

Appendix A: Letters of Support from primary consultation

1. Original letter from NZCA (version provided is the letter to the Sew Hoy family)
2. Sew Hoy family
3. Ng / Wu family
4. Poon Fah Association 新西蘭番花會館
5. Tung Jung Association 新西蘭東增會館
6. Te Roroa Whatu Ora and Mana Whenua Trust Boards, through General Manager Snow Tane
7. Mātihetihe marae committee
8. Te Hua o te Kwariki Trust through John Klaricich



NEW ZEALAND CHINESE ASSOCIATION INC
紐西蘭華聯總會

Debbie Sew Hoy
Sew Hoy Family representative



2 October 2024

Dear Debbie,

Re. Heritage New Zealand Listing for the SS Ventnor Wreck Site

The New Zealand Chinese Association (NZCA) has been asked by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga to prepare a nomination to add the wreck of the *SS Ventnor* to the New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangī Kōrero. A heritage listing would mean the Government officially recognises the historical and cultural significance of the *SS Ventnor* and places it amongst the most important heritage sites of Aotearoa / New Zealand.

We are approaching you as key descendant stakeholders to seek a letter of support for this nomination. More information on heritage listings is attached. We are approaching the descendant groups including the Ng / Wu family, the Tung Jung Association and the Poon Fah Association. We are also approaching mana whenua groups that share the history in this story, such as Te Roroa Group, Te Hua o Te Kōwhiri Trust and Mātihetihe marae.

You can provide your feedback by email to contact@nzchinese.org.nz or we can arrange a video call to discuss. We would appreciate any feedback by the end of November 2024.

As well as descendants we will also be seeking feedback from our broader network of Ventnor supporters. We are preparing an email survey which will enable us to collect feedback on specific topics. This will be part of our second stage of gathering feedback. We would be very grateful if you could also circulate this survey to your networks once it is ready for release.

Regards,

The SS Ventnor sub-committee of the New Zealand Chinese Association

What is the New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangī Kōrero?

The New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangī Kōrero is the national record of New Zealand's significant heritage places. It recognises the heritage significance of a place, assessed against national criteria and standards by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

Listed places are categorised based on their level of significance - Category 1 for places of special or outstanding heritage value, and Category 2 for places of historical or cultural heritage value.

What are the benefits of an New Zealand Heritage Listing?

Statutory Recognition: Places listed on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero receive statutory recognition of their heritage values, which helps in preserving the historical and cultural significance of these sites.

Historical and Cultural Significance: Heritage listings help in recognising and celebrating the cultural and historical narratives of a place, including significant events and figures in New Zealand's history. A heritage listing will enhance recognition of the stories surrounding the *SS Ventnor*, including practice of exhuming and shipping Chinese remains en masse from New Zealand to China, the tragic maritime disaster that resulted in the loss of 13 lives, the role of tangata whenua in respectfully caring for remains that washed ashore, and the modern-day relationship between Māori and Chinese.

Educational Opportunities: Heritage sites often serve as educational platforms, providing insights into the cultural, and historic aspects of the region and the communities involved. A heritage listing will give this history national importance, making it easier for our communities to initiate educational projects. It will also enhance the status of the memorial sites and any future museum displays in the Hokianga district and elsewhere.

Funding Support: Listed status supports applications for funding, including for New Zealand Lotteries Board grants. Funding could be used to develop educational resources and enable cultural events.

Enables Future Protections: The wreck is already protected as an archaeological site. A listing may support in any future moves to ban bottom trawling around the wreck site.

Why Does the SS Ventnor Wreck Site Deserve a Place on the List?

By listing the SS Ventnor on the Heritage New Zealand register, its historical, archaeological, cultural, and memorial values would receive formal recognition, ensuring this significant site is preserved for future generations.

Historical Significance:

The SS Ventnor sinking in 1902 was a tragic maritime disaster that resulted in the loss of 13 lives. It highlights the historical ties and migration between China and New Zealand during the gold rush era. The incident marked the end of the practice of exhuming and shipping Chinese remains en masse from New Zealand to China.

Archaeological Value:

The wreck site is considered an archaeological time capsule, representing a specific moment in history when the event occurred, with the cargo and ship's structure likely preserved in good condition due to its depth and lack of disturbance for over a century. As a post-1900 wreck, the SS Ventnor was designated as an archaeological site by Heritage New Zealand, the only one of its kind, to protect it from intentional disturbance and the removal of artifacts.

Cultural and Memorial Significance:

The wreck has become a maritime graveyard and memorial for the Chinese miners whose remains were lost, as well as those who perished in the sinking. It holds immense cultural significance for Chinese communities in New Zealand, with monuments and commemorations erected to honour the ancestors and recognise the role of local Māori iwi in respectfully caring for remains that washed ashore.

