



Image: Louise Furey

## Waitetoke and other wetland cultivation complexes from the northern offshore islands of Aotearoa New Zealand

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### Centre for Archaeological Research Seminar Series 2022

Ahuahu (Great Mercury Island) is a small 16 km<sup>2</sup> island located approximately 6 km off of the Coromandel Peninsula of the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. Māori were drawn to the island from the early 14th century in part by its warmer oceanic microclimate, rich marine resources, and the relative ease with which the indigenous forest could be cleared and transformed into a productive horticultural landscape.

We have focused extensive excavations on Waitetoke, a swale formed between a steep hill slope and adjacent coastal dune system. Our ongoing research has documented the transformation of the area from a mire with surrounding indigenous forest to a raised bed taro *Colocasia esculenta* complex, and later to an intensified kūmara *Ipomoea batatas* cultivation.

We present our initial results drawn from Waitetoke, comparing these with initial results from Moturua, Bay of Islands, another offshore island in northern Aotearoa. These islands offer unique insights into the comparable ways Māori adapted tropical Polynesian island horticulture to temperate ecosystems, but also how cultivation systems changed later in the settlement sequence, including at European contact.

[Zoom link click here](#)

Passcode: 640883

#### Details

Thursday 9 June

3:30pm AEST

In person & on zoom

RSSS Auditorium 1.28

Building 146, ANU

#### Contact

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