

94

Iwi artwork on the eastern Homer Tunnel



The new avalanche and rockfall shelter entrance featuring unique artwork depicting the special cultural connection local iwi have with Milford Sound Piopiotahi.

Kāi Tahu traditions tell us Te Rua o te Moko and Piopiotahi (Fiordland and Milford Sound) were created by Tū-te-Rakiwhanoa and his supporters after the waka (canoe) of Aoraki capsized in the great ocean of Kiwa.

Their task was to make the upturned waka into a beautiful landscape to be inhabited by the many offspring of the atua (demigods) including humans. Creating Fiordland was a massive undertaking.

The Homer tunnel area was named after Te-Ruru a young atua who assisted Tū-te-Rakiwhanoa to shape Fiordland. Although Te-Ruru was willing and energetic, he lacked the power, knowledge, and ability of Tū-te-Rakiwhanoa. When Te-Ruru went up the Cleddau Valley he came across a great wall of rock. In his inexperience he tackled the base first, creating a square face of rock.

He then went to the inland side where he made the same mistake. Thoroughly discouraged, he threw down his toki (adze) in disgust and sat down on a nearby mountain to consider what had just happened.

This mountain was named Te Whakaaro-o-Ruru (Mt Talbot) and Homer Saddle was named after Te Kōhaka-o-Te-Ruru in memory of his unsuccessful attempt. The eastern entrance to the Homer tunnel is Te Toki-a-Ruru (the adze of Te-Ruru).



The eastern entrance to the Homer Tunnel depicts:

- Te-Ruru on the left, holding his toki and looking frustrated
- Tū-te-Rakiwhanoa on the right is looking down towards where he created his final masterpiece Piopiotahi
- the centrepiece can be viewed in two ways:
 1. Two atua in profile greeting each other (with a hongi).
 2. One atua face-on welcoming you through the tunnel to experience the wonders beyond.