

TE WAI Ū O WAITAHA

Te Wai-ū-o-Waitaha (The breast milk of Waitaha); is the name of a *puna* near Karangaumu in the Pāpāmoa hills.

A *puna* was located at the top of a gully near *Te Pītaratara o Karika* (the cervix of Karika).¹ The *puna* was used for drinking and another at the bottom of the gully was used for washing and bathing.

Te Wai-ū-o-Waitaha was created by diverting and joining the waters of the two springs to form a creek and it was here that Waitaha birthed children of high rank.

Te Wai-ū-o-Waitaha and another *puna*, *Te Toki o Tamaheke*, also marked an escape route for Waitaha people if any pā located in Te Uku o Takakōpiri (the Pāpāmoa hills) was attacked. It would lead people through Ōtawa, between the springs and down to canoes which could navigate valley streams to safer ground.

¹ Takakōpiri buried the cervix of Karika and the jawbones of her husband, Atua Matua, at Hikutawatawa to claim the land for Waitaha. Atua Matua and Karika were the parents of Hei.