

## Maori tribe demands anti-vax protesters stop doing their haka



*Protestors perform a haka during a Freedom and Rights Coalition protest at Parliament in Wellington, last Tuesday.*

By Tom Hunt  
November 15, 2021

**Wellington:** A Maori tribe has demanded protesters stop using their haka war dance, made internationally famous by the All Blacks, to promote opposition to the COVID-19 vaccination.

The Ka Mate haka has been performed at numerous anti-mandate and vaccine protests, and leaders of the Ngāti Toa tribe said they had been made aware that it was planned for future events.

“Our message to protesters who wish to use Ka Mate is to use a different haka,” Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira chief executive Helmut Modlik said on Monday morning.

“We do not endorse the use of Ka Mate for this purpose.”

A settlement in 2014 came with special legislation acknowledging Ngāti Toa ancestor Te Rauparaha as composer of the Ka Mate haka, and that the iwi, or tribe, has intellectual property rights over the haka.

Ngāti Toa condemned the use of the haka by anti-vaccination groups, and hailed the benefits of vaccination.

“Ngāti Toa has been proactive in the protection of our whānau [clan] against COVID-19 with our Ora Toa Health Services being a major provider of COVID-19 vaccinations across our rohe [territory],” Modlik said.



*Protesters outside Parliament call for an end to COVID restrictions and vaccine mandates.*

“Many of our tupuna [ancestors] lost their lives in previous pandemics and our iwi suffered greatly. We are absolutely clear that the COVID-19 vaccine is the best protection we have available to us and we are committed to supporting our whānau to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

“Protests are promoting the views of individuals ahead of the needs of collective whānau.” They said this was not in accordance with the values of their culture and their ancestors would agree.

Ngāti Toa elder Taku Parai, an authority on the tribe’s traditions, backed the calls.

“As the descendants of Te Rauparaha, we insist that protesters stop using our taonga immediately. We do not support their position and we do not want our tupuna or our iwi associated with their messages.”

Anti-vaccination and anti-lockdown protesters have targeted New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern’s mandate that teachers and workers in health and disability must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Auckland's hospitality sector remains shut under COVID restrictions, and will not reopen until 90 per cent of eligible Aucklanders are fully vaccinated.