



*Rīpia Marae, near Te Kōpuru*

# **Te Kawa Waiora**

## Hui Wānanga Report

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DATE	<b>14–15 November 2020</b>
VENUE	<b>Rīpia Marae, Te Kōpuru</b>
WRITTEN BY	<b>Dr Charles Royal</b>
ON BEHALF OF	<b>Reconnecting Northland</b>
FOR	<b>Waimā, Waitai, Waiora</b>

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## Introduction

Convened at Rīpia Marae (near Dargaville), on 14 and 15 November 2020, this was the second hui wānanga undertaken for the Te Kawa Waiora research project. Although the number of attendees was small, the hui was nonetheless valuable as much fruitful knowledge sharing and discussion took place. Day one started with an introduction to the three research questions and an open discussion on what those questions mean for the people in attendance. A site visit to Wairoa River also took place during Day one. Day two continued with traditional stories from the local area and explored short to medium term actions that the hapū can look at now.

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### The Traditional Tangata Whenua View of the River and its tributaries

A presentation of key ideas within the tangata whenua and indigenous worldview and how this relates to rivers led to a lengthy discussion on how this worldview relates in the community here. The key themes of interests include:

- Further information regarding the taniwha tradition, particularly concerning a third taniwha (Kahukura).
  - Home of Rangiriri (the taniwha) is at Tatarariki. The fight between Rangiriri and Pokopoko took place near Tangowahine
- Three waves, ‘e toru ngā ngaru hei whakawātea i te wai’, ‘there are three waves which clear the water’.
  - **Hoeroa** – cut the river, opened it up
  - **Takutai** – brought the kai to the awa
  - **Rangimārie** – settled the awa
- There were ‘five brothers’ who came from the south east and became hills or island in and along the river (see below).
- We also heard of the migration of Te Rarawa women and children who travelled to the south under the protection of the Crown. The group was composed largely of women and their children by British soldiers and they carried with them a flag that had written on it ‘Te Tohu o Te Rarawa, I raro i te Karauna’.



*Tokatoka showing through the morning mists over the Wairoa River*

## **Tangata Whenua view of change in the river since the 19th century**

An open conversation on change in the river addressed two main points. It also explored types of kai collected:

- We heard of the deeply concerning issues pertaining to Motuwheke, a traditional maunga that was destroyed through the extraction of aggregate for roads.
- The introduction of electricity also had effects on relationships. That is, prior to electricity, whānau members needed to share their kai quickly (fish they had caught, meat they had slaughtered etc) so that it didn't go off. However, when electricity was introduced and fridges came into whānau homes, they no longer needed to share kai as quickly as they had before and this contributed to lowering the number of interactions between whānau.
- There were patterns of resource harvesting across various parts of the river. At one location a species of fish could be found whereas at another location, another species of fish could be harvested. Consequently, the entire river comprised various locations along its lengths where various resources could be harvested. Hence, the various river communities would move around the river at various times of the year where they could harvest resources according to agreements. This annual process also fostered kinship ties between the various communities along the river. Species included snapper (tāmure), ngaehē (dogfish) and mullet (kanae).

*‘The river was our motorway, we all had jetties, all the way to Tangiteroria’*

- Other species included toheroa, tuatua, patiki, mussels, oysters, and tuna (he nanao tuna).
- Foods grown and eaten included kānga pirau, kumara, kamokamo, watermelons, passionfruit, apples, peaches, blackberries, salted meat, chickens, and ducks.



*Motuwheteke, looking across to the hills on the western side of the Wairoa River*

## **Tangata Whenua view of what needs to be done now**

*‘We too have been disrespectful to the awa and  
have lost the ability to read the signs of the awa now.’*

- Need for a new collaboration between marae of the river, rebuilding kinship ties and placing the river back into the centre of the community.
- Need for a ‘100 year plan’ and also constitutional reform as a Crown/Government dominated approach in years to come will not be supported.
  - Although many important short term tasks can be done (e.g planting, fencing, pest eradication etc), the depth of change required to truly improve the river requires a long term and fundamental approach
  - Given, too, that the deterioration of the environment has taken place over the past 150-160 years, it will need to take a similar amount of time to achieve the fundamental improvements we seek
- Noted that our vision ought to be about some kind of desirable state in the future rather than trying to recreate something that has been lost.
  - Need to increase our knowledge and understanding about the river – proposal to create a map of the river (bed, banks, water column)
- It was also suggested that an interim milestone of 2040 be considered, as part of an overall 100 year plan, as 20 years is a good length of time in which something deep and important can be achieved, and also because 2040 marks the 200th anniversary since the signing of the Treaty.



*Participants visit to Wairoa River and Motuwheke, L-R: Charles Nathan, Patricia Clark, Celia Witehira, Lyona Parata, Allison Rīpia, Katarina Tautuhi, Sylvester Leef, Tokotoko Retimana, Fiona Kemp, Kelly Retimana*

## **Visit to Motuwheke, near Rīpia**

Motuwheke is a pā and urupā that used to stand just to the south of Rīpia. Its nearest point is approximately 5 metres from the western bank of the Wairoa River. Motuwheke is one of ‘five brothers’ who, it is said, were visiting from the south and through various events they turned into maunga or motu, islands in the river. The five brothers are:

1. Maungaraho (near Tokatoka)
2. Ōkirirahi (an island in the river)
3. Kewipohutai (near Tokatoka)
4. Tokatoka (the local, well known and striking maunga)
5. Motuwheke (just south of Rīpia)

It is said that Motuwheke’s legs are still in the river and his body was lying upon the land.

