

# Media Release

## Victoria Square tree planting ceremony

Release Date: 31 July 2012

Today students from Discovery 1 School and Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti will assist Prime Minister John Key at a tree planting ceremony at Victoria Square.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Kaiwhakahaere Mark Solomon says the ceremony will be symbolic for the students, who represent the generation that will inherit the decisions being made today and who will continue the work to rebuild Christchurch.

“In time these trees will grow tall and strong - and you will one day bring your children here, tell them how you helped the Prime Minister of New Zealand plant this tree. And share the kōrero of how we rebuilt our city. Mo tatau, a mo ka uri a muri ake nei – For us and our children after us.”

“The Pōkākā and Totara, that we are planting here today are important to Ngāi Tahu identity. They are recorded in tribal whakapapa and are the descendants of Tane Mahuta, and so too they are our ancestors. This whakapapa forms the basis of our relationship with the natural world and our custom of mahinga kai - the interdependence between people and natural resources.

Tōtara wāhi rua, he kai nā te ahi

A totara divided is food for the fire

This whakataukī is appropriate today because the close grained totara represents people. When the people are of two minds, one part goes off to fight and lacking strength of unity - will succumb. The other part also diminished will also fall. In short – we must work together to succeed.”

The planting ceremony will take place at Victoria Square, in the past known as Market Square, where the early settlers of Christchurch relied on Ngāi Tahu farmers to trade their provisions brought in from outlying settlements in the 1840s and 1850s.