

TANGIHANGA Guidelines During COVID-19

By Che Wilson on 23 March 2020

E ngā tini kārangarangatanga maha puta noa i te motu, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātau katoa. Tēnā tātau me te ngārara nui, a te mate koroua, kua pae mai ki tēnei motu me hōna moutere a Te Ika-a-Māui, Te Waipounamu, Rakiura, Te Wharekauri me ngā motu ririki heoti huri noa i Aotearoa whānui.

E tangi ana ki ngā mate o te wā, e moe, e oki. Tēnei te pō, tū mai te ao.

Kāti, e te iwi he kupu akiaki hēnei e rārangi iho ana, he whakatūpatotanga, he mea whakamataara i a tātau kia mātau ai tātau ki te 'riarati hou'.

As we navigate the 'new reality – te riarati hou' with COVID 19 coronavirus here in Aotearoa, I thought it was worth sharing some thoughts to help our whānau, hapū, marae and iwi work through tangihanga during this time. This isn't a tohutohu, but we need to be real and take practical steps to ensure we live through this pandemic.

Tikanga is a broad and dynamic way to live and make decisions to keep us safe according to the context at hand – ngā mea e tika ana mō taua wā tonu. The tangihanga process means that we are great at working through grief. It is time to embrace the change to our lives and make it work in another way as our tūpuna have done for centuries. It's time for us to be good ancestors by making decisions today for our mokopuna.

The following is a guideline for marae and whānau to help you work through the tangihanga process during the four stages of COVID 19. It is important to note, we are entering into winter and our people get sick the most during this time.

There are four sets of changes recommended:

- **Alert Level 4** – Straight to Urupā or Cremation;
- **Alert Level 3** – One Day Tangihanga;
- **Alert Level 2** – Small Tangihanga;
- **Alert Level 1** – Tangihanga & Extra Sanitation.

Feel free to use this document if it helps you, there is no need to ask for permission, it's a contribution to helping us all during this challenging time. Appended to this paper is a simple table which I hope helps!

I'm also reminded by the whakataukī I always heard as a child:

*Moea tō rākau, moea tō poi
Always be ready for the unexpected.*

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ALERT LEVEL 4 – STRAIGHT TO URUPĀ OR CREMATION

*E pai ana te hunga mate, ko tā tātau he whai tikanga kia ea te mamae.
The dead are fine but for us the living, we must find ways to grieve.*

The virus is contagious, and this is a serious time where we must revert back to what our tūpuna did during the 1918 Influenza and during other circumstances. Often, we had one big mass grave and several people were placed in the hole side-by-side or on top of each other (no more than two for practical reasons). In addition, we may also have to cremate our bodies which our tūpuna did during war times, and if the pandemic brakes out in a bad way – this is war! Here are points to consider:

Preparing the tūpāpaku – IT'S CONTAGIOUS

- Work with undertakers though they may be overworked;
- If undertakers are overworked or you live rurally, then you may have to prepare your own bodies and legally **bodies don't need to be embalmed**;
- IT'S CONTAGIOUS so kaiwhakarite tūpāpaku **need to wear full protective gear (gloves, masks, protective clothing – to be burnt after use)** to prepare the tūpāpaku and you may have to make a makeshift manuka stretcher and wrap the body in a shroud/sheet if you have no coffin.

Straight to urupā – IT'S CONTAGIOUS

- Once tūpāpaku is ready, tūpāpaku is taken to urupā where no whānau are present except grave diggers and pallbearers who are all wearing protective gear;
- There is no legal requirements around depth of grave though **1m is a good depth** so that the body is covered properly and can naturally decompose rather than the full 6 feet that is normally practiced;
- Grave diggers or pallbearers will recite a karakia or short ceremony and bury the tūpāpaku;
- Please **mark on a map** where each tūpāpaku is buried so whānau can visit to hold a memorial service once the situation is over.

Cremation

- Where you may not be used to cremation, this may have to be an option especially if things get contagious;
- We must also prepare that we might not get the ashes returned till after the pandemic, who knows but better to be prepared.

Role of whānau pani

- Many hapū and iwi don't allow whānau pani to work during a tangihanga, this will need to change as whānau pani will have to do most of the work to prepare themselves at their kāinga, for a hākari at their kāinga and, in some cases, bury their whānau member.
- Once you know the time of the burial, hold a service at that time in your home (and connect to others online) so you send your karakia and aroha to your loved one that has passed and to those that carry out the important role of burying your loved one or sending them to the crematorium.

