

Rāhui Pōkeka is the historical name for our town.

Our twins (now 23 years old) when they were 10 years old started trying to get the historical town's name restored with Council as a school project. The Waikato Times took it up as high-interest front page news as righting a wrong. (*'Council dismissed their submission in one sentence: 'At this stage Council is not looking to rename Huntly'.*)

(*'Youth Engagement Plan: WDC (YEP:WDC): The purpose of the plan is to focus on how Council can give youth a voice in local decision-making structures.' Here is an opportunity for Council to hear some of Huntly's young people whom are passionate on many levels to have their towns historical name restored. YEP:WDC:... young people will start taking an interest in local government matters if they feel that their opinions on relevant issues matter. The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. They are an important interest group in our community and it is important that they feel that they are heard as well as listened to. They are often the eyes and ears of our community and have a lot to contribute to its development. The key points to this plan: • Giving young people a voice in local decision-making. • Create confidence in young people to be able to have a voice.'*)

We can make it about Policies, but it is a Treaty of Waitangi right to have our town's name restored. The Prime Minister, Governor General and M.P's responded to our letters using our towns rightful name of Rāhui Pōkeka – it is time and at the right 'stage' for Waikato and its District Council to also recognise its historical name. (*Other movement to use of original name: Executive GM at Genesis recently wrote - 'We here at Genesis are excited for our collective future in Rāhui Pōkeka (Huntly)...', and our Library and Medical Centre, etc, already bear the towns historical name.'*)

*It is widely believed a postal service immigrant renamed Rāhui Pōkeka after a town in Scotland using an acquired 'Huntly, Scotland' postal stamp from his previous position in Scotland. It is a colonial 'legacy' that needs to be 'put right' - or at the very least 'officially' recognising the use of both names - Rāhui Pōkeka (Huntly). Belonging to Huntly we know the name Huntly has worn out it's worth being synonymous with negative connotations.*

*We have loved living in this town for over 40 years but when asked where we live we feel embarrassed to say we live in Huntly as it has such a reputation as a despised coal mining town with so much dysfunction. Yet there are young people in our town, like our own, that have a unique understanding of inequity and inequality who are keen to make a difference -believing in the importance of starting with giving our town and people its historical name back.*

Our youth have a need to be prideful of our town and its rich pre-European history - as the mines are now defunct it is a unique opportunity to reinvest in a positive future by giving our town its name back. All it needs is someone from this panel to take this up and run with it as a real opportunity for this Council to start to make a difference, listen and engage with its young people to restore our heritage and enable change for our town. (*Our twins will do the donkey work if you wish to involve them.*)

Rāhui Pōkeka is a name we can be proud of to live in.