



# TE KAWA WAIORA REPORT 2020 — 2021

A Tāngata Whenua inspired Research Project concerning the health, wellbeing and mauri of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs.



# **TE KAWA WAIORA REPORT**

**2020 — 2021**

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Cover photo taken near the Wairua (Omiru) Falls 2022



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

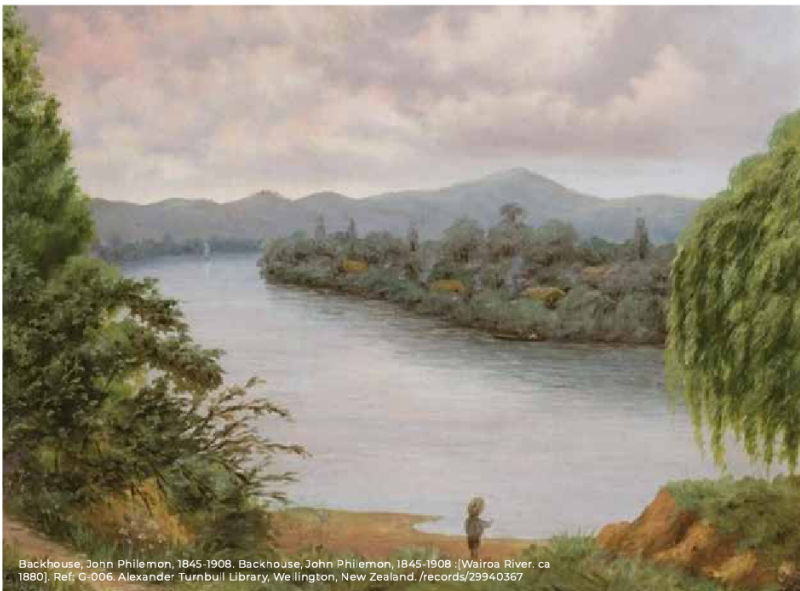
This report presents the findings of a research project entitled 'Te Kawa Waiora: A Tangata Whenua inspired Research Project concerning the health, wellbeing and mauri<sup>1</sup> of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs'. The purpose of this research project was:

To enable iwi/hapū/whānau/marae (tangata whenua) of the river to conduct research concerning issues of importance to them and as the basis by which their contribution to raising the health, wellbeing and mauri of the Wairoa River can be achieved.

This research was conducted in 2020 and 2021 and sought answers to the following questions:

- What is the traditional tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau, marae) view of the river and its tributaries?
- What is the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau, marae) view of change in the river and its tributaries since the 19th century?
- What is the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau, marae) view of the river now?
- What do they believe needs to be done now?
- How can we measure the mauri of the river?
- How can the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) help with improving the river and its tributaries?

<sup>1</sup> Mauri: Life force



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- What do they believe needs to be done now?
- How can we measure the mauri of the river?
- How can the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) help with improving the river and its tributaries?

Perspectives, views and answers to the research questions gathered through these activities are presented in this report.

# CAVEAT STATEMENT

Before summarising the key findings of this research, the Research Team wishes to make the following caveat statement.

The size of the study area was considerable, and it is debatable whether a two-year study, together with the resources available to the study, would be of a sufficient scale to produce an authoritative and comprehensive account of the views of these tangata whenua communities. Additionally, the project took place at precisely the same time in which a global pandemic arrived in Aotearoa. The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruption and hindered progress in many ways (described in the report).

Hence, given the restricted time frame and available resources, the size of the study area and the impacts of Covid-19, this research does not purport to comprehensively represent the issues and concerns held by tangata whenua communities regarding the study area. Rather, the research is indicative only of the kinds of issues, concerns and answers these communities hold with respect to the health, wellbeing and mauri of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs. Further research is required to achieve a truly comprehensive view.

## Regarding Question 1 - concerning the traditional tangata whenua view of the river, tributaries and environs:

We found evidence that the tangata whenua communities of the river historically possessed a worldview, culture and experience similar to that held by tangata whenua communities throughout the country. Sometimes called indigeneity or tangata whenuatanga, the foundational principle of this indigenous worldview is the idea that all things are birthed from the earth and are therefore kin to each other. The implications of this worldview include, among other things, the belief that human identity, meaning and purpose is achieved through a kinship relationship with the natural world, the belief that humans are part of the natural order, not superior to it.

This worldview also sees the natural world as alive with energies, presences and mana - expressions of mana whenua. In the case of the Wairoa River, this took the form of taniwha, of enchanted hills that could relocate themselves, and in other natural phenomena such as ngaru<sup>2</sup>. This tangata whenuatanga was reflected in place names and wāhi tapu<sup>3</sup>. It was expressed in

literature such as pepeha and whakatauki<sup>4</sup>. It was respected and honoured through tikanga<sup>5</sup> and day-to-day activities (such as harvesting kai and other resources) and in kawa<sup>6</sup>, the whole 'way' the tangata whenua approached life and lived in the world. These ideas formed the basis of the living culture and the experience of generations of the tangata whenua.

We found evidence that these foundational indigenous ideas, values and principles were espoused by tangata whenua communities of the study area, in history at least. We also found evidence that despite the significant decline of the presence and impact of this traditional knowledge and worldview, it remains present nonetheless within these communities. Importantly, there is a deep desire and thirst within these communities today to restore and revitalise this knowledge not just for the purposes of healing history but as the basis upon which new decisions and actions might be taken into the future.

## Regarding Question 2 - concerning the traditional tangata whenua of change that has taken place in the river since the 19th century:

We found significant evidence of change and the effects this change had upon tangata whenua communities. Since the 19th century, the environment of the study area, including the river, has changed radically and its current state is described as 'disastrous' - a state that came about through a long historical process which, from the tangata whenua point of view, commenced with the widespread alienation of their land. As alienation increased, so change increased and became more 'radical'. This was followed by the widespread felling of native forests, an act responsible for the most significant change in the environment. The drastic reduction of native forests over time meant, among other things, the loss of native habitats, flora and fauna (the draining of wetlands), a general diminishment of native biodiversity and the 'life force' of the study area.

The felling of native forests allowed for the introduction of

pastoral farming which meant the introduction of exotic species of flora and fauna, some of which have now turned out to be pests and invasive. It meant the introduction of pesticides, pollutants and fertilisers and a steady increase in sedimentation flowing into waterways. Pastoral farming was also supported by the introduction of roads, water services, electricity infrastructure, quarries and townships. All these developments served to radically alter the environment and led to many things, including the destruction of wāhi tapu.

A number of examples of change and its effects were brought to our attention. The complicated experience of the establishment of the Wairua Falls Power Station is one such example. It led to environmental degradation while, at the same time, members of local whānau were able to secure employment there. A particularly poignant and disheartening example is the destruction of Motuwheteke - once a small hill located to the south of Te Kōpuru.

2. Ngaru: Wave  
3. Wāhi tapu: Sacred place

4. Whakatauki: Proverb  
5. Tikanga: Protocols

6. Kawa: Rituals



This was destroyed during the harvesting of aggregate materials for use in roading. Finally, the draining of the Hikurangi swamp, described as the 'food bowl' of local hapū, had major impacts on these communities. Once again it resulted in decreased water quality and quantity, and diminished access to traditional food and other resources causing, among other things, a change in diet.

