



28 July 2023

Tena koutou i runga i nga ahuatanga o te wa, me nga manaakitanga a Matariki e haere ake nei, mo te tau hou.

As the world grapples with challenges of poverty, pollution, polarization, of war, racism, and climate change, and their impacts on Aotearoa, we look to secure our homes, lands, roads, waterways, our connection, communities and culture. Our identity.

Te Ara Tipuna is a piece of our shared puzzle of how we might do this here at home.

Te Ara Tipuna is, at one level, an idea and a prayer to restore a way of life inherited from our forebears, made fit for modern times, and sustainable into the future. At another, it is simply much needed infrastructure – a network of accessways providing a critical option for routine (and emergency) movement through the takiwa.

At yet another level, Te Ara Tipuna is a motivation for collecting, protecting, learning and teaching our stories, our songs, our systems and structures, our distinctive ways of seeing and being. Also, Te Ara Tipuna is the provision of access and opportunity for local level enterprise, for the sharing and showcasing of cultural wealth, for manuhiri and manaakitanga, and for material wellbeing. And, Te Ara Tipuna will require us, and rely upon us, to be practiced and perpetual kaitieki guardians of our whenua, whanau, whakapapa – our taiao, and our ao whanui.

This initiative has been conceived as a physical realisation of cultural connection. While it has been sponsored and led by Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou, in partnership and resourced by Te Puni Kokiri, it has been developed as a cultural embrace - of the iwi and hapu who are linked through whakapapa and share boundaries from Te Toka a Taiau (Ngati Porou) to Tarakeha (Te Whakatohea). It is in the spirit of an open invitation, respecting the mana of each to make their own decision, in their own time, as to whether to take up the opportunity.

Ultimately, however, it is the right and responsibility, the decision of landowners, shareholders, trustees, over whose property it is proposed Te Ara Tipuna passes.

Along with the high-level proposal for the mapped route it is further proposed that a device, akin to a passport, will be developed for users of Te Ara Tipuna. This 'passport', and an undertaking to abide by its settings, would apply to the entire journey, informed by the specific requirements negotiated with landowners, the hapu and iwi of that rohe. It is intended that the 'passport' provide for a principled commitment of safe and welcome passage, by both guest and host alike.

We are excited about the possibilities of Te Ara Tipuna. We trust that you are too!

Kia tau te ia o te Mauri kia tatau.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Parata", with a small flourish at the end.

Sir Selwyn Tanetua Parata KNZM