Are similar places already on the New Zealand Heritage List?

There are many Chinese-themed heritage sites, including:

- Ng King Brothers Chinese Market Garden Settlement (listed in 2024)
- Lawrence Chinese Camp
- Lawrence Chinese Graves Historic Area, Lawrence Cemetery
- Arrowtown Chinese Settlement
- Sites and structures in Otago and West Coast related to the gold rush

The SS Ventnor site is unique amongst these sites. There is an emotional resonance that comes with the symbolism of the site and the confluence of Māori and Chinese cultures.

New Zealand Chinese Association
Attn: SS Ventnor Sub-Committee
contact@nzchinese.org.nz

4 November 2024

Dear Committee Members,

Re: Support for Heritage New Zealand Listing of the SS Ventnor Wreck Site

My name is Debbie Sew Hoy. I am the great-great-granddaughter of Choie Sew Hoy. I am writing on behalf of the descendants of Choie Sew Hoy.

Our family has strong ancestral ties to the historical and cultural narrative represented by the SS Ventnor wreck site. We support the nomination for this site to be added to the New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangī Kōrero, believing its preservation is vital for future generations and cultural memory.

Choie Sew Hoy was the first president of Cheong Shing Tong, who organised the ill-fated return of the Chinese goldminer's remains on the SS Ventnor to China in 1902. The Cheong Shing Tong benevolent society was set up to care for elderly and poor Chinese, and to return their bodies to Canton. Unfortunately, Choie Sew Hoy died of a heart attack in 1901, and so his body was on the SS Ventnor. His remains and those of 487 gold miners were lost in the sinking in October 1902, and some of their remains were washed ashore. Not only did they suffer a second tragic "death" at sea, but there were also 13 men who drowned. Choie Sew Hoy's nephew Choie Kum Foo, who was on the boat to accompany the coffins also drowned during the event.

Searchers found only a few of the coffins washed ashore. As remains washed ashore in Northland, local iwi (Te Roroa, Ngāpuhi & Te Rarawa) accepted them and buried them in their ancestral burial grounds. Other remains were reported to have been buried in Rawene cemetery. The manaakitanga that was shown by the local iwi has provided a bond between two cultures (Māori and Chinese) who have so many shared values. Our paths crossed over 120 years ago, and we continue this relationship now and into the future.

The wreck has become a maritime graveyard and memorial. The site holds invaluable historical, archaeological, and cultural significance. A heritage listing would honour this connection, granting it national recognition, while protecting and preserving the site for educational, cultural, and historical initiatives. This will help to commemorate culture, signify unity between Māori and Chinese and marks a treasured moment in New Zealand history and brings mana to this living tapestry.

We wholeheartedly support this nomination. Please do not hesitate to reach out for any additional support we may provide.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Debbie Sew Hoy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Debbie Sew Hoy
Sew Hoy Family representative

23 Lower Watt St
Wadestown
Wellington 6012
murraykwu@gmail.com

contact@nzchinese.org.nz
New Zealand Chinese Association

11 November 2024

To the SS Ventnor Sub-Committee,

Re. Heritage New Zealand Listing for the SS Ventnor Wreck Site

Thank you for the letter dated 2 October 2024 regarding the application for a heritage listing for the wreck site of the SS Ventnor. The Ng / Wu family, descendants of Ng Jor Chun, support the NZCA's application.

I have attached the comments from family members in support of the application.

Regards,

Murray Wu

Murray Wu
Family representative

[REDACTED]

I fully support the application.

[REDACTED]

This looks good by me and having been part of this year's visit to the site, I think it deserves such preservation and recognition as part of NZ's history.

[REDACTED]

What a wonderful initiative. I would be delighted to support this, it is a key piece of history unique to showing the unity and relationship among Māori and Chinese.

[REDACTED]

Yes, support a heritage listing for the wreck site. We can't ask for a heritage listing for where the bones were reburied as no one knows where they are exactly.

[REDACTED]

I think supporting this is a great thing, for all the obvious reasons set out in the letter you attached from the NZCA. The one thing I wonder about is what wider opportunities it might present, and/or what wider needs it might carry to ensure it has real meaning and "life". And whether, and where, it would be appropriate to signal these in some way.

[REDACTED]

We support the application for the Ventnor to be made a heritage site.

[REDACTED]

I think it is a wonderful idea. Especially to preserve the special relationship between Māori and Chinese. I've been to some of the other sites like the Ng King Bros and the Arrowtown site and these have been interesting.

[REDACTED]

Yes, definitely write a letter on our behalf. We really enjoyed the Ventnor trip - very enlightening and good to meet the reli's again.

[REDACTED]

I support listing as heritage site so next generations have a place that stands to honour all the early descendants.

