

Matariki marks the start of the Māori New Year in which the Pleiades constellation is visible from Aotearoa. It is a time of remembrance and celebration. In contemporary times, Matariki is used to highlight and acknowledge the importance of Māori culture and its significance in our unique identity as New Zealanders.

In conjunction with local hapū in the Wellsford area we have been approached to hold a Matariki celebration on Saturday 30th June at Rodney College. A kapahaka festival in which over 20 local schools have been invited to perform will take place. A mentoring course in which Rodney College students will help to organise the event will also be utilised in a bid to ensure the practice of tuakana- teina is fulfilled.

There will also be a range of other activities that highlight kaupapa Māori. A mau rākau group will be performing and demonstrating the art of hand to hand combat and its application in the 21st century. Māori language pods will be scattered throughout the location so that attendees can access help with te reo Māori that applies to their needs, as we know that a one size fits all doesn't work.

A Toi Māori or Art competition that is centred on turangawaewae is scheduled with 3 categories: tamariki nohinohi 0-4 tamariki 5-10 rangatahi 11-18 ruha 19+ and a local school will be exhibiting their whakairo and kowhaiwhai art work.

A desire to increase the hauora of whānau will be addressed in the school gymnasium where the Cameron Basketball Academy will run different drills and Te Hā Oranga, the Ngāti Whātua Health Service will do health checks and help people make realistic goals towards better health. An inter-high school basketball competition will cap off the day there.

Stalls will be available to local groups who want to promote educational and health organisations. Kai will also be available to sell by community groups who are raising funds.

So that the perception that Matariki is not a stand-alone, single event we propose that there are a range of activities that continue after the concert has finished. Local history talks presented by different key speakers will take place at the library. Matariki pūrākau narratives at the Wellsford library will also occur.

A Matariki ngahau held at the Wellsford Community Hall in which Māori singers take centre stage at an alcohol and drug free event that is whānau appropriate.

The last event is a planting day at Atiu Creek. Local schools have been invited to participate in this kaupapa.

Ngā mihi o te wā ki a koutou,

Reno Skipper (Principal TKKM o Ngāringaomatariki and co-organiser of Wellsford Matariki)