

## MOTU-Ō-PUHI ISLAND

*Motu-ō-puhi* is an island in the Waimapu estuary near Hairini, was once a Waitaha settlement in the days when Waitaha people had their pā on the cliff top at the end of the peninsula there.

The island was close to the pā site and *puhi* or young women of high rank were taken here each night to sleep, protected by kuia, until they were married off to the sons of chiefs of other hapū and iwi.

It's said that it soon became obvious that the island was not enough to keep men away and that it was too close to the pā. So the Waitaha women gathered together at half-tide and with one great heave pushed the island further away across the estuary. At low tide a channel is revealed between Motu-ō-puhi and Maungatapu, which was gouged out when the women shifted the island.