

# Well worth attending

## Day by day

When I was asked if I could write a summary about the Pathways national hui I thought to myself, that's easy, I could sum that up in three words "Well worth attending". Then I thought to myself, this isn't an adequate summary, as people would ask why was it well worth attending? So this got me thinking...

### Day One

While waiting what seemed like an hour or two for the powhiri to begin, I can remember feeling bored, out of my depth not to mention my comfort zone, I can remember texting my partner and colleagues to fill the time and wondering why I had agreed that I would like to go.

The powhiri then began and although it wasn't the first time that I've been on to a marae, it was like no other powhiri that I have ever had the pleasure to be a part of.

We were all welcomed on to the marae with a karanga that echoed through the hills carrying with it the chant of emotion.

Once welcomed on, we all sat in the Wharekai where there was a heap of welcoming words exchanged between the Marae's Kaumatua, Bruce Stewart and our Pathways Board Member and representative, Rei Mihaere. With only a little understanding of te reo, I was most impressed by the translation of those words between Bruce and Rei.

This was followed by an amazing performance of two young tamariki, to this day I do not know what was said but again, with it they carried emotion and talent like I had never seen before.

Following this, a majority of the remainder of the day was free time, during this time, we each had the opportunity to receive a T Shirt which carried with it the emblem of the Hui, I can remember receiving this with a sense of pride.

Later that evening, it was our turn to welcome on the people that had traveled from the Waikato and Auckland and again this was a pleasure to be a part of.

There we were, all gathered together and there was no way of deciphering who was staff and who was service user or whanau, we were all gathered there as equals and for a common purpose.



## Day Two

Started off with a morning of discussion forums, everybody was given the opportunity to partake in these, there were various discussion groups and I found myself moving from group to group interested in each of the topics, it was an opportunity to share and hear the new ideas and innovation happening within Pathways.

The afternoon was great as during the lunch break we were all introduced to the idea of an afternoon of recreational activities which we were able to put our names down for.

The activities included an opportunity to go rock climbing, visiting the seal colony, visiting Te Papa, going sea kayaking, going for a Wellington harbour cruise or making flags with a known Wellington artist. I chose the harbour cruise, something that I enjoyed immensely and will probably never get the opportunity to do again.

Later that afternoon, we were all given a talking too from Bruce, it was on the history of the marae and how his dream of building the marae became a reality, he is a truly inspirational man.

Later that evening, we were privileged by the performance of a Wellington band that played a range of dance music that got everyone dancing including all of the management team, This gave me the opportunity to see that the management within Pathways are not only down to earth but also human.

## Day Three

We woke early for a early morning ceremony, one that will permanently mark the Pathways hui of 2007, should you the reader ever get the opportunity to go to Tapu Te Ranga marae, it is one that I would well recommend to anyone and say while you're there have a look at the flags above the entrance onto the marae, they're ours.

Sadly day three had come too soon and it was an experience that for me could've lasted a lifetime and yet still been totally enjoyable, it was certainly "Well worth attending".

Derek, Taranaki