This is where the idea of the harakeke logo come from, it explains it all in the words of this waiata; written by Hirini Melbourne

**Hutia te rito**

Pull out the shoot,

**Hutia te rito o te harakeke**

Pull out the shoot of the flax bush

**Kei hea te kōmako e kō?**

Where will the bellbird sing?

**Kī mai ki ahau**

Say to me

**He aha te mea nui?**

What is the greatest thing?

**He aha te mea nui o te ao?**

What is the greatest thing in this world?

**Māku e kī atu**

I will say

**He tangata! He tangata! He tangata, hī!**

The people! The people! The people

This traditional waiata, which originates from northern tribes, is often used today. It is the music education subject association’s (MENZA) waiata. It can be sung, like “Haere Mai”, as a waiata kinaki or waiata of support, complementing what has been said by the first speaker at a gathering.

Its meaning relates to nurturing the young. The pūharakeke metaphor refers to the wider community of families and social groups. Hirini Melbourne talks about the significance of the flax plant

“The flax is a symbol of family unity and the maintenance of close family connections, both between generations and among relations. The family of leaves remain within their cluster, just as people remain within their particular hapu or iwi.

The flax plant grows from the centre. The first shoot divides into the father and the mother, and between them a child shoots up. As this continues to happen, the original parents become grandparents and so on, and you can have many generations in the same plant. The new shoot always grows in the middle.

When you cut a leaf from the flax, always cut it from the outside, because if you take the centre it destroys the whole plant”.


Website: http://menza.co.nz/waiata-hutia-by-hirini-melbourne/