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Two more years with Te Rā: Loan of historic Māori sail extended until 2026

Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum is pleased to announce a two-year extension of the loan of the historic Māori sail, Te Rā.

Originally scheduled to return to the British Museum in June 2024, the overwhelming public interest and engagement with the sail has led to a generous loan extension. Te Rā, the only known customary Māori sail in existence, will now be on display in the exhibition *Te Rā: Navigating Home* at Auckland Museum until August 2025, and will remain in Aotearoa until June 2026.

David Reeves, Tumu Whakarae Chief Executive of Auckland Museum, expressed his gratitude saying, "We are deeply moved by the public's resonant response to Te Rā and are thrilled that the British Museum has agreed to extend the loan. This allows us even more time to celebrate and share this rare and significant taonga."

"The mana of Te Rā is undeniable, and over the last six months we have seen the depth of connection our community has felt with the sail. Through wananga held around Te Rā, we've also been able to see how invaluable in-person and detailed observation is for those wish to study, learn from and connect with this taonga," says Reeves.

Te Rā has been in Aotearoa since July 2023 and was first exhibited at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū before coming to Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum in November last year. This is the first time this taonga has returned to Aotearoa since it left these shores more than 200 years ago.

At nearly four and a half metres long and featuring a complex three-way pattern woven from harakeke, Te Rā is a testament to the skill of Māori weaving and serves as a reminder of the rich history of Māori sailing and navigation.

Based on study of Te Rā, the sail is known to have been made in the late-18th century, but it is not known where in Aotearoa Te Rā was made, or by whom. Marks and signs of wear on the sail show that Te Rā was used before it was collected in Aotearoa and taken to Britain.

The decision to extend the loan comes as a direct response to the community's engagement with the sail, including long-term study by a research group led by Rānui Ngārimu ONZM, Dr Catherine Smith, and Dr Donna Campbell; and Te Rā Ringa Raupā, a group of master weavers mentored by weaver, installation artist, and researcher Dr Maureen Lander.

Since November 2023, the exhibition of Te Rā at Auckland Museum has been accompanied by the display of two additional sails created by Te Rā Ringa Raupā, in an exhibition called *Karanga o Te Rā*. These sails, Hine Mārama and Māhere Tū ki te Rangī, stand as contemporary responses to the weaving techniques and cultural significance of Te Rā. *Karanga o Te Rā* is on until 30 July 2024 and includes the sail Hine Mārama. Māhere Tū ki te Rangī will be on display until 26 May 2024 in the Museum's Te Marae Ātea Māori Court.

Dr Kahutoi Te Kanawa, Curator Pou Ārahi, Māori at Auckland Museum, highlighted the significance of the loan extension: "Having Te Rā in Aotearoa for an extended period is a monumental opportunity for us to reconnect with and delve deeper into the wisdom of our tūpuna. The time we can spend with Te Rā is a gift to future generations who will continue to learn from and be inspired by this taonga."

Auckland Museum is exploring opportunities for Te Rā to be exhibited elsewhere in Aotearoa following the display in Tāmaki Makaurau.

The exhibition and extended loan of Te Rā represent a significant collaboration between the British Museum, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, and Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum.

For image or interview request contact:

Samantha McKegg, Publicist
Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum
smckegg@aucklandmuseum.com | +64 21 458 353

[IMAGES AVAILABLE HERE](#)

TE RĀ: NAVIGATING HOME
UNTIL Sunday 17 August 2025
Te Marae Ātea Māori Court
FREE with Museum Entry

TE KARANGA O TE RĀ
UNTIL Tuesday 30 July 2024
Te Taunga Community Hub
FREE with Museum Entry

[ABOUT AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM](#)

Auckland War Memorial Museum is one of New Zealand's first museums. The Museum tells the story of New Zealand, its place in the Pacific and its people. The Museum is a war memorial for the province of Auckland and holds one of New Zealand's top three heritage libraries.

It has pre-eminent Māori and Pacific collections, significant natural history resources and major social and military history collections, as well as decorative arts and pictorial collections.