The impact of this change, in the period 1840-2000, upon tangata whenua communities is well known. It generally transformed 'land owning', unified, cohesive tangata whenua communities into largely fragmented, 'landless natives' who were forced to move into the townships and cities in search of employment. It meant the breakdown of the old tribal structures, the 'old ways of doing community', and the elevation of the nuclear family as the primary collective unit.

Despite this radical and enforced change, tangata whenua communities persisted nonetheless making the best of the changing circumstances and challenges that came their way. On many occasions, this

meant their participation and contribution to this change leading to a complicated and nuanced relationship with it. While holding the Crown to account for this change, tangata whenua communities also recognise that on many occasions, agencies were motivated by the best intentions.

The overall effect of colonisation, however, was the disconnection of the tangata whenua from the environment (and from each other) and the desecralisation of the natural world - a breaking of the kawa. Where once the environment was vibrant, alive and brim-full of mana<sup>7</sup>, tapu<sup>8</sup> and mauri, it has become dry, flat and lifeless. A particularly poignant conclusion the Research Team came to through a reflection upon the destruction of wāhi tapu/sacred ancestral sites was the sense of 'mourning the loss of the sacred'. While the tangata whenua communities of the study area did not articulate this idea in the same way, it is fair to say that there is an undercurrent of sadness amongst them about what has happened to the environment and to themselves since the 19th century.

### Regarding Question 3 - concerning the tangata whenua view of the river today and what they believe needs to be done:

We found that these tangata whenua communities had much to say about the contemporary state of the river, tributaries and environs. We found a deep sense of frustration both about the state of the environment and their inability to significantly influence decision-making regarding the environment. They often feel ignored, misunderstood and/or misrepresented. They are deeply sceptical about the ability of Crown agencies (local, regional, central Government) to truly address the urgent and disastrous situation facing the environment, a state that they hold the Government accountable for in the first place. They are also deeply dissatisfied with constantly having to 'fit into' schemes, plans and designs created by the Crown which fail in two ways - (1) real change does not occur, significant issues are not genuinely addressed, and (2) the mana, authority and agency of tangata whenua 'on the ground' to design and implement their own plans (to sit alongside those of the Crown and its agencies) is

not envisaged, acknowledged or enabled.

In their view, there is no alternative but to design and lead action themselves, alongside that of the Crown, based upon their deep relationships to the study area and more particularly their tangata whenua values of kaitiakitanga<sup>9</sup>, manaakitanga<sup>10</sup>, ethics of 'deep care' and more. They believe they have a right derived from Te Tiriti o Waitangi to advance Kaitiakitanga and seek support to enact this right not just for their own sense of empowerment but for the benefit of the environment of the study area and all those who live in that area. They wish to truly act as a 'Treaty partner' and seek the restoration of tangata whenua leadership over places and geographies of significance to them. Consequently, space needs to be created to enable these tangata whenua approaches to be advanced and to supplement those provided by the Crown.

The tangata whenua propose the establishment of a resourced

7. Mana: Prestige, integrity, authority  
8. Tapu: Sacred

9. Kaitiakitanga: Guardianship  
10. Manaakitanga: Hospitality

network of Kaitiaki located along the river whose role is to restore a mana-enhancing relationship between people and the natural world. While initiatives such as planting programmes, water quality monitoring, pest eradication, the protection of wāhi tapu and native flora and fauna are important to the tangata whenua, they believe that real change will not take place until the question of the relationship between people and the environment is truly addressed. There is a need to move away from the unconstrained, exploitative and superior attitude toward the natural world to one

that truly understands that the fate of humankind is inextricably connected to the fate of the earth.

The tangata whenua call for a new kawa, a new approach or 'way' to living in the natural world. This new kawa is built upon the fundamental idea of a sense of honour and gratitude toward the natural world. Its overall purpose is to restore balance between people and the environment, achieved through a search for the 'new sacred', one that might be inspired by notions of the sacred of the past but is ultimately informed by the realities and challenges of the world as it is now and into the future.

## CONCLUDING SECTIONS

The report concludes with two sections as follows:

- Te Kawa Waioira - an interpretation of the research findings for the purposes of enabling positive action by the tangata whenua to bring about positive change
- Relationships with External Parties - contributions that tangata whenua of the study area will be able to make to the activities of other parties, notably Crown/ Government. In this section, we discuss the National Policy Statement on Freshwater 2020 and Farm Environment Plans.

Regarding Te Kawa Waioira, entitling the research project with this name signals from the outset that there is an intention to find an alternative mātauranga Māori approach to environmental management. 'Te Kawa Waioira' refers to a kind of ritual or formal process whose outcome is healthy water or waiora. The report includes a discussion regarding the meaning of 'te kawa waiora' drawing from both traditional understandings of kawa together with new uses of the kawa concept by other iwi - particularly Whanganui iwi concerning the Whanganui River and Ngāi Tūhoe regarding the Urewera.

Finally, the report concludes with a discussion regarding contributions to Farm Environment Plans. Although the status and the concept of Farm Environment Plans has been changing throughout 2020 and 2021 - owing to the ongoing review of the Resource Management Act 1991 - the principle of tangata whenua influence upon and contribution to the management of farms in areas of their customary concern remains. In response to this question, regarding tangata whenua contributions to Farm Environment Plans, the Research Team concluded that, in the first instance, tangata whenua communities need a process by which they are able to formulate their aspirations, goals and objectives for their environmental areas. This needs to be achieved before

contributions to external instruments, such as FEPs, can be made. Consequently, the report is appended with a draft 'Kaitiakitanga Planning Template', a tool which is designed to aid a tangata whenua community to develop and articulate their aspirations for their environmental area. The Research Team envisages that this will be made available to these communities to assist them in their planning going forward.

Having said this, it is possible to state that, on the whole, tangata whenua communities all possess the following aspirations and these can be articulated in FEPs:

- Restoration and revitalisation of indigenous flora and fauna
- Pest Eradication
- Restoration of particular species of flora and fauna of significance to the local iwi, hapū, whānau, marae (eg: the kāhia or kohia plant in Mangakāhia)
- General Increase in Water Quality and Quantity
- General Increase in Soil Quality and Quantity
- Protection and Restoration of Wāhi Tapu

## REPORT DETAILS:

Te Kawa Waiora: A Tangata Whenua inspired Research Project concerning the health, wellbeing and mauri of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs.

A Report on Research conducted in 2020 and 2021.

Report written by Dr Charles Royal for Reconnecting Northland and Waimā, Waitai, Waiora.

Webpage:  
[www.reconnectingnorthland.org.nz/te-kawa-waiora](http://www.reconnectingnorthland.org.nz/te-kawa-waiora)

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# HE MIHI

Tuia te rangi e tū iho nei  
Tuia te papa e takoto ake nei  
Tuia rātou ka riro i te ara whānui a Tāne  
i te Muriwaihou, i te pō tiwha  
i te pō e okioki ai te moe  
He maimai aroha mō rātou kua riro  
He maioha ki a tātou, ki te hunga ora  
ki ngā kanohi o ngā mātua, o ngā tūpuna<sup>1</sup>.

