

TE NAMUNAMU

Near Pātangata pā in the Pāpāmoa hills¹ was an ancient burial site and wāhi tapu, Te Namunamu.

Waitaha would hang bodies from puriri trees in a gully to decompose (just behind the present day car park of Pāpāmoa Regional Park). The bones would then be taken to their final resting place.

When a Waitaha *puhi* or woman of high rank called Rangiwahakahokia died, she was buried in a cave at Te Namunamu. Later, a tohunga or priest, Ōhauiti Kaitangata, was also buried there, to be her *kaitiaki* in the afterlife.

They were entombed together, facing Mauao and the Tauranga Harbour.

From the late 1800s, the McNaughton family came to own and farm the land. In 2000 Barry McNaughton, a former local body politician for 15 years, gave the Tauranga and Western Bay councils first refusal on 84ha of his 118ha farm, having turned down \$4 million from developers.

The land eventually became a 108ha reserve in 2005 and is now owned by Environment Bay of Plenty. Poplar Lane quarry owners, Fulton Hogan, gifted 9ha which includes the peak of Karangaumu. Another small triangle of land adjoining the main pā, and land adjoining SH2 to the north that incorporates part of Te Rae o Pāpāmoa pā, was also added to the park.

During the 1960s, dynamite was used to quarry the area which destroyed Te Namunamu. Rhyolite rock that was mined there was used for roads in the Bay of Plenty and Waikato areas.

It's said desecration of the site and use of the rock has been the cause of many fatal road accidents. The owners of the quarry, both father and son, also died in accidents.

¹ The hills are known as Te Rae o Pāpāmoa but was originally named Te Kūrei o Pāpāmoa by Hei, when the Arawa waka first arrived in Tauranga.