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*Valuing our place:*  
*a critical exploration of frameworks for assessing the*  
*significance of New Zealand's historic heritage*

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Management at Massey University,  
Auckland, New Zealand.

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2006

## *Abstract*

This thesis argues that considerations of value and significance are fundamental to sustainable heritage management practice. It explores critical issues relating to the valorisation of historic heritage in New Zealand and considers whether existing frameworks for evaluation and assessment are effective and appropriate.

The rationale for the research proposes that achievable and effective outcomes for historic heritage only occur in the context of rigorous evaluation and assessment frameworks. Theoretical and pragmatic frames of reference drive key lines of reasoning. The two frames of reference comprise: firstly, theoretical principles relating to the nature and qualities of heritage value and secondly, operational strategies relating to the process of assessment.

The thesis integrates current policy and practice within existing epistemology with primary research data using a mixed methodology. A review of international policy and practice contrasts the various approaches used in Australia, Canada, England and the United States of America, and identifies effective system characteristics. Existing understandings and practice within New Zealand are considered and analogies made between particular elements of the primary research drawn from surveys of professional and non-professional opinion of the heritage assessment process. The New Zealand findings are then set against the review of international evidence and the literature to identify significant strengths and shortcomings.

It is argued that New Zealand currently lacks suitable frameworks within which appropriate concepts of value and effective strategies for significance assessment are meaningfully integrated. Expressions of the nature and qualities of historic heritage must be reformulated in ways that afford greater recognition to principles of social value and the holistic, multivalent properties of the resource. Moreover, identified deficiencies in matters of community engagement, consistency, resourcing, local authority process and the recognition of indigenous rights, undermine the effectiveness of operational strategies for assessment and require attention.

## *Acknowledgements*

This has been a singular learning experience; one whose significance and consequences have featured prominently in my life for the last five years. Here, I acknowledge the people who have supported me throughout my journey, both professionally and personally. Thanks first of all to my supervisors John Monin and Harry Allen for their patient encouragement and to colleagues Ralph Bathurst, Aidan Challis, Keith Dewar, Ian Lawlor, Hilary Lewis and Virginia Warriner. I thank my friends and family who are always there for me, unfailingly enthusiastic and understanding. Finally, I acknowledge my partner, Maureen, who has shared this journey with me, travelling close by my side through its rough and smooth passages with gentle fortitude. I dedicate this work to you.

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COVER LETTER  
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## *Glossary*

### *Valuing our place - Manaakitia to tatau kainga*

<i>Hapu</i>	Sub tribal community.
<i>Iwi</i>	Tribal community.
<i>Kaitiaki</i>	Iwi, <i>hapu</i> or <i>whanau</i> group with the responsibilities of <i>kaitiakitanga</i> .
<i>Kaitiakitanga</i>	Stewardship of resources.
<i>Marae</i>	Traditional tribal cultural centres.
<i>Mauri</i>	The life essence, life force or power which exists in all things.
<i>Pa</i>	Former fortified villages.
<i>Pakeha</i>	A non-Maori New Zealander generally of European descent.
<i>Rangatiratanga</i>	Sovereignty; self determination.
<i>Tangata whenua</i>	Local community.
<i>Taonga</i>	Treasure; valued resources.
<i>Tikanga</i>	Customary values and practices.
<i>Wahi tapu</i>	A place sacred to Maori in the traditional, spiritual, religious, ritual or mythological sense.
<i>Wahi tapu area</i>	An area of land that contains one or more <i>wahi tapu</i> .
<i>Whakapapa</i>	Personal or tribal genealogy.
<i>Whanau</i>	Extended family group.