

Staff Profile



PAUL PEETI - OWĀHANGA STATION

Ko Rangitāne me Ngāti Kahungunu ōku iwi.

My parents are Peter and Awhina Peeti (nee Spooner). I have four sisters: Kaylene Kani, Beatrice Tawhai and Rose Peeti; Alice Kerr, whāngai out, was brought up in Masterton.

I have lived and worked on Owāhanga Station for 47 years, since I was 21 years old.

I have been married to Doris (nee Lye) for 44 years. We have been together for 50 years this year. We got married in the Dannevirke Registry Office and celebrated our wedding at the Station. We met in the billiard room that Dannevirke used to have, and she kicked my arse at snooker. We were both very young.

Doris came to live at Owāhanga when her mother passed away, and Arana was approximately 16 months old. Doris was 18.

We have five children: two sons, Arana and Luke, and three daughters, Natasha, Shontelle and Kaylene. Natasha, Shontelle, Kaylene and Luke were all born and raised at Owāhanga.

We have ten mokopuna and our great-granddaughter.

Arana has three children: Tylar Rose (26 years old), Isaac (23 years old) and Paora (15 years old). Isaac has a daughter named Meila Rose Peeti, who was born on 4 January 2023.

Natasha has four children: Mikayla (24 years old), Charlotte (16 years old), Conrad (12 years old) and Braxton (2 years old).

Shontelle has three children: Peyton (13 years old), Ngahere (5 years old) and Toāhu (10 months old).

All my kids went to Pongaroa Primary. They all privately boarded and went to Dannevirke High School.

Shontelle was the only one we were able to send to Fielding Agriculture for almost three years. We had to take her out once Doris had her bad accident and was unable to work for some time because of the injury, which meant we only had the one income again.

Owāhanga Station

There was plenty of fencing to be done when I initially came out to the Station with Parekura Horomia as contract fencers. Albert Horsfall was the manager at that time. Albert had only been on the Station for about six months. Later, I went out on my own as a fencer and Albert gave me the contract to do the fencing. I was the fencer for approximately 20 years, and then the position was changed to fencer/general because I had been doing a lot of general work as well as fencing.

I was also given the job of supervising approximately six young men at a time. They would have to stay at the Station for up to six months. This was an agreement made between the Police, Ministry of Social Welfare and the Station.



Hepa Tatere was on the Aohanga Board then. When I think about this scheme, I realise, I didn't get paid for the services that I provided to these young men. I oversaw them. I taught them a lot of skills on the farm, such as fencing, how to kill mutton, shearing and crutching, docking, anything that you did on the farm. The shepherds would also get some of them to help out when they needed support.

It was a good scheme, but a lot of pressure on me. I am not sure how long we had it going, all I know is that Albert Horsfall was on board when the scheme was set up, and it was still going when Tom Fleming came on the Station, for a short time. The house the boys stayed in burnt down, and I feel that is when the scheme was stopped.

My earliest memory of working on the Station was fencing with Parekura Horomia. We had two fencing gangs, which consisted of four to six men per gang. I ran the younger team, and Parekura ran the older team.

When I first started work on the Station, there were up to six shepherds – four single shepherds, one head shepherd and Matai Broughton, who was the shepherd over the Mataikona area – two tractor drivers, a cook for the single men (shepherds) a cow man/gardener, and the manager (Albert Horsfall).

There were around eight houses that were filled with workers and families. When I first came on the Station, the farm's pastures were very lush. All the front paddocks were always kept weed free and the tracks throughout the farm were kept tidy so that you could drive your car from the front end to Matai's place easily.

Everyone was very close; yes, there was the odd quarrel, but we all still got on well. We would always have gatherings. Whether it was because the manager shouted us for the hard work done such as during docking, shearing or crutching, they were still amazing gatherings, and it always made everyone feel like they were appreciated.

There are huge differences between those days and the present.

Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle

Cyclone Hale had no effect on us. Gabrielle has had huge effects. The devastation is still ongoing. The immediate response was to get the road cleared so that we could get to the main road to contact the outside.

We (Luke, Marama and I) were doing all the fence repair work ourselves to try to get the paddocks stock proof. Eventually they (the Committee of Management) approved two teams of fencing contractors to come in, and we, (Luke, Marama and I) were setting up the fence lines for them and showing them where to go. I also

organised a digger to do all the roading, as the tracks and roads were not drivable.

To get access to some of the places, we will need to have the proper machinery, fencing material and experienced workers who know what they are doing. If this is provided, then flooding damage will be repaired within four to six weeks. A lot of the damage is mainly at the Mataikona end.