[REDACTED]

I echo the comments that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have made. The Ventnor is such a special part of our family's history on this land, and I think it's important that we throw all the support we can behind the nomination – for all of the reasons set out in the NZCA's letter. [REDACTED] we've certainly seen a lot of those benefits for the Ng King Bros settlement, which is both an archaeological site and a site with Category 1 listing.

I presume we are aiming for Category 1 for the Ventnor. I think we'd all agree that the site is deserving of that categorisation, as a place of special or outstanding historical and

cultural heritage significance or value. Some points that spring to mind for me are as follows.

- Section 65(3)(a) of the Act states that one of the purposes of the Rārangi Kōrero is *“to inform members of the public about historic places, historic areas, wāhi tūpuna, wāhi tapu, and wāhi tapu areas”*.
 - Our family and the Sew Hoys are the only two families with the privilege of knowing their ancestors’ kōiwi were on the ship – to date. Inclusion on Rārangi Kōrero (and the increased awareness that will come with listing) may lead to other families identifying their ancestors. I think the Ng/Wu family is uniquely placed to talk to this point, given Uncle Gordon was the first person to identify an ancestor after Liu Shueng connected the dots with iwi (noting the Sew Hoys’ connection was presumably obvious given their ancestor had led the efforts to get the remains onboard). Though it may be optimistic to think that another family will be able to make a connection, the significance for our family is massive and there were hundreds of men, so there is at least potential for widespread benefit.
- Section 66(3) sets out the criteria for Category 1 or 2 status. I think the criteria in paragraphs (a) *“the extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history”*, (c) *“the potential of the place to provide knowledge of New Zealand history”* and (j) *“the importance of identifying rare types of historic places”* are of note. In particular:
 - the wreckage is connected to a story which speaks to the relationship between tangata whenua and tauiwi other than Pākehā, and it’s important to increase awareness of that part of our nation’s history which is not widely known;
 - the cultural heritage aspect relating to respect and care for kōiwi from both a Chinese and Māori perspective is highly significant; and
 - the oral history element is important. The iwi and hapū groups are better placed to address specifics, but it struck me that the group of young people from Te Roroa who took us out to the burial site in 2021 knew where to take us only because that knowledge had been passed down from generation to generation in the hope that one day descendants would return.

新 西 蘭 番 花 會 館

Poon Fah Association of New Zealand
150 Vivian Street TeAro
Wellington 6011

25 May 2025

Hello James, Murray,

Thank you for your communication.

Poon Fah is a Major stakeholder in this issue; of the 499 remains on board The majority were from our district

The Poon Fah Association of NZ endorses the NZCA application for the Heritage listing of the SS Ventnor wreckage.

It can only help to punctuate the contribution that the Chinese Community has made to the development and growth of our Aotearoa/New Zealand Society. It also reminds us of the mutual respect held between Iwi and our people.

Our Association wishes you every success in your application.

Regards

Robert Ngan

President

新西蘭東增會館

Tung Jung Association of NZ Inc (inc 1926)

PO Box 9058, Wellington, New Zealand

<https://tungjung.nz>, secretary@tungjung.nz

28 November 2024

Dear James,

Re. Heritage New Zealand Listing for the SS Ventnor Shipwreck site

This is to advise that the Tung Jung Association of NZ agrees that Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga prepare a nomination for the SS Ventnor shipwreck site to be added to the New Zealand Heritage List / Rāangi Kōrero.

The SS Ventnor has important significance to the descendants of the early Chinese settlers both as a grave site and as marking a turning point in the way our ancestors managed burials for those who died in New Zealand. It marked the end of the tradition of returning remains for burial in China instead opting for burial in their new homeland.

Please let us know if you require further information from us.

Kind regards,

Helen South
Secretary

Tung Jung Association of New Zealand

M: 021 0765976

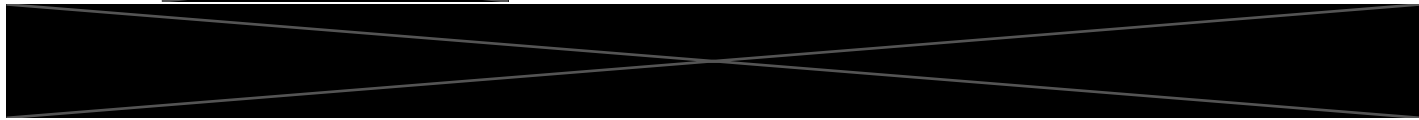
E: secretary@tungjung.nz

<https://tungjung.nz/>

For your review: Heritage NZ draft application for a Ventnor Heritage Listing and survey

Meng Foon 

Sun, May 11, 2025 at 7:49 AM



Morena Murray

Te Roroa Supports - see below

Meng

From: Snow Tane 

Sent: Friday, 9 May 2025 5 : pm

To: Men Foon 

Cc: 

Subject: Re: For your review: Heritage NZ draft application for a Ventnor Heritage Listing and survey

Tena koe e te rangatira e Meng, tumanako i pai to ra.

