
JIM MORIARTY



Actor, Director, Psychiatric Nurse

Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Koata
& Ngāti Kahungunu

MY FAVOURITE PLACE

His favourite place in Porirua is the urupā in Takapūwāhia. It has beautiful views and also “a lot of space for both the living and the dead”.

WHO AM I AND WHAT IS MY CONNECTION TO PORIRUA

Jim was born and raised in Porirua, and traces his ancestry back to Ngāti Toa Rangatira while at the same time acknowledging his other ancestral ties. He grew up opposite Takapūwāhia, where many of his cousins and relations still remain. Jim attended high school in Wellington and later trained as a psych nurse at Porirua Hospital. He now lives in Island Bay, Wellington and sees himself as a watch for Ngāti Toa due to his location at the “southern most habitable point of te ika a māui (north island).” Jim tries to remain active and engaged as much as possible and visits Porirua often. To him Porirua is his kainga tuturu and as such, his connection with Porirua has been “profoundly life forming.” His mother's and various other whānau bones are in the urupā in Takapūwāhia so he will always remain well connected to Porirua.

WHAT I LIKE OR VALUE IN PORIRUA CITY

Jim loves the city of Porirua, particularly for its multiculturalism and thinks “it's one of the most exciting cities in the world.”

IDENTITY OF PORIRUA IN KEY WORDS

Te Rauparaha- as he was the most prominent chief in Ngāti Toa history and is the reason that Ngāti Toa are the mana whenua of Porirua to this day. He also composed the Ka Mate haka and is seen by Jim as a symbol of survival and adaptation. He believes these are important attributes for Porirua City.

HOW THE CITY INFORMS MY PERSONAL/ WHĀNAU IDENTITY

“Wherever I go as a Māori or anywhere, I whakapapa through my pepeha back to Porirua that's where I come from. I'm proud of that.” Jim and his siblings have frequently contemplated buying the family home in Porirua, as no matter where they live that will always be their kainga tuturu.

CHALLENGES FOR PORIRUA

One of the challenges Jim mentioned was the large scale alienation of Ngāti Toa land. He feels that it is extremely important that the little that remains is used in the best possible way.

Jim also spoke about the development and growth of Porirua City and was concerned that the marae and Ngāti Toa may get left behind. He highlighted the need for a two way process, that often people want to engage and learn about Māori culture and Ngāti Toa history but don't know how to approach the marae. Jim suggested that the marae needed to reach out to those willing to engage, in order to ensure that in the future the marae doesn't end up isolated from the rest of the city.

He also reminisced about fishing and swimming in the harbour during his childhood, and felt a challenge for Porirua was working to restore the harbour to its past condition.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PORIRUA

Jim spoke about the industry that was historically in Porirua such as car manufacturing however this is no longer. Yet he believes future opportunities lie in the cultural capital within Porirua. This would allow for not only the provision of meaningful jobs but it would also act to unite the community. Jim sees the history of Te Rauparaha as an iconic element of Porirua and a history that can resonate with people and "create cohesion in the community."

In terms of industry and tourism he sees this occurring in the form of a centre or space dedicated to the history of Porirua and Te Rauparaha. For Jim, the provision of an authentic cultural experience for tourists and the subsequent job opportunities it would create, would allow for the transmission of cultural skills that otherwise may have been lost such as bone carving and flax weaving.

Jim emphasises the need to embrace the culture and history in Porirua. He proposes this be taught in schools and that children learn Te Reo Māori as part of their curriculum. He thinks that the richness of the culture and history in Porirua is a real opportunity and is what makes its people unique in the world. "It's not about running away from it, it's about owning it, you know bringing it out into the world of light".

Another opportunity Jim discussed was a performing arts venue in Porirua or Porirua being the site of a national Māori Performing Arts Centre. He sees a lot of potential and opportunities in Porirua because in some ways the city "is quite young even though it is old. " There's an opportunity "to be able to look at mistakes that have been made and correct from it and do that whole future proofing thing around how you design and build the extensions of that place."

In terms of the physical form of Porirua, Jim imagines an entire restructuring where the layout of the city is in the shape of a koru allowing for easy access inside and out. This shape also reflects the pattern of life and mimics the traditional design of Māori pā.

"It would give our mokopuna something to focus on, work in the future and make them proud of who they are. You know people go to the Stratford Upon Avon to see Shakespeare's stuff, you know and all that, and they go to The Globe. We've got it here, Porirua, let's create it and celebrate it so it's there for future generations to uphold and benefit from. Simple. Makes business sense, makes cultural sense, it makes creative sense."

HOW TO MAKE THESE OPPORTUNITIES HAPPEN

Jim believes that improved partnerships and engagements with Ngāti Toa, local council, government and other philanthropic providers need to be had to make these opportunities a reality. It is also crucial that any developments are desired by the community.

WHAT SHOULD COMPETITION ENTRANTS KEEP IN MIND?

He once again emphasises the need to take care of the harbour.

WHY I AM EXCITED TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT

“Projects like this are awesome, because you’re right. It is my children, my moko and those who choose to live in Porirua who will be affected by the decisions that have been made and will continue to be made, so give them some power in the conversation I reckon. Sooner the better!”