EMERGENCY/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Cyclone Gabrielle has made us aware of how isolated we can become, but now we have an emergency radio provided by Civil Defence Emergency Management in our home. It is monitored by Marama and Luke, and every house has a generator.

I would like to recommend that the Committee of Management consider also providing the following, in case of future emergencies:

- a Starlink set-up, as a back-up communication system
- training for all Staff in what needs to be done
- full gas bottles and gas cannisters on hand for all Staff as well as emergency kits/grab bags.

PĀPĀUMA MARAE

The Marae used to be the centre of the community when Emma and Dubby Power were alive. Whānau don't visit our Marae as often as they used to. I believe it is because there is too much politics going on throughout the Whānau. To be honest, I feel things changed majorly when the new dining room was put up and my family and I pulled away from the Marae and any support.

I think about how we would attract our younger generations and Whānau to visit the Marae more often. We did have ideas like doing a bike ride, but Cyclone Gabrielle squashed that idea because we need to repair the tracks first. I do think the booking fee could be a reason, but I understand it needs to be high to cover costs. Currently, the farm covers the insurance costs and major repairs as the Marae income is minimal.

In the old days we used to have schools come and stay, and I would talk to them about kaimoana. Sometimes, we would do a hangi for them. We used to have tourists visit too, and I would also talk to them. I don't see why we can't look at doing things like that again.

I feel because there isn't a proper Marae Committee that's possibly why things are not operating properly. The Marae Committee used to run everything. We were part of that Committee. No one seems to be interested in helping like they used to. We did it for aroha, we loved being with everyone. I don't think people have that in them any more; everything is about being paid.



Tourists, farm stays, advertising on the internet are good examples of ways to encourage more people back to the Marae. That's the only way things are going to pick up.

Kaitiaki

I'm not actually sure how long I've been Kaitiaki - approximately 23 years maybe. Dubby Power was still with us. Matai was already appointed for the Mataikona end.

Kaimoana numbers and sizes seem to be still the same. I feel they should have dropped the pāua size because that would help the bigger ones to mature. I see the future of our kaimoana should be fine for the next 20 years if it is still monitored and looked after, like we have been doing.

Kaitiaki are the ones who make the decisions on how much Whānau are allowed to gather and what size they can get. Whānau can tell them what they want to gather, but it is up to the Kaitiaki. I suggest all Kaitiaki should be given an amount that they can allow Whānau to gather. That way, everyone is on board.

Owāhanga Station is a working farm. Whānau or visitors might want access to go diving during busy seasons on the farm. I don't let them come on if there is stock work to be done, such as docking or during shearing season, but I can't speak for the managers.

We usually lock the gates during the Christmas period and advertise that the Station will be closed during our Christmas break. Communication is the key. Tom Fleming was good at communicating with everyone about who was coming out. This was good for all of us, and it kept the farm safe. Managing visitors can be done amicably if we all communicate.

One of my best memories is of having my friend Geoff Thomas bring his daughter, son-in-law and five girls and five men to stay at the Marae. They all came from Estonia and stayed three nights at the Marae. I took them to gather kaimoana, and we, as a Whānau,

showed them how to prepare the kaimoana and how to do a hāngi. They were so appreciative, and it is a memory that they still hold dear to them.

I have a lot of great memories - family Christmases on the beach are our children's favourite times. Also, we had my daughter's ex-mother-in-law bring her friends and their students from Germany to stay at the Marae for three days, and our eldest son and I showed them how to gather kaimoana and do a hāngi. They came a couple of times because they loved the experience.

I will say everyone who has come to Owāhanga has loved the place and the experiences.

Station Manager's and Committee of Management involvement

I've worked for three Station managers since I started work on the Station: Albert Horsfall, Tom Fleming and Scott Somerville.

I believe the Committee of Management should be more involved with Staff, have meet-and-greet types of lunches. The Committee of Management should be more hands-on in actually knowing what the Staff do on the farm. Building relationships between Staff and the Committee of Management should be set in stone.

Aspirations for Owāhanga Station and Pāpāuma Marae for the Next 47 Years

- Getting Owāhanga Station up and running how it used to be, and where we all worked on the Station because we loved being on the Station.
- Having a manager and workers who care about the Station and what needs doing to it.
- Employing people who are passionate about their mahi. By this, I mean they aren't here just for the pay package, the diving or even possibly the hunting.
- Seeing the Marae being used more often, but in saying that, the Whānau of the Marae also need to put some effort into wanting to support it.



A double manaia depicting the spirits of good and evil endeavouring to influence the progress of man in this world