E te iwi, tēnā koutou katoa.

I te tuatahi, ngā whakawhetai, ngā whakamoemiti ki te wāhi ngaro, ki tō tātou Matuanui-te-rangi mō ngā manaakitanga kua tatū ki runga i a tātou i ngā rangi, i ngā pō kua taha ake nei.

Tuarua, ki ō tātou tūpuna e whanga mai ana ki tua o te ārai. Ki ngā tūpuna o ngā iwi, o ngā hapū, o ngā whānau, ki te hunga i takatū i te mata o te whenua, ngā whītiki o te kī, ngā whakamataku, ngā whakawehi, haere, haere haere atu rā. Mei kore koutou, ka kore hoki ngā whakatupuranga o ēnei rā. Ka apiti hono, tātai hono, ko rātou ki a rātou, ka apiti hono tātai hono, tātou o te hunga ora, kia tau rā ngā manaakitanga ki runga i a tātou katoa.

Ka mutu, ka tahuri ki a tātou, ki te hunga ora, tēnā koutou katoa. Ki ngā maunga huahua, ki ngā wai tuku kiri, ki ngā taumata iringa kōrero katoa, tēnei rā te tāpae atu nei i tēnei pukapuka hei tiroiro, hei whiriwhiri, hei wānanga mā koutou. E puta ana tēnei pukapuka me ngā whakaaro o roto kia whitingia e te rā, kia puhipuhia e te hau. Ehara i te mea kei konei te mutunga atu o te kōrero, o ngā whakaaro, ngā māramatanga katoa mō te kaupapa nei. Heoi, kei konei ngā wāhanga i kite ai mātou, ngā wāhi e mārāma ana ki a mātou, ā, e tukuna ana i konei hei āwhina i te whakatupunga o te ora ki ō tātou iwi, hapū, whānau me ngā marae, tae noa hoki ki te Taiao, ki Te Ao Mārāma.

Kāti, e te iwi, tangohia tā koutou, ā koutou e pai ai. Me he āwhina kei roto, ko te painga atu tērā.



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Wairoa River is a significant waterway of the Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) region. It commences at the confluence of the Wairua and Mangakāhia Rivers, just north of the settlement of Tangiterōia. It makes its way in a south-westerly direction toward the township of Dargaville where it flows into what is referred to today as the Kaipara Harbour. This is the general shape of what is popularly understood to be the 'Northern Wairoa River'. However, as we shall see, the Wairoa River is part of a much larger and more complex waterway system and catchment that includes the Mangakāhia, Wairua and Kaihū Rivers together with a host of tributaries and associated areas such as swamps and wetlands.

Like so many rivers throughout New Zealand, the Wairoa River (and the system as a whole) has suffered greatly through decades of land-use change since the 19th century. The deterioration of the health and wellbeing of the river began in the 19th century when large tracts of native forests and bush lands were felled to make way for pastoral farming, new townships and associated infrastructure such as roading. The deterioration intensified with the introduction of invasive and exotic species of flora and fauna – together with a decline in native species – and later, the use of fertilisers, pesticides and other

introduced chemicals. This led to, among other things, increasing levels of waste and pollution introduced into the waterways which remains the case today.

A well-known outcome of this long process has been a general decline in the overall health and wellbeing of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs. Water quality, for example, has decreased markedly as have water flows and access to water sources. Increasing levels of sediment flow daily into the river which has turned the river water brown and diminished the river's life sustaining capabilities. The increased level of sediment in the river itself is further complicated by the introduction of waste - including pollution from townships and farm runoff such as effluent and fertilisers.

This unsatisfactory state has long been recognised and efforts are now underway to improve the fortunes of the river. This research project, entitled 'Te Kawa Waiora', is but one project tasked with discovering a path to improvement.



## 1.1 WAITAI WAIMA WAIORA

Such is the level of concern regarding the health of these waterways, that a number of initiatives are now in place to rehabilitate them. They include the Kaipara Harbour Integrated Management Group (now forms part of the Kaipara Moana Remediation), the Million Metres Stream Project, the Living Water Partnership and a host of iwi/ community-based projects and groups. It also includes the Waimā, Waitai, Waiora partnership, a collaborative project which seeks to improve the health, wellbeing and mauri of the Wairoa River with positive flow-on effects for all of the Kaipara Harbour. The goal of Waimā, Waitai, Waiora is described as follows:

... to reduce sediment and bacteria levels in the Northern Wairoa River and its tributaries - which will ultimately improve the mauri of the Kaipara Harbour. The Kaipara is the largest harbour in the Southern Hemisphere and is a national taonga for its many ecological, cultural, historic and economic values. The harbour contains some of the rarest ecosystems in New Zealand – including sand dunes, seagrass beds, and wetlands. It is a nursery for west coast snapper, grey mullet, flounder and other fish. It supports commercial, recreational and customary fisheries, agriculture, industry and tourism. The mauri (spiritual life force) of the harbour, its ecological health and wellbeing, are being degraded, particularly by the high sediment carrying Wairoa River.<sup>12</sup>

The Waimā, Waitai, Waiora partnership is a collaboration involving the following parties:

- Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngā Wai Māori (comprising Ngāti Hau, Ngāti Hine, Te Kahu o Torongare, Te Urirooi and Te Parawhau)
- Te Roroa
- Te Uri o Hau
- Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group (now forms part of the Kaipara Moana Remediation)
- Reconnecting Northland
- Department of Conservation and Fonterra Living Water Partnership
- Northland Regional Council
- Sustainable Business Network's Million Metres Streams Project

Waimā, Waitai, Waiora received funding from the Ministry for the Environment's Freshwater Improvement Fund and the group identified the following activities to be conducted:

- Work with mana whenua and landowners to incorporate Mātauranga Māori<sup>13</sup> alongside good farming and forestry principles and restoration practice.
- Complete at least 180 farm environment plans with landowners to identify, prioritise and adopt sustainable land management practices on their farms.
- Provide subsidies to landowners to assist with fencing, planting, stock water reticulation and wetland enhancement.
- Target our efforts on the highly erodible land in the catchment.
- Set up new freshwater quality monitoring sites in the catchment.

12. <https://www.nrc.govt.nz/your-council/about-us/council-projects/waima-waitai-waiora>

13. Mātauranga Māori: indigenous knowledge

## 1.2 TE KAWA WAIORA

'Te Kawa Waiora' is a program of work located within the Waimā, Waitai, Waiora project. Its purpose is:

In order to explore and understand the actual and potential contribution of tangata whenua communities to improving the Wairoa River and environs, a host of questions needs to be addressed, including the following:

... to enable iwi/hapū/whānau/marae of the river to conduct research concerning issues of importance to them and as the basis by which their contribution to raising the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river can be achieved.

- What is the view of the iwi/hapū/whānau/marae communities of the river concerning the river?
- How was the river viewed and experienced in history?
- What is their view of the river today?
- How do these communities interact with the river today?
- Why do they think the river is in such poor health?
- What do they think is required to improve the health and wellbeing, the mauri of the river?
- What can they do to help to improve the health of the river?