Those in contact with tūpāpaku – IT'S CONTAGIOUS

- Kaiwhakarite tūpāpaku, grave diggers and pall bearers will have to go into isolation or as was done in 1918, they carry this role during the period of Alert Level 4 on behalf of the whānau, hapū and/or marae.

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How to grieve without being present

- We encourage whānau from their homes to have karakia, to tangi, to share stories about your loved one that has passed and to sing as you remember them – it is important to do this with those in your own house to help each other grieve;
- You may also wish to zoom in and/or ring other whānau members during this time. If you don't know any karakia, reach out to whanaunga or friends that can help online or by phone. Alternatively, there are a heap of people doing online karakia in the morning and at night mainly on Facebook;
- Once everything has settled down and the country is out of the danger period, make arrangements to have a rā whakamaharatanga – memorial day or service with your whānau, hapū or marae and iwi.

ALERT LEVEL 3 – ONE DAY TANGIHANGA

Ko tā tātau he tangi, he haku, he auē

We must cry, grieve, and mourn

If you have a community outbreak OR a whānau member dies from COVID 19 coronavirus, revert to the guidance for Alert Level 4 otherwise, the following is a guide to help you work through tangihanga during the Alert Level 3 period. It is important to note that after downscaling from Level 4 to Level 3, it will still be different and will not be like the two days of Level three from 23-25 March 2020. Here are points to consider:

Preparing the tūpāpaku

- Work with undertakers and remember this is a serious time where people will need to be isolated;
- If the whānau member dies in the afternoon then it is best to work with authorities and you may have to leave your tūpāpaku over night by themselves;
- If the whānau member that has passed is a coronavirus victim then refer to Level 4

Te kawē tikanga – Kaikōrero and kaikaranga

- You may not be able to leave your home, in this case tangihanga will only be held at homes;
- This is a time for the bare essentials to be practiced and aroha can be expressed in a normal way once things have settled down when you hold a rā whakamaharatanga – memorial day or service;
- You will have to **wear a mask and gloves** and maintain at least 2m distance. Obviously while you are doing the whaikōrero and karanga you are at a decent distance anyway so you can take the mask off to perform your duties.

One day tangi at home – Closed casket

- Tūpāpaku is taken home for service only. It is best to lay the tūpāpaku on a space where you can easily disinfect the area after the tangihanga;
- Only whānau pani to attend tangihanga;
- All attendees to **wear masks and gloves, no hariru or hongis and maintain 2m distance** from each other;
- You may not have a tohunga or minister so work out how you will run a little service;
- The only kai served at the marae should be the hākari which may be something very simple or even just a cuppa and biscuits – be practical;
- For those that can't attend, link in online to collectively send karakia and aroha to the whānau and your loved one that has passed.

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Role of whānau pani

- Many hapū and iwi don't allow whānau pani to work during a tangihanga, this will need to change as whānau pani will have to do most of the work to prepare the kāinga (or marae if open), hākari and bury their whānau member.

How to grieve without being present

- You will not be allowed to go out and about so you may wish to zoom in and/or ring other whānau members during this time. If you don't know any karakia, reach out to whanaunga or friends that can help online or by phone. Alternatively, there are a heap of people doing online karakia in the morning and at night mainly on facebook;
- Once everything has settled down and the country is out of the danger period, make arrangements to have a rā whakamaharatanga – memorial day or service with your whānau, hapū or marae and iwi.

ALERT LEVEL 2 – SMALL TANGIHANGA

Ahakoā he ranga iti, nō te puna e kore e mimiti

Though small in numbers, love comes from a spring that never dries out

The fact that we will still have an alert level system in place means we have to be real and not spread it again. Yes, this level means things have been scaled down but safety is essential. Here are some suggestions:

Preparing the body

- This continues as per normal with the undertaker or recognised kaiwhakarite tūpāpaku.

Te kawē tikanga – Kaikōrero and kaikaranga

- All kaikōrero and kaikaranga must be under 60 years of age and well or need to stay at home if unwell or poorly;
- You should **wear a mask and gloves** and maintain at least 2m distance. By doing this, you are leading by example so people understand that this is still a serious time and you are not being over cautious – we have to lead to show our people. Obviously while you are doing the whaikōrero and karanga you are at a decent distance so you can take the mask off to perform your duties;
- Stop hongī, harīru and hugging at this time.

