

## Te Kakano – the seed of Whangarei's Hundertwasser art centre – officially opened

8:00 AM Saturday Oct 22, 2016

Put contemporary Maori art on the global stage; house the largest Hundertwasser art collection outside Europe; and make the Hatea Loop a true tourist destination.

The ambitious promises kept on coming at the opening of Te Kakano yesterday – the "seed" building that acts as a precursor to Whangarei's Hundertwasser Art Centre.

About 300 people, including politicians, philanthropists Sir Ron Carter and Sir Michael Hill and national media, gathered at the Town Basin for the official ribbon cutting.

The event wrapped up the five-month construction of the koru-shaped lookout and seating area, in Hundertwasser's trademark wonky brick-and-tile style.

Grant Faber, who spoke on behalf of Whangarei Art Museum Trust, described the opening as part of a journey of "vision, courage and commitment".

He urged people to get behind the "main event" – the HAC – because the team still needed to raise another \$3.26 million by June next year for the project to proceed.

"Please ensure we are back here in 2020, just a few yards behind us [opening the HAC]," Mr Faber said.

Project action team leader Andrew Garratt said Te Kakano was an opportunity for local tradespeople to practise the skills required on the main event, with a design aesthetic that shuns the straight lines beloved by most tradies.

Mr Garratt mentioned how much time one tiler had taken perfecting the unconventional style.

"I can only imagine what will happen next time he works on a GJ Gardner."

The team of 75 volunteers had raised \$13m in 15 months, Mr Garratt said.

He said the HAC would complement projects such as the Hihiaua Art Centre and Camera Obscura sculpture, making the Hatea Loop a day-long visitor experience.

He also thanked Dr Shane Reti for his support, saying the Whangarei MP had lobbied central Government on behalf of the project group.

Dr Reti's office in Wellington was bedecked with Hundertwasser flags, and he even sang a rendition of Maori folk song He Kakano Ahau – complete with electric guitar – before cutting the ribbon.



Hundertwasser project team leader Andrew Garratt said it had taken a lot of work for tradepeople to master the unconventional Hundertwasser style.

## **The Seed song:**

Doctor, MP, and now rock star.

When Whangarei's National MP Dr Shane Reti ducked down behind the stage after his speech at the opening of Te Kakano yesterday afternoon, people were expecting him to pop up with an acoustic guitar to lead a waiata.

But no.

"Myles, the sound please," said the MP, before launching into what can only be described as a te reo rock anthem, complete with distorted electric guitar.

Mr Reti said the song was a well known Maori folk song composed by Hohepa Tamehana.

"I first heard it a few years ago while doing the award winning Waipoua forest "Footprints" trek with local Maori. At that time the kaumatua sung this song to Tane Mahuta, the greatest living Kauri tree," Mr Reti said.

It earned him slightly baffled, but impressed applause from onlookers.

"Clearly, a man of many talents," the MC observed.

– [Northern Advocate](#)

**Not-your-average-village-idiot ( )** | 09:54AM Tuesday, 25 Oct 2016

I don't like it, but we have got it and I still say it is butt ugly.

**YES! Whangarei ( )** | 09:54AM Tuesday, 25 Oct 2016

Big thanks to everyone who came along today, to both the dawn karakia and the afternoon opening celebration – so great to see so many happy, positive people revelling in this achievement. We can't wait to get on to the next phase; finishing our fundraising and starting to build the Hundertwasser Art Centre with Wairau Maori Art Gallery. If you would like to lend support to the project, please visit [yeswhangarei.co.nz](http://yeswhangarei.co.nz)

**Neil (New Zealand)** | 11:38AM Thursday, 27 Oct 2016

It's a shocker. Each time I look at it, it gets worse!

Why couldn't it be built on private land, with private funds and, preferably, underground?