My apologies for not getting back to you in good time. The board supports the Ventnor whanau in its quest for Heritage Listing and Survey.

Let me know if you require a formal letter and I will follow up with Thomas.

Nga mihi

Snow

On Thu, May 8, 2025 at 6:22 PM Meng Foon  wrote:

Tena koe e te Rangatira e Snow, Te tumanako o a e ora pai koutou.

Snow, I'm following up on this kaupapa, have you a response for us?

nga mihi

Meng

From: Meng Foon 

Sent: Friday, 7 February 2025 : m

To: Snow Tane 

Cc: 

Subject: Fw: For your review: Heritage NZ draft application for a Ventnor Heritage Listing and survey

Tena koe e Snow, te tumanako kei te ora koe me to whanau, me to iwi.

me te mihi nui ki nga whanau kuawheturangitia, haramai haere.

Te Take - kaupapa

We would like Te Roroa to consider this project of Rahuitanga of the SS Ventnor ship area only.

We are leading the korero with our whanau regarding supporting the Protection of the SS Ventnor ship in the area that it has sunk in 1902.

Heritage NZ through Bill Edwards is putting together the application for this to happen

We are also asking for the opinions of Manea, Mitihetihe,

We would like Te Roroa to consider this project of Rahuitanga of the SS Ventnor ship area only.

having this listed as a category 1 classification would prevent divers going to take taonga off the area, prevent fishing nets being trawled over this area.

We are keen to attend a zone hui to contribute to your discussion

no reira e te Rangatira e Snow.

Ka mihi nui ki a koe me to tira rangatira kua tautokotia ki a matau i nga wa kua hipa.

nga mihi

Meng Foon
NZCA Iwi Liaison officer



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Nga mihi

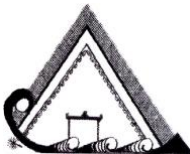
Snow

Taoho (Snow) Tane | General Manager

Te Roroa Development Group

Mobile: 

Email 



24 February 2025

**Re: Mātihetihe Marae Trust Support for the New Zealand Chinese Association's
Application to List the SS Ventnor Shipwreck Site on the New Zealand Heritage List**

Tēnā koutou,

On behalf of Mātihetihe Marae Trust, we write to express our support for the New Zealand Chinese Association's application to have the SS Ventnor shipwreck site added to the New Zealand Heritage List.

The story of the SS Ventnor is one of cultural significance, both to the Chinese community in Aotearoa and to our hapū and whānau along the Hokianga coast. For generations, our people have respected and acknowledged this history.

Since 2007, our hapū of Te Tāo Mauī and Te Hokoheha have maintained a relationship with the descendants of these Chinese ancestors, welcoming them onto our whenua and marae, and erecting a Chinese gateway in remembrance of our shared history. As remains washed up on our shores of Te Ākau, our own ancestors collected the remains and respectfully interred them in our urupā for safekeeping. This is a deeply spiritual connection we share with the Chinese community of Aotearoa, and we now continue this unique connection with the younger generations who have been creatively exploring this relationship and history through mahi toi, music, raranga, and other expressions.

Recognising the SS Ventnor shipwreck site as a place of heritage significance is an important step toward preserving this shared history for future generations. It provides an opportunity to educate the wider public on the cultural and historical intersections between our peoples. Furthermore, this history exists with the rich Māori history of Te Hokianga Nui a Kupe and Hokianga Whakapau Karakia, reinforcing the depth of historical and cultural significance of our region.

Mātihetihe Marae Trust supports this application and urges Heritage New Zealand to acknowledge the SS Ventnor site as a taonga of national significance. We look forward to continuing to strengthen the relationship between our communities and honouring those tūpuna who rest in our waters and whenua, and their descendants who live among us.

Ngā mihi nui, nā

Kyla Campbell-Kamariera
Chair
Mātihetihe Marae



Murray Wu

Fw: Reply to request

Meng Foon <mengfoon@outlook.com>
To: Murra Wu <murra kwu mail.com>

Sat, Jan 18, 2025 at 11:16 AM

Hi Murray Uncle John supports

Meng

From: John Klaricich
Sent: Saturda , 4 Januar : m
To:
Subject: epy o reques

Tena koe Meng,

Your question is a given affirmative. I, my spirit says, all the elements of that unfortunate incident needs be concluded. The most important factor is the " known location of the remains ". Of course I will provide within the coming week a Paper, I will prepare for your question. Haytime for us, if you can spare your sun, push it north !!

Nga mihi,
Te Kainga John K