## CONSEQUENTLY, RESEARCH WAS UNDERTAKEN IN THE 2020-21 TO ADDRESS THESE QUESTIONS. PARTICULAR OBJECTIVES FOR THE TE KAWA WAIORA RESEARCH PROJECT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

### Objective

By 2022, Te Kawa Waiora will be developed for Farm Environment Plans and implemented in the Wairoa catchment, informed by sustainable land management practices through Mātauranga Māori.

### Key performance indicators

Te Kawa Waiora is applied to at least three farms in the Wairoa catchment during a trial period in year 2 of the project.

Deliver a report to NRC (and stakeholders) to outline the process undertaken, barriers, enablers, resulting in the creation of the 2019 Te Kawa Waiora 'framework'

Present at one conference to demonstrate learnings from the development process and how the Te Kawa Waiora 'framework' is being applied in practice.

## How will you monitor and evaluate the achievement of this objective?

Te Kawa Waiora 'framework' is presented to NRC and key stakeholders (such as the Northern Wairoa Freshwater Improvement Partnership) by the end of year 2.

Implementation of Te Kawa Waiora is documented for three farms across the Wairoa catchment by the end of year 2.

From year 3, Farm Environment Plan (FEP) template includes Te Kawa Waiora (explicit or implicit depending on farmer preference) for implementation across all subsequent FEP's.

## Baseline information

Mātauranga Māori principles and recommended actions are not a current feature of FEPs.

Kawa is used in other settings as a traditional Māori convention to provide a pathway to achieving a desired outcome.

Mātauranga Māori principles are identified in iwi environmental management plans.

## Expected outcome

Empowered local iwi, hapū and mana whenua groups to provide leadership for positive behavioural change informed by a shared understanding of traditional and living Māori knowledge and practices that guide people's relationship to land and water in the Wairoa and Kaipara catchments (Kaitiaki).

Other applications of Te Kawa Waiora are identified.

Work with iwi to develop implementation of iwi environmental management plans.

The objective sought here is the development of meaningful knowledge derived from mātauranga Māori which can be used to inform farm environment plans of the Wairoa Catchment - these plans being a critical mechanism by which tangible change in the environment can be achieved. The work program seeks application of the 'Te Kawa Waiora framework' in at least three farm plans in the period of the project. It also seeks a report to stakeholders and a conference presentation. The framework is to be completed by the end of Year 2 and the implementation across the three farms in the research period is documented. In Year 3,

the desire is to have a template prepared that will apply the Te Kawa Waiora framework into all farm environment plans.

Other outcomes sought include increased knowledge and confidence within iwi/marae communities regarding their philosophies, approaches and practices and the identification of other potential applications of the Te Kawa Waiora framework. Finally, the team will work with iwi in the development of iwi environmental management plans.

A report concerning each of these objectives and milestones can be found in Section 7.0.

## 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

On 10 May, 2019, a research planning workshop was convened in Whangārei. A number of iwi/hapū/marae representatives attended where they discussed potential research questions and approaches to research. These research questions were grouped into the following overlapping themes:



Mātauranga Māori views/perspectives of and interactions with the Wairoa River - the tangata whenua view and experience of the river

Iwi/Hapū/Marae views/perspectives of change in the river since the 19th century - the view of these communities concerning change in the river

Iwi/Hapū/Whānau/Marae view of how to improve the health, wellbeing and mauri of the Wairoa River

How was and is the Wairoa River viewed and interacted with from the perspective of the traditional indigenous knowledge of the iwi/hapū/marae communities of the Wairoa River?

What was the nature of the relationship historically?

What is the view and experience of these communities with respect to the change in the river and its environs since the 19th century?

How do the iwi/hapū/whānau/marae communities interact with the Wairoa River today?

What is the view of these communities concerning the Wairoa River today?

What do they believe caused the change in the river's health, wellbeing and mauri?

What do they believe are the problems with the river today?

What do they believe needs to be done to improve the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river?

What can these communities do today to contribute toward the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river?

## THESE THEMES WERE ARRANGED INTO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WHICH BECAME THE FOCI OF THE SUBSEQUENT RESEARCH PROJECT:

### Question 1

What is the traditional tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau, marae) view of the river and its tributaries?

### Question 2

What is the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau, marae) view of change in the river and its tributaries since the 19th century?

### Question 3

What is the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau, marae) view of the river now?

What do they believe needs to be done now?

How can we measure the mauri of the river?

How can the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) help with improving the river and its tributaries?

**The purpose of Question One** is to enable a competent description of the tangata whenua view of the river - created by the iwi/hapū themselves and grounded in their traditional indigeneity. These iwi communities possess a view of the river similar to that expressed by the iwi of the Whanganui River, for example, where they say, “Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au” (I am the river, the river is me.) This expression illustrates the fundamental principle of indigeneity - namely, of a kinship-based relationship with the natural world.

These questions led researchers to sources of knowledge and experience where the tangata whenua worldview is expressed, including:

- The traditional literature of the people including foundational narratives (pūrākau<sup>14</sup>, pakiwaitara<sup>15</sup>, kōrero etc), karakia<sup>16</sup>, waiata<sup>17</sup>, whakapapa<sup>18</sup> and the like.
- The customary practises of the people of the river from resource harvesting to healing practises and more
- The history of the tangata whenua as it relates to the river

The value of this line of questioning is that it gets to the 'heart' of iwi/hapū/whānau concerns for the Wairoa River.

It helps them recover, reawaken and reconnect with the depths of their tangata whenuatanga and therefore assist them to clarify the basis of their issues today. A second and valuable outcome is that indigeneity/tangata whenuatanga offers rich and inspiring perspectives that are an important alternative to the conventional Western worldview and culture. These two traditions placed together in positive ways will generate further value for the river and its communities.

**The purpose of Question Two** is to focus attention on the views and experiences of these communities concerning change in the river since the 19th century. The question encourages a focus upon the ways in which these communities responded to the enormous change that has happened to the river during colonisation. Whereas the first question concerns how these tangata whenua communities viewed and experienced the river through the tangata whenua worldview, the second set of questions concern how they viewed, understood and responded to change in the river since the 19th century.

This kind of information is obtained from:

- Petitions, letters to officials, judicial actions and initiatives (e.g Native Land Court) and other official records and documents
- Other literature such as letters to Church representatives, newspaper articles & more
- History of actions taken by the tangata whenua in response to change in the river
- Other manuscripts of various kinds

**The final group of questions** concern the views held by the tangata whenua regarding what they believe needs to be done now (short, medium and long term) to improve the health of the river and how they can help to achieve these goals. This is a challenging set of questions asking these communities to think deeply about the problems facing the river and how these problems should be addressed. The questions also ask the communities to identify their contribution to improving the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river.

It will ask them to think about things such as:

- |                                                                               |                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| ● What does a healthy Wairoa River look like from their point of view?        | ● What steps need to be taken to achieve this? |
| ● What does 'success' for the Wairoa River into the future look like to them? | ● Who needs to be involved?                    |
|                                                                               | ● How will this be achieved?                   |

It will ask them to think about things such as:

- What does a healthy Wairoa River look like from their point of view?
- What does 'success' for the Wairoa River into the future look like to them?
- What steps need to be taken to achieve this?
- Who needs to be involved?
- How will this be achieved?

