

# The History of Mount Cook Pukeahu

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Mount Cook/Pukeahu and Buckle Street have always played an important part in the history of New Zealand / Aotearoa.

The area around Mount Cook/Pukeahu has played an important part in the history of New Zealand / Aotearoa.

## Importance for Māori

Māori lived in this area long before European settlers arrived. The hill was a special place for Māori living around Te Whanganui a Tara/Wellington Harbour.

This area is known as Pukeahu – meaning a sacred hill. An ahu is a sacred mound used for ceremonies. It was used as a pā (fortified village) by Te Ati Awa – the tribe from Taranaki who settled in Te Whanganui a Tara. The slopes leading down to the harbour were gardens from the earliest times.

## European Settlers

When European settlers arrived in 1840, they saw that Mount Cook/Pukeahu was a good place for defence so they built their army, police barracks and prisons along Buckle Street. Prisoners made bricks from Mount Cook/Pukeahu clay soil which they marked with the shape of an arrow and used to make buildings and walls on the hill. The European settlers called Pukeahu Mount Cook after Captain James Cook.

## A National War Memorial

When the Government decided to build the National War Memorial after the First World War, Mount Cook/Pukeahu was chosen as the best spot because it had been a place for defence and because a tall memorial tower built here would be seen from all around.

The Carillon tower was the first of the three parts of the National War Memorial to be built. A [carillon](#) [3] is a musical instrument usually placed inside a bell tower.

The Memorial Park Carillon has 74 huge bells which weigh a total of 70.5 tonnes. It is the third-largest Carillon in the world and is 51 metres in height.

The Carillon opened more than 80 years ago in 1932. Back then it could be seen from any part of the city and by ships entering the harbour. Skyscrapers now block that view from people in the inner city of Wellington.

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## Education

Mount Cook/Pukeahu is also an important place for education. Mount Cook School was built in 1875. Wellington High School and Massey University College of Creative Arts have also been placed here.

## Buckle Street

Many Wellington streets are named after directors of the New Zealand Company which was formed in 1823. John William Buckle was one of those directors.

Over the years Buckle Street has turned from a track into a wide road that is now part of State Highway One. [State Highway](#) [4] 1 (SH 1) is the longest and most significant road in the New Zealand roading network, running the length of both our main islands. It is also part of the main route through Wellington for people travelling to and from the airport.

Every year Buckle Street has to be closed for memorial services at the National War Memorial. Once the new road is built through the tunnel underneath the park, it will be called the Memorial Park Underpass and will not need to be closed during services.

## Importance for Māori

The hill, Mount Cook/Pukeahu has always been a special place for Māori living around Te Whanganui a Tara/Wellington Harbour.

- pukeahu - means a sacred hill
- puke - means hill
- ahu - means a sacred mound used for ceremonies.

Pukeahu was used as a pā (fortified village) by Te Ati Awa, a tribe from Taranaki who settled in Te Whanganui a Tara. The slopes leading down to the harbour were gardens from the earliest times.

## European Settlers

When European settlers arrived in 1840, they saw that Mount Cook/Pukeahu was a good place for defence so they built their army, police barracks and prisons there.

- Prisoners made bricks from Mount Cook/Pukeahu clay soil.
- The bricks were marked with an arrow and used to make buildings and walls on the hill
- The European settlers called Pukeahu Mount Cook after Captain James Cook.

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## A National War Memorial

After the First World War the Government decided to build the National War Memorial on Mount Cook/Pukeahu in Wellington. The place was chosen because;

- it had been a place for defence
- a memorial tower would be seen from all around.

The National War Memorial tower includes a [carillon](#) [3]. A carillon is a very big musical instrument made up of huge bells.

- The Memorial Park Carillon has 74 huge bells which weigh a total of 70.5 tonnes
- It is the third-largest Carillon in the world and is 51 metres in height.

The National War Memorial Carillon opened in 1932.

- In 1932 it could be seen from any part of the city and by ships entering the harbour
- Skyscrapers now block the view from the inner city of Wellington.

## Education

Mount Cook/Pukeahu is also an important place for education;

- Mount Cook School was built there in 1875
- Wellington High School and Massey University College of Creative Arts are also there.

## Buckle Street

Many Wellington streets are named after the directors of the New Zealand Company, formed in 1823. John William Buckle was one of those directors.

