

# News

## Trip to capital continues healing for Tuhoe kids

**Karla Akuhata**  
Maori affairs reporter

WHEN Kathleen Taipeti woke with several guns pointed at her in her Ruatoki home, her immediate thoughts were for her son, who had been asleep in the lounge by himself.

That was in 2007, when her son was eight. He is now 16 and the scars of the Tuhoe Raids are still firmly etched deeply across both he and his mother.

Ms Taipeti and her children were among three families from Ruatoki targeted on the morning of the October 15 Tuhoe raids.

She said it was her "worst nightmare" and something she would never forget.

"It would have been about 5am when they banged the door down. My boy was asleep in the lounge by himself and me and my baby were asleep in the room ... there were guns at every door in the house and even at the windows."

But now, Ms Taipeti believes she is ready to move on and she wants to start rebuilding the trust between her family and the police.

That is the reason that she and her children joined about 65 others on a trip to Wellington last week.

The trip had been suggested by police commissioner Mike Bush last year when he visited the homes of families caught up in the raids to apologise.

Last week the children and several adults, including Ms Taipeti, spent three days in Wellington as guests of the police. They stayed at Te Horouta Marae but spent most of the time, including meals, at the police college.

The trip's purpose was to start rebuilding the relationship between



**ALL ABOARD:** Tuhoe youngsters KellyAnne Iopata (front) and Karera Kiwi board a bus for Wellington, where they met and enjoyed the company of New Zealand police.

Photo supplied

the police and those involved in the raids.

Ms Taipeti said the healing that started with the apology from Mr Bush was cemented during the three-day trip, which included a visit to Parliament and an Amazing Race game set up across Wellington by the police.

But she said the highlight of the trip was the day the police got the kids in a patrol car and performed wheelies and skids in a controlled environment.

"I am so grateful to Mike Bush, that it was him who first suggested the trip.

"Even though he is a cop he has a

Maori wairua (spirit) about him and his korero (words) were so sincere, I knew it came from his heart.

"I really enjoyed my time down there; it was a good way to start healing and trusting the cops again.

"They (the kids) have seen the negative things cops can do but going down there, that was a good idea, so that the kids could see the other side, too.

"Now, all of the kids are thinking hard about going to the police college and a couple of the boys, who have already signed up for the army, are thinking about becoming cops instead."