

Media release

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## **A Powhiri in Manukau City**

To mark the incorporation of Steel Construction New Zealand as a society under the Incorporated Societies Act 1978, Manager Clark Hyland combined a prayer of dedication with a traditional Maori powhiri. On the morning of July 11, about 50 guests assembled outside HERA House at Gladding Place to await the karanga, the ceremonial call of welcome performed only by the women.

The start of the karanga indicated to the manuhiri (visitors) that they were free to approach their hosts across the space directly in front of HERA House (symbolic of the marae atea, the sacred meeting house). It's a spine tingling chant not unlike a lament, and the depth of its sadness is said to represent the bottomless source of ancestral tears. The karanga acknowledges the ancestral spirits of the visitors.

The women acknowledged who their visitors were and why they had come. They also invited them to pause and shed tears for those who have passed on. For the engineers of HERA house, a mixture of German, Hungarian, Iraqi, Chinese, English and New Zealand nationalities, it was a moving moment.

Inside HERA House, the tangata whenua (people of the land) were represented by Toi Katipa, of Tainui and an employee of Manukau Welders. Concluding his eloquent oration, Toi bid the manuhiri thrice welcome with the words: "Haere mai! Haere mai! Haere mai!"

In response, Joe Conrad, of Ngapuhi and an employee of Steel & Tube Distribution, spoke warmly of the occasion, at times jesting with his hosts before asking, "Has anyone got a song for me?" Toi led on guitar while Bob Harris, also of Manukau Welders, was joined by the two women from the Te Puea Marae, Mrs Nuiia Taratu and Mrs Taitai Paul, for the singing of the waiata, which elevates the mana of the speaker. It was time for the mihi and whaikorero, and talk turned to the issues of the day and the reason for the gathering.



***A song elevates the mana of the speaker.***



***The current HERA Director, Dr Wolfgang Scholz (left), congratulated SCNZ on its incorporation, the story of which was related in a supporting speech by his predecessor, Dr John Meikle(right). Seated behind them is Manukau Welders Director, Toko Tahare,***

Pastor Grahame Craggs offered a prayer of dedication, more usually reserved for buildings but in this case applied to the work that SCNZ does in the steel construction sector.

After exchanges of the traditional hongī embrace, it was time for the hakari or feast. Despite the language gaps, the enduring emotion of the powhiri was a profound sense of goodwill.

The word powhiri embraces two concepts: po can be translated as a venture into the unknown or a new experience, while whiri is derived from the term whiriwhiri, meaning the act or experience of exchanging information and knowledge.

Clark Hyland: “That’s not a bad description of what we do at Steel Construction New Zealand and HERA. Our research is a venture into the unknown, and the knowledge we obtain we freely exchange. The day represents the coming of age of SCNZ on its incorporation. It has been welcomed into the community as a new entity and its purpose has been dedicated to God.”

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