Overnight tangi or no longer than two nights at home or marae

- Keep the tūpāpaku at our home and only take to marae (if open) on the funeral day;
- Take the tūpāpaku to the marae (if it is open to tangihanga) and only lay on mahau – mahau to be disinfected after tangi;
- Only whānau pani to attend tangihanga;
- All attendees to **wear masks and gloves and maintain 2m distance** from each other;
- You may not have a tohunga or minister so work out how you will run karakia at the kāinga and a service on the funeral day;
- Maintain safe spacing (including when sleeping);
- Where possible, only those that live at the house should sleep there and others travel to the house;

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- Space out the mattresses at the marae (if open) so there is a gap between moenga and only allow that number to stay at the marae – we can't spread the virus by thinking all is ok;
- Be practical with your kai preparation and hākari – it doesn't have to be flash and a financial burden;
- For those that can't attend, link in online to collectively send karakia and aroha to the whānau and your loved one that has passed.

Role of whānau pani

- Many hapū and iwi don't allow whānau pani to work during a tangihanga, this will need to change as whānau pani will have to do most of the work to prepare the marae/kāinga, hākari and bury their whānau member.

How to grieve without being present

- Use online options to connect to whānau who are unable to attend tangi;
- If you don't know any karakia, reach out to whanaunga or friends that can help online or by phone. Alternatively, there are a heap of people doing online karakia in the morning and at night mainly on facebook.

ALERT LEVEL 1 – TANGIHANGA & EXTRA SANITATION

He aroha te aroha, whakatīnanatia

Our presence is the manifestation of love itself

This is not going back to normal as we will still need to be precautious. Here are some guidelines:

Preparing the body

- This continues as per normal with the undertaker or recognised kaiwhakarite tūpāpaku.

Te kawē tikanga – Kaikōrero and kaikaranga

- To be safe, we should continue to encourage that kaikōrero and kaikaranga must be under 60 years of age and well or need to stay at home if unwell or poorly;
- Stop hongī, hariru and hugging and have washing and sanitation stations available at waharoa and around the marae complex.

Tangihanga

- This is a chance to return back to holding tangihanga in the way that we know with changes;
- Maintain healthy distancing from each other including for sleeping;
- Wearing masks and gloves when preparing and serving kai;
- Encouraging the use of the washing and sanitisation stations throughout the marae.

Role of whānau pani

- We return back to the tikanga you would normally uphold for whānau pani **where practical**.

How to grieve without being present

- Use online options to connect to whānau who are unable to attend tangi.

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This is a new time for us and we must be realistic. As a people, we are good at adapting and making tikanga live for the time and at this time, we have to be extra vigilant to ensure tapu and noa are upheld so that ora is our primary focus.

He whiu nui tēnei kua pā kau mai nei ki a tātau nō reira, kia mataara, kia manawanui tātau me ngā manaakitanga o te wā.

Nāku iti, nā

Che Wilson – Whanganui me Te Kāhui Maunga nui tonu.

23-25 March 2020

TANGIHANGA GUIDELINES DURING COVID 19

	Preparing tūpāpaku	Holding tangihanga	Manuhiri	Memorial Service
Level 4	It's contagious so leave to undertakers or people that have full protective gear.	NO TANGIHANGA will be held and strict protocols will be in place. Your tūpāpaku may also be cremated.	NO manuhiri, so we will have to do everything online or by phone. Make it work whānau.	Work as a whānau to set a date after the pandemic.
Level 3	Work with undertakers and officials.	One day tangihanga only.	Be a good manuhiri and stay home but send your aroha in other ways and use technology to connect.	Work as a whānau to set a date after the pandemic or you could also use the unveiling to remember your loved one.
Level 2	Undertakers will guide you.	Tangihanga will be small and numbers restricted so send your aroha online or by phone.	Manuhiri are welcome but try to encourage that the numbers stay small for now.	Don't over burden yourselves with extra financial expense as you would have had people attend anyway.
Level 1	Going back to normal with some changes.	Tangihanga will be semi-normal with strict hygiene requirements in place.	Manuhiri will have hygiene and sanitation stations at waharoa and around the marae. Washing of hands will also be encouraged.	Again, don't over burden yourselves with extra financial expense as you would have had people attend anyway.

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