARA** indulges her love of music, especially from the 1920s to the early 1950s.

“The programme idea started when I saw Ben Tawhiti at the 75th birthday of Milly Bradfield, a former jazz/blues diva,” says Hinewehi. “We talked about how it would be great to see some telly tailored to our kaumatua. I’ve always loved talking to my Nan about the olden days and listening to my grandfather’s old crooner music so it made sense to create a show like **MAUMAHARA**.”

Upcoming episodes feature themes ranging from war, politics and women to urbanisation, social activities and health. As a loving footnote to the kaumatua, a song from Ben’s band ends each show with a range of singers including Taisha, Mabel Wharekawa-Burt, Manu Harrison, Whirimako Black, Dennis Marsh and Mahinaarangi Tocker.

Tune in to **MAUMAHARA** tonight on Maori Television (date and time).

Ends