## 1.4 METHODOLOGY

At the 10 May 2019 workshop, a number of aspirations and prescriptions were articulated regarding the way by which this research ought to be conducted. A sample is as follows:

- Involvement of hapū is critical
- It needs to include a hīkoi<sup>19</sup> to the river
- Whānau, marae, hapū, Māori landowners need to be involved
- Provision needs to be made for involvement by tamariki<sup>20</sup> and rangatahi<sup>21</sup>
- Use of hui wānanga<sup>22</sup>
- Engage key knowledge holders
- Enable hapū story sharing

With these thoughts in mind, the following methodology was applied in this project:

- Documentary research - including manuscripts in public and private collections e.g., whakapapa books written by reputable authorities
- Interviews with individuals with particular knowledge and experience with the river e.g., kaumātua<sup>23</sup> with particular knowledge and experience with the river
- Hui Wānanga, focused group workshops designed to 'bring together' perspectives and views from a variety of people (enabling a collective view to develop, foster good relationships)
- Site visits to align memories and understandings with the reality of the river. Utilising the river itself as a way of prompting understandings and inspirations

Additionally, it was proposed to:

Create a representation of the land and waterscapes of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs seen through the lens of traditional knowledge. This to take the form of maps, images and a database of information showing place names, areas of land and water use (resource harvesting), settlements & more.

Trial a network of 'kaitiaki' along the river comprising representatives of iwi/ marae communities for the purposes of understanding how collective action for positive change could work.

23. Kaumātua: Older person of status

19. Hīkoi: Walk  
20. Tamariki: Children  
21. Rangatahi: Young people  
22. Wānanga: Meeting



## THE RESEARCH APPROACH IS, THEREFORE, SUMMARISED IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE:

Research Question(s)	Methodology
Mātauranga Māori, tangata whenua perspectives and experiences of the river - expressed in the literature, customary practices and history of the tangata whenua.	Documentary Research in public and private collections. Interviews with knowledgeable individuals. Hui Wānanga, focused group sessions. Site visits.  <b>Project</b> Construction of a representation of the tangata whenua land and waterscape
Tangata Whenua perceptions of change in the river since the 19th century	Documentary Research in public and private collections. Interviews with knowledgeable individuals. Hui Wānanga, focused group sessions. Site visits.
Tangata Whenua perceptions of what needs to be done to improve the river and how they can help	Interviews with knowledgeable individuals. Hui Wānanga, focused group sessions. Site visits.  <b>Project</b> Trial a 'kaitiaki' network of iwi/hapū/marae representatives for the purposes of understanding how collective action for positive change might work.

## 1.5 MĀTAURANGA MĀORI AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

In attempting to improve the health, wellbeing and mauri of the northern Wairoa River and its tributaries, the Government (central, regional, local) uses a variety of scientifically derived criteria as to what constitutes 'health and wellbeing' for the river. This is reflected in the overall goal of the 'Waimā Waitai Waiora' project which reads as follows:

...to reduce sediment and bacteria levels in the Northern Wairoa River and its tributaries - which will ultimately improve the mauri of the Kaipara Harbour.

Consequently, the Government employs a variety of testing methods which measure an increase or decrease of sediment and bacteria levels upon the assumption that achieving a certain level means that the river has achieved 'health and wellbeing'. Overall, iwi, hapū and whānau generally agree that decreasing sediment and bacteria is a good thing, and this will make a significant contribution toward achieving health and wellbeing for the river. However, this does not yet speak to the totality of the way an iwi, hapū and whānau

may perceive, experience, interact with and understand the health and wellbeing of their river. Tangata whenua hold a range of perspectives and views about the health and wellbeing of their river, some of which are based upon their traditional knowledge or mātauranga Māori.

A further important point is that tangata whenua communities do not wish to investigate Mātauranga Māori for the purposes of merely 'fitting into' and contributing to Crown/ Government environmental

management. Rather, they have their own approaches that they wish to investigate and advance for two reasons: (1) they assert a right to design and implement their own approaches under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and (2) because they hold the Crown/ Government accountable for the current 'disastrous' state of the environment, they are deeply sceptical as to whether Crown/ Government will ever be able to create the change required to improve the health, wellbeing and mauri of the environment.

In recent times, words and concepts derived from mātauranga Māori - such as mauri - have been introduced into environmental management planning and policy to 'make space' for the way tangata whenua communities (such as iwi, hapū, whānau) may perceive, experience, interact with and understand their environment. The inclusion of the word 'mauri' is a doorway by which one may enter a world of understanding about life that was not previously enabled in public policy, management and administration. Importantly, mauri is included in the Waimā Waitai Waiora project goal and it can be assumed

that the title of the project also suggests an invitation to explore tangata whenua views of the river.

Hence, our task is not just to understand the views of these communities but also to understand their distinctive and unique views knowing that these are likely to arise from knowledge and experiences. The introduction of words like 'mauri' into public policy planning and research such as this enables an investigation of iwi, hapū, whānau and marae knowledge, views and understandings - and we group these views under the title 'mātauranga Māori', without undermining the variations that exist at hapū, whānau and marae levels. This is done as the basis of the diverse contributions that our communities may make toward achieving better environmental outcomes. We are also strengthened to do this by recognising that it is not necessary for us to conduct other kinds of research concerning the river which is already being undertaken by other parties. (There is no need for us to spend time on projects that others are already addressing and are better placed to do so.) Finally, we investigate mātauranga

Māori understanding that its primary application is within tangata whenua communities rather than in Government led environmental management (where contributions nonetheless may be made).

### Mātauranga Māori leads to very Different Perspectives and Views about the River.

Hence it is the intention of this project to investigate mātauranga Māori (including iwi, hapū, whānau knowledge) views, understandings and explanations of the northern Wairoa River and its tributaries. From the outset and based upon previous understandings and experiences, we know that mātauranga Māori will generally take us in very different directions to that offered by Western science and Western culture. For example, the mātauranga Māori responses to the following questions illustrate this Te Ao Māori worldview:

- What do these communities regard this river to be?
- On this basis, what does a healthy river look like to them?

## HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLE ANSWERS:

# WHAT DO THE TANGATA WHENUA REGARD THE RIVER TO BE?

"The river is my tupuna<sup>24</sup>, my ancestor."

"The river holds the breast milk that flows from the top of our mountain (our mother's breast)."

"The river is the meeting place of all the waters – of the water that flows from the mountain tops, of the water that wells up from below (wai manawa whenua), of the rain from the sky, of maunga large and small. It gathers all the inland waters and guides them to the sea, to the source, to Tangaroa.<sup>25</sup>"

"The river is both the water that flows within it and the contours of our mother's body which holds that water."

"The river nourishes me and my people – spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically. It is my parent, and I am its child. The only way I can truly know myself and life itself is by being with my river. The river is the source of me. In order to

know me, one has to know the river."

"The river is the place where I can draw water, to cleanse myself, to drink, to baptise my children, to honour the bodies of my loved ones when their time has come."

"I experience the river emotionally, spiritually, mentally, physically. I say this because the river has a personality, a tone, a mood, a voice. It is a being with its own mana, its own authority, its own agency. I respect the river; I humble myself before the river."

"A river reflects the people who live around it. If the river is unwell so the people who live there will be too."

