

Henare Tiri Mahanga

At 29 years of age, Henare Mahanga has done a lot for the youth of Otago. He's the cultural tutor of Te Kupenga Maori Club of Otago, a composer, a community worker and lately, a coordinator of cultural festivals.

Mr Mahanga was responsible for the Auckland Regional Youth Maori Cultural competitions held late last year for the first time. Held on the Mataatua Marae at Mangere, the competitions covered pre-school children right through to school leavers. Between 800 and 900 people watched 14 Maori clubs take part in competitive and non-competitive sections.

The competitive section of the Intermediates was won by Rutherford High School, runner up Avondale High, the Junior section was won by Te Whetu Marama of Otago and runner up was Te Kupenga of Otago.

The winning cultural clubs will represent the Auckland region in the 1984 Nationals of Te Kotahitanga Church Building Society at Taumarunui. The present title holders are Te Kupenga Maori Club.

Mr Mahanga, who founded Te Kupenga, says cultural festivals matter

to youth.

"The Auckland festival was very important in regards to fostering and getting a better idea of how our youth respond to things Maori within a city or European society.

"I am proud of all these young people taking part in something positive towards their own heritage, to see some of our familiar faces from the courts performing, instead of being condemned by their own people."

Henare Tiri Mahanga comes from North Auckland and is an exponent of the taki or challenge according to northern kaupapa.

He's also a carver and playwright, having the pupils of Yendarra Primary School in Otago perform his play entitled 'The multi-cultural migration of our polynesian ancestors to Otago'.

He explains his philosophy as being strong within yourself, setting goals and then working towards them.

"Whenever you stumble, don't give up, just carry on because we have the whole of Maoridom at our doorstep."

● Sent in by proud supporters of Auckland for all he has done over the six years he has spent in this area.



Henare Mahanga holding the Maori Queens Coronation Trophy won by his students of Te Kupenga Maori Club of Otago.