Unfortunately, Motuwheke was destroyed when aggregate materials were extracted for roading purposes. The local hapū are deeply concerned about the site – not just because of the loss of a taonga such as this, but also because the seeming and ongoing lack of care in the past by the local Council; a limited commitment to clean up the site. We heard that the Council does propose to extract more aggregate from the site for the completion of the road to Poutō. Afterward, they pledge to then clean the site properly and leave it in a better state than it is now. Naturally, the iwi are very weary and sceptical about the Council and its commitments - given this history and also because that their commitment to clean the site up comes with a desire to extract yet more aggregate from the site.



*Motuwheteke, now a quarry, was once a small hill, pā and urupā, destroyed through the extraction of aggregate for roads. At the closest point, this site is approximately 5 metres from the western bank of the Wairoa River.*

## Day Two

The conversation in this session recapped some of the traditional aspects and korero related to the area. Although there are some gaps in the knowledge, some information was provided, such as:

- A mermaid pool at base of tokatoka.
- A whirlpool that you could call to you, usually is found at the base of Kewipohutai.
- The landscape is alive with our tupuna represented throughout. There are pā at every bend.

Discussion then flowed into what needs to be down now and how whānau, marae, and hapū can start to rekindle the relationship with their awa and traditional landscapes:

- Mapping the river, opportunity to get university students involved, logistics, obtaining own vessel, ownership of IP, want that opportunity to be involved in any contracts.
- Mobilise marae to take a stretch of the river, to share their knowledge, giving ownership to the whanau along the river, rebuilding the knowledge of how to read the awa.
- Tira hoe waka in the river from Tangiteroria to Poutō – start off small and build into an annual regatta.
- Every marae should have a boat.
- Create a river kaitiaki group, marae focused collaboration, ground up (take the discussion outside of the paradigm of iwi politics and treaty claims and into a new paradigm of positive collaborative mana whenua action).

The hui concluded on Sunday at 1pm.



*Day Two discussion on patupaiarehe, matakite, and other such traditional stories*

## **Hui Attendees**

*Katarina Tautuhi, Georgina Parata, Lyona Parata, Sylvester Leef, Tokotoko Retimana, Kelly Retimana, Patricia Clark, Allison Rīpia, Charles Nathan, Fiona Kemp, Lyona Sydney*

### **TKW Team Members**

*Charles Royal, Celia Witehira*

## **Notes collected during the hui wānanga by the research team**

- Sylvester Bully Leaf
  - e toru ngā ngaru hei whakawatea i te wai, hoeroa, takutai (Kaimoana) rangimarie (brought peace), he ngaru ēnei
  - Third taniwha is Kahukura (others are Pokopoko and Rangiriri)
  - Electricity contributed to severing kinship ties, for example, meat needed to be cut and shared before it went off, when electricity came then fridges meant ppl no longer needed to share
  - We are just a ‘scale’ on the land, tangata, it’s up to us
- There are patterns of use across the whole river not just one place (mullet appears at one place, kutae at Tino Pai, then species at another place).
- Big patches of islands in the river, they come up and disappear, runoff from farms.
- Nursery for snapper?
- Pressure from Auckland and Wellsford.
- Not about reconstructing or recovering the past but rather about envisioning something of the future.
- Oysters in Ruawai
- Ngaehē, dogfish seen at Dargaville at days gone by.
- 3 orcas came to Tokatoka, ngā mokopuna a Paikea.
- Mullet in some
- The home of Rangiriri is at Tatarariki, he came to Hokianga and killed a taniwha up there, Moehau, used to go to Waikato, goes against the current.
- Araara is not eaten since the time of Rongomai.
- Toheroa, tuatua, kanae, tuna
- He nanao tuna
- He kānga pirau, kumara Kamokamo, corn, watermelons, Passion fruit, apples, peaches, blackberries.
- Salted meat
- Chickens, ducks
- 5. Motuweteke, 1. Maungaraho, 2. Okirahi, 4. Tokatoka, 3. Kewipohutai, (5 brothers who came and became maunga or islands in the river)
- Motuweteke, now a quarry just south of Ripia marae, he struggled on shore and his legs are in the river.

***Notes collected during the hui wānanga by the research team (continued)***

- Kewipohutai, a hill across the river, we saw it from Maungawheteke.
- Ōkirirahi is an island in the river.
- Maungaraho is properly Mangaraho.
- Te Tohu o Te Rarawa, i raro i te Karauna (a flag carried by Te Rarawa women and their children by British soldiers as they made their way from north Hokianga to Te Kōpuru when they were taken in by Ngāti Whātua).

***Key points for way forward***

- 100 year plan (think about 2040).
- Need for constitutional change (problem with crown dominated approaches).
- Vision for the future.
- We do not know enough of about the river therefore we need to map the riverbed.
- Follow model of Te Tira Hoe Waka of Whanganui, (re)creation of an annual waka regatta on the river, joining up the various marae communities along the river, building a model of organisation from ground/marae up where the unifying principle is the river itself (not so much about advancing an iwi).







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