"The river is not just the water and the whenua that holds the water, it is also all the beings that exist in the water, the fish, the kōkopu<sup>26</sup>, the plants. It also includes the spiritual beings, the taniwha<sup>27</sup> that have their mana in the water."

# ON THIS BASIS, WHAT DOES A HEALTHY RIVER LOOK LIKE TO THEM?

"A healthy river starts with beautiful water, water that is brimful with mauri, water that can sustain life."

"A healthy river is one that is full of mauri... and we know that it is full of mauri because it can sustain all the naturally occurring life there, the plants, the animals. We know it has mauri because the water I drink there sustains and heals me. I am happy to use the water there when we baptise our children, when we need healing, when our gardens need watering. We have no hesitation in using the water from the river for these purposes."

"A healthy river is one where the natural flora and fauna are able to flourish."

"A healthy river is one where I can hear its voice, loud and clear, unencumbered."

"A healthy river is a place where I can harvest the tuna, īnanga<sup>28</sup>, kōkopu, all the traditional kai of our people."

"A healthy river is a place where I can draw water and it sustains me."

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE ARE NOT VERBATIM QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS. THEY WERE CREATED AS ILLUSTRATIONS.**

24. Tupuna: Ancestor  
25. Tangaroa: God of the sea

26. Kōkopu: Native fish  
27. Taniwha: Water creature/spirit

28. Inanga: White bait



# MĀTAURANGA MĀORI LEADS TO DIFFERENT IDEAS ABOUT KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

In addition to distinctive perspectives about the river, mātauranga Māori can offer very distinctive perspectives on the nature of knowledge itself and knowing. Because research is about gathering and creating knowledge, we are very interested to understand how we gather knowledge and how we regard the knowledge held in our communities. We are interested to understand how questions are formed, how understandings are achieved and how to arrive at answers to our questions. Mātauranga Māori has things to say about all these aspects of the human quest to know and understand the world.

For example, it is not enough to 'know' a river through intellect and rationality only. Rather, mātauranga Māori seeks to 'know'

the river emotionally, spiritually, intuitively and physically. Mātauranga Māori asserts that life comprises 'te taha hinengaro, te taha tinana and te taha wairua'<sup>29</sup>. Hence, to truly know the world, we have to engage all these 'dimensions', all these 'taha'.

Secondly, mātauranga Māori asserts that we do not truly 'know' a river if we continue to see the river as something fundamentally separate from ourselves. To know a river truly, we must come into a relationship with it. And coming into a relationship with it means that we understand the river is speaking to something within ourselves. There is something shared there. The act of perceiving and experiencing is ultimately an act of connecting, of unifying.

## Mātauranga Māori ideas concerning methodology

A further important question asks, "what is the significance of these ideas to research methodology?" If we wish to understand the traditional tangata whenua view of rivers, how does one achieve this given what we know about an indigenous way of experiencing and explaining the world.

### In the first instance, these ideas point to the importance of:

- Engaging researchers who have some familiarity with mātauranga Māori and tangata whenuatanga
- Involving tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) communities in the research
- Seeking pre-existing mātauranga Māori of the communities under study and bringing that knowledge to light and to the centre of the research
- Visiting and spending time on the river and its tributaries, including undertaking rituals, resource harvesting and other kinds of activities designed to give people a larger experience of the river
- Engaging of all one's faculties– emotional, spiritual, rational, intuitive and physical – when conducting research about the river (hence, the need for nohopuku and whakatiki)

More particularly researching tangata whenua view of rivers means investigating the tangata whenua experience of rivers. It means entering into a conscious relationship with the environment in which one engages all of one's faculties, not just rational intellect.

29. Te taha hinengaro, te taha tinana and te taha wairua: Mentally, spiritually and physically

## 1.6 WORK COMPLETED

Unfortunately, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (see below), the number of projects completed during 2020-21 was fewer than originally planned. They are as follows:

- 7 x hui wānanga convened across the study area (1 hui was conducted online)
- 25 x oral history interviews completed
- 7 x iwi research training seminars delivered

### Documents completed include:

- Ethics Statement
- Intellectual and Cultural Property Statement
- Research Training Modules
- Literature Review Statement

### Communications and Knowledge Sharing items

- 4 x newsletters released
- 7 x hui wānanga reports released
- 1 x Literature Review released
- 1 x webpage (and associated pages) established and maintained
- 1 x master report completed

## 1.7 PEER REVIEW

The master research report was reviewed by the following:

**Prof Jacinta Ruru**  
University of Otago

Professor Jacinta Ruru belongs to Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Ranginui and Ngāti Maniapoto. She is a Professor of Law at the University of Otago and is a long term advocate and researcher concerning tikanga Māori and the law. She has a particular interest in indigenous rights relating to water.

**Keir Volkerling**  
Independent Researcher

Mr Keir Volkerling has worked for over thirty year to articulate and advocate to mainstream environmental agencies issues of kaitiakitanga under the direction of kaitiaki. Initially this work was for Ngāti Wai, which continues to this day. He has done similar work at regional and national levels.

Please note that a presentation on Te Kawa Waiora was planned to be delivered at the 2021 Whangaroa Kaitiaki Symposium. Unfortunately, this did not take place as the Symposium was cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We would like to thank Prof Ruru and Mr Volkerling for their review and support of this research.

## 1.8 DISSEMINATION, KNOWLEDGE AND BENEFIT SHARING

Research findings will be disseminated in the following ways:

- A report (this report) will be completed providing an overview of the project overall and its findings. This report, in full, will be made available through the Te Kawa Waiora webpage on the Reconnecting Northland website
- A Conference presentation will also be conducted to share research findings and an explanation of the project overall
- Various additional documents will be made available on the Te Kawa Waiora webpage, as follows:
  - » Literature Review
  - » Hui Wānanga Reports
  - » Interview Extracts
- Provide contributions to Farm Environmental Management Plans (see Section 7.0)

Additionally, the project will:

## 1.9 RESEARCH TEAM

The research team comprised the following:

Dr Charles Royal Lead Researcher	Celia Witehira Project Manager
Hineāmaru Davies-Lyndon Oral History Researcher	Robyn Kāmira Documentary Researcher

The team was supported by a Research Committee comprising the following:

Auriole Ruka  
Northland Regional  
Council

Tāoho Patuawa  
Te Roroa

Dr Brad Coombes  
University of Auckland

Assoc Prof Anne-Marie Jackson  
University of Otago

Assoc Prof Te Kawehau Hoskins  
University of Auckland

Fiona Kemp  
Te Uri-o-Hau

Information about the Research Team and the Research Committee can be found in Appendix One.

The role of the Research Leader was to take overall responsibility for the research project. This included ensuring the integrity of the research and its methodology, construction of a defensible thesis based upon information and responses gathered, managing the research team, ensuring that reporting is occurring in a timely manner and that a good relationship with the Research Committee is maintained.

The role of the Researchers was to conduct certain portions of the research such as documentary research in libraries and archives (public and private) and oral history interviews and hui wānanga.

The role of the Project Manager was to provide administrative support to the project. This includes files management, meeting support, hui wānanga arrangements, budget discipline, travel and accommodation bookings and other similar activities.

The role of the Research Committee was to provide governance oversight and review to the project ensuring that it complies with agreed goals and ways of achieving those goals. The role of the Research Committee was to maintain the integrity and mana of the research by ensuring that it adheres to agreed goals and ways of achieving those goals and maintains good relationships with the iwi/marae communities of the Wairoa River and other stakeholders.



## 1.10 THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19

It was unfortunate that the COVID-19 pandemic struck at the same time as this project was being undertaken.

The first case of the virus in New Zealand was reported on the 28th of February 2020. On the 25th of March, the entire country moved to Alert Level Four, complete lockdown, and this stayed in place until the country moved to Alert Level 2 on the 13th of May.

On the 12th of August, the Auckland region was once again isolated as it moved to Alert Level 3 and that remained in place until 30 August 2020. Further restrictions on travel and gatherings in Auckland remained in place until 23 September.

In 2021, new cases emerged and Auckland moved to Alert Level 3 on the 14th of February and returned to Alert Level 1 on the 22nd of February. Auckland returned to Level 3 on 28 February and then back to Alert Level 1 on 12 March. On the 17th of August, Auckland was again placed in lockdown and this continued (in some version) till the end of the 2021, the scheduled end of the Te Kawa Waiora project<sup>30</sup>.

The lockdowns in Auckland from 2020-21 meant that travel to Te Tai Tokerau for Charles Royal was restricted. Further, libraries and archives were closed during much of the lockdown period, and this inhibited the work of our Documentary Researcher, Robyn Kāmira. Some hapū and marae communities became wary of holding hui on their marae (even though they were not in lockdown) and there was some concern with respect to kanohi-ki-te-kanohi<sup>31</sup> oral history interviews.

Consequently, impacts of the lockdowns upon the Te Kawa Waiora project were as follows:

- We did not convene as many hui wānanga as we had planned
- The hui wānanga were not as well attended as we would have liked
- Although we completed some 25 oral history interviews, many were conducted in restricted circumstances, and some were conducted via Zoom.
- For the duration of all lockdowns, libraries and archives were closed preventing access to key documents. In the case of Auckland Library, the entire research centre and manuscripts archive was closed for much of 2021 as the library took the opportunity to repair the roof of the building during the lockdown period.
- The research team and research committee were not able to meet in person
- The two intended special projects were not able to be undertaken. They included:
  - » The planned creation of a visual representation of the catchment/study area in Year One
  - » The trial of a Kaitiaki network planned for Year Two

30. See <https://covid19.govt.nz/about-our-covid-19-response/history-of-the-covid-19-alert-system/>  
31. Kanohi-ki-te-kanohi: Face to face

## 1.11 RESEARCH CAVEAT STATEMENT

Before presenting this research report, the Research Team wishes to present two caveats for consideration while reading this research report. They concern the following:

- the size, scale and complexity of the study area itself and of the communities that are associated with it
- the impact of COVID-19.

### Size, Scale and Complexity of the study area

From the outset, it is important to note the size, scale and complexity of the study area (described in Section 2.0). It is physically large and inhabited by numerous communities living in diverse circumstances. It also represents a multiplicity of inter-relating ecosystems and environmental areas that have experienced, and continue to experience significant change and deterioration. Consequently, the research team wishes to make the following caveat statement:

Given the size, scale and complexity of the study area, and given the small research team, the limited resources and the brevity of the project, it cannot be asserted that this research project completed a comprehensive investigation of all questions and issues concerning tangata whenua relationships to the waterways of this catchment area. Rather, the research is indicative only and further research is required in order to complete a comprehensive survey and study of tangata whenua views and perspectives of Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs.

### Impact of COVID-19

The research project was inhibited significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic and the overall result is that the research is not as representative, comprehensive and in-depth as we had originally intended. It was recognised from the outset that conducting effective, in-depth and comprehensive research on such a large study area was always going to be challenging for a project with a small team, a limited budget and a two-year time frame. As we have seen, the impact of COVID-19 made completing comprehensive research impossible.

We also note that there are some communities of the study area that we were not able to visit. This includes communities of the Kaihū River, of Tangiterōia, of Porotī and elsewhere. There are some obvious and significant gaps. And, finally, of the communities that we did visit, our stays were brief and hui attendees were small in number.

### Consequently, we wish to expand our caveat statement as follows:

Given the restricted time frame and available resources, the size of the study area and the impacts of COVID-19, this research does not purport to represent comprehensively the issues and concerns held by tangata whenua communities regarding the study area. Rather, the research is indicative only of the kinds of issues, concerns and answers these communities hold with respect to the health, wellbeing and mauri of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs. Further research is required to achieve a truly comprehensive view.

## 1.12 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

This research report is supported by a number of documents created through the duration of the project. They are as follows:

- Literature Review
- Hui Wānanga Reports
- Oral History Interview Abstracts
- Kaitiakitanga/Tangata Whenua Environmental Planning Template

## 1.13 TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS REPORT

The terms 'tangata whenua' are used to refer to any kind of traditional indigenous community of the study area which possesses mana whenua in that area. Typically, this includes iwi, hapū, whānau and/or marae community.

## 1.14 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Te Kawa Waiora team would first like to thank and acknowledge the tangata whenua communities visited throughout this project. Particularly, the team would like to thank the marae that hosted us during the project and shared so generously at a time impacted by COVID-19.

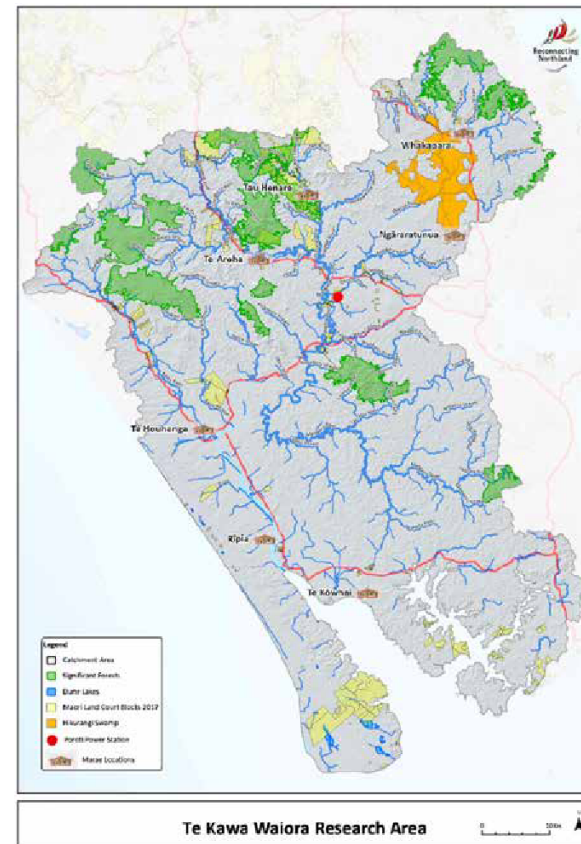
- Te Aroha Marae, Mangakāhia
- Ripia Marae, Dargaville
- Tau Henare Marae, Pipiwai
- Whakapara Marae, Whakapara
- Te Houhanga-a-rongo Marae, Dargaville
- Ngārara-i-tunua Marae, Ngārara-i-tunua
- Te Kōwhai Marae, near Ruawai, Kaipara

We also wish to thank our interviewees, the 25 members of our tangata whenua communities who agreed to be interviewed and shared their views, perspectives and thoughts with us.

Finally, we wish to thank the following:

- Waimā, Waitai, Waiora
- Ngā Kaitiaki o ngā Wai Māori
- Te Uri o Hau Environs
- Northland Regional Council
- Peer Reviewers

The Te Kawa Waiora project could not have proceeded without the support of all these parties. Although all were challenged by the pandemic, the research team is grateful for the support and enthusiasm shown by these communities throughout this project.



Map showing the study area and marae visited by the research team in 2020 and 2021



## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

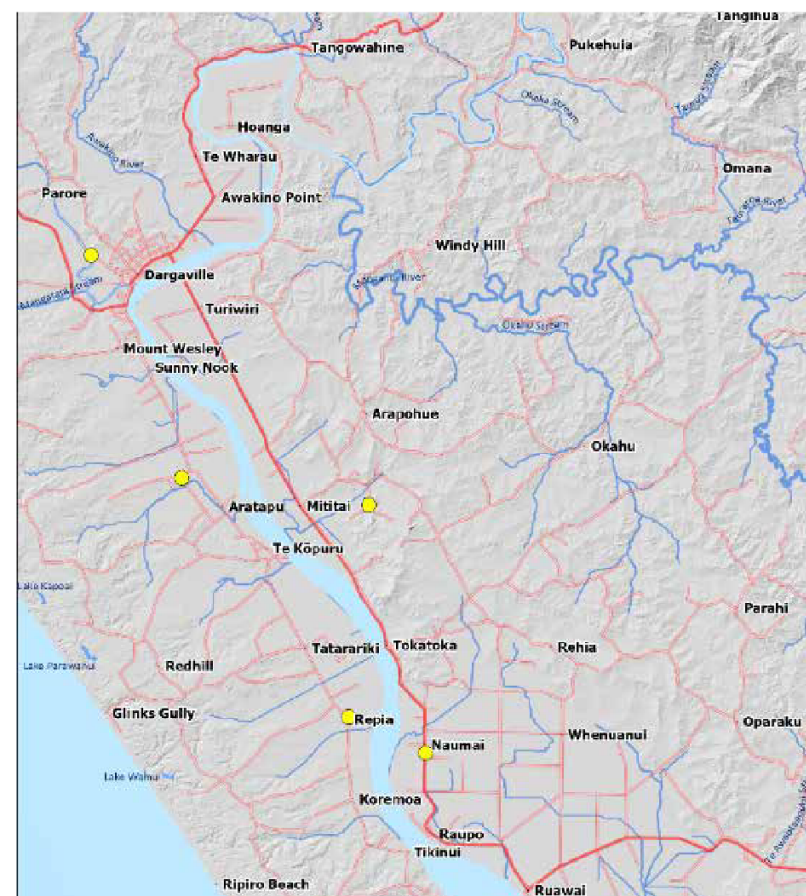
Initially, the research study area was defined as the 'Northern Wairoa River' which is typically understood to commence near Tangiterōia (at the confluence of the Wairua and Mangakāhia Rivers) and continues in a south westerly direction toward Dargaville township. The Wairoa River then concludes at the point at which it enters the Kaipara Harbour (how the Kaipara Harbour is typically understood today).

However, during meetings prior to the commencement of the Te Kawa Waiora project, various hapū representatives pointed out that focusing the research on what is popularly known as the 'Northern Wairoa River' would be inadequate – for the river is part of a much larger river system and catchment area. These representatives made two particular points; the first concerned the impact of the Hikurangi Swamp upon the river. Although located a significant distance from the Wairoa River, this large, drained swamp area is responsible for enormous amounts of sediment that flow daily into the Wairoa River (via the Wairua and other rivers). The local hapū assert that it is not possible to improve the Wairoa River without addressing the Hikurangi Swamp.

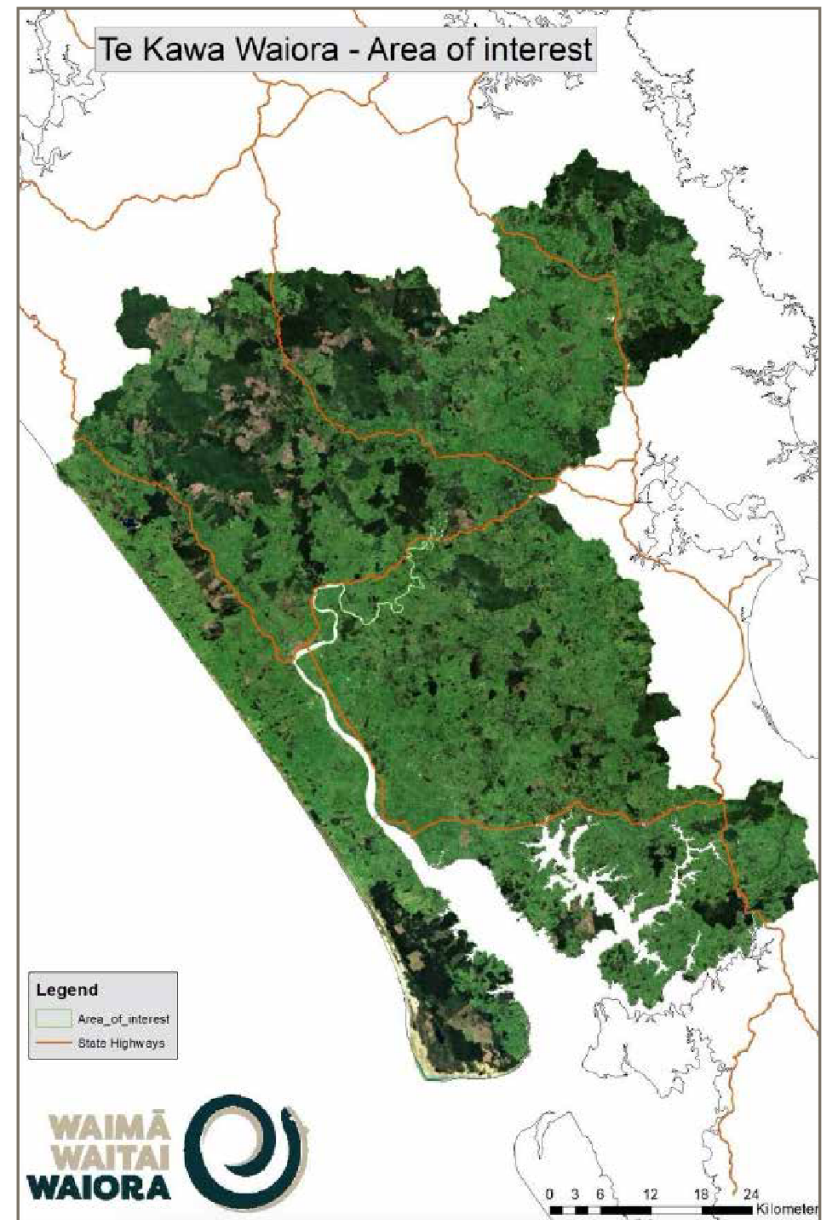
The second point