

Karen Te O Kahurangi Waaka-Tibble

Karen Te O Kahurangi Waaka-Tibble is of Te Arawa descent, born and raised in Rotorua. She is also of Scottish, Irish and English descent.

For the past 15 years she has been producer for Kura Productions, working with Quinton Hita on a range of television productions using Te Reo Māori, including long-running language programmes *Tōku Reo* and *Pūkoro* and the suite of *Kōwhao Rau* shows. Also in her credits are the documentary *Te Kati – The Goethe Mystery* and the comedy series *Only in Aotearoa* and well as feature films *Mt Zion* (she was line producer with director Tearepa Kahi) and *Maui's Hook* (as producer with director Paora Joseph).


She has served as a board member of Ngā Aho Whakaari - the Māori in Film & Television collective - advocating for funding, training, and Māori improvements across the industry and working with other industry guilds. She was secretary/ treasurer from 2009 to 2011 and then again in 2015-2016 when Ngā Aho Whakaari celebrated 25 years as an industry organisation.

Prior to her screen industry career, she worked extensively in the tourism industry in Rotorua plus other Māori development initiatives and with over 25 years' experience as a cultural performer, she has promoted New Zealand and Māoridom through China, United States, Germany, and Japan.

She was a policy analyst and facilitator with Te Puni Kōkiri (Ministry of Māori Development) and business mentor for the Māori Tourism Facilitation Service (2005–2008), providing advice to Māori businesses. She has also held management and marketing roles with Tarawera NZ Ltd, Te Kahui Hauora Trust, NZ Māori Arts and Crafts Institute, and was chair of the Māori Regional Tourism Organisation, Māori in Tourism Rotorua, for 10 years.

She has served on national boards: Māori Tourism Advisory Group to the NZ Tourism Strategy 2010, Ministerial Advisory Group on Immigration, NZ Tourism Research Council and Aotearoa Māori Tourism Federation.

From 2000-2002 she was a member of the Māori Tourism Advisory Group appointed by then Minister of Tourism Mark Burton to provide advice on national tourism strategy. At



the same time, she was on the advisory body to Waiariki Polytechnic's Tourism Degree, advising on the curriculum and before that, in 1991, she was writer of the Māori Tourism Unit Standards for the NZ Qualifications Authority.

She is currently Chair of the Māori Trademarks Advisory Group (since 2003) and was a member of the 1995 focus group that developed the discussion paper and consultation with Māori that saw many of the recommendations being included in the revised legislation.

In 2006, she travelled with the Official NZ Delegation to Geneva to attend the eighth session of the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore. She has maintained her work in intellectual property, being appointed to the Patents Māori Advisory Committee in 2015 and is also a member of the Māori Working Group for the Plant Variety Rights Review.

Karen is also active in whānau and hapu including her Marae Trust renovation project (since 2016) and the inaugural Tūhourangi Tribal Authority (2007-2011), one of the iwi affiliates to the Te Arawa Treaty Settlement Entity. She has also been part of the collation team for Te Arawa Regional Kapa Haka Festival (2002, 2004, 2010) and for the Bay of Plenty Secondary Schools Māori Festival (2000) and from 1999-2001 she was on the organising committee of the Opera in the Pa event in Rotorua.

Karen has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Waikato University in Political Science, Māori and Education.

She has twin daughters, Ashleigh and Angela and a son Te Irikau and 3 grand-daughters – Te Puhi Māreikura, Rukuwainuiātea and Mahina Aotea-Lea.