- Over the years Buckle Street has turned from a track into a wide road that is now part of State Highway One
- State Highway One (SH1) is the longest road in New Zealand that goes right through the North and South Islands.
- Buckle Street is part of SH1 that takes vehicles through Wellington to the airport.

Every year the Buckle Street part of SH1 has to be closed for memorial services at the National War Memorial.

- The new road will be built in a tunnel underneath the park

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- It will be called the Memorial Park Underpass
- It will not need to be closed during services.

Māori keywords:

<a href="#">Pukeahu</a> [5]	National War Memorial Park
<a href="#">Te Whanganui-ā-Tara</a> [6]	Wellington
<a href="#">pā</a> [7]	fortified village
<a href="#">kōrero o mua</a> [8]	history, traditions
<a href="#">mātauranga</a> [9]	knowledge
<a href="#">ako</a> [10]	schooling, learning

Audio Māori keywords:

- [Pukeahu - National War Memorial Park](#) [11]
- [Te Whanganui-ā-Tara - Wellington](#) [12]
- [pā - fortified village](#) [13]
- [kōrero o mua - history, traditions](#) [14]
- [mātauranga - knowledge](#) [15]
- [ako - schooling, learning](#) [16]

Samoan keywords:

Malae Fa'amanatu ole Taua	National War Memorial Park
Ueligitone	Wellington
lafitaga	fortified village
tala fa'asolopito, fa'a Samoa	history, traditions
malamalama, silafia	knowledge
a'oa'oga	schooling, learning

Tongan keywords:

Mala'e Fakafonua hono Fakamanatua e Tau	National War Memorial Park
Uelingatoni	Wellington
kolotau	fortified village
hisitōlia, tukufakaholo	history, traditions
'ilo	knowledge
ako	schooling, learning

Cook Islands Maori keywords:

	National War Memorial Park
Vereniteni	Wellington
'oire	fortified village
kōrero	history, traditions
kite	knowledge
apii	schooling, learning

Niuean keywords:

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Male/Kaina ke Fakamanatu aki e tau Kautau	National War Memorial Park
Ueligitoni	Wellington
kolo	fortified village
maveheaga, tau aga fakamotu, agamotu	history, traditions
pulotu	knowledge
tau fakaakoaga	schooling, learning

Find out more about how Anzac Day is commemorated in your local community.

Find out more about how Anzac Day is commemorated in your local community.



[17]

An 1852 watercolour by John Pearse showing two small Māori figures heading up towards the Buckle Street army barracks. Image: Alexander Turnbull Library.



[18]

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Roadworks on the old Buckle Street in 1930. Can you see the cannon at the barracks gates? Image: Alexander Turnbull Library. Photo Evening Post Newspaper.



[19]

Archaeologists carefully excavated this gun pit at the Taranaki end of Buckle Street before the diversion road was built.

### Source URL:

<http://www.learnz.org.nz/memorialpark134/history-mt-cook-pukeahu-wellington>

### Links

[1] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/the-history-of-mount-cook-pukeahu.mp3?uuid=5d822c2620fd8>

[2] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/the-history-of-mount-cook-pukeahu-easy.mp3?uuid=5d822c2620a95>

[3] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/memorialpark134/glossary#carillon>

[4] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/memorialpark134/glossary#statehighway>

[5] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/Field%20trips/memorialpark134/pukeahu.mp3>

[6] [http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/Field%20trips/memorialpark134/te-whanganui-a-tara\\_0.mp3](http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/Field%20trips/memorialpark134/te-whanganui-a-tara_0.mp3)

[7] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/Field%20trips/memorialpark134/pa.mp3>

[8] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/Field%20trips/memorialpark134/korero-o-mua.mp3>

[9] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/Field%20trips/memorialpark134/matauranga.mp3>

[10] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/Field%20trips/memorialpark134/ako.mp3>

[11] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/pukeahu.mp3?uuid=5d822c2621125>

[12] [http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/te-whanganui-a-tara\\_0.mp3?u](http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/te-whanganui-a-tara_0.mp3?u)

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[13]

<http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/pa.mp3?uid=5d822c2621323>

[14] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/korero-o-mua.mp3?uid=5d822c262141a>

[15] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/matauranga.mp3?uid=5d822c262150e>

[16]

<http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/ako.mp3?uid=5d822c2621601>

[17] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/b-mp134-01-water-colour.jpg>

[18]

<http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/b-mp134-02-old-buckle-street.jpg>

[19] <http://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/b-mp134-03-gun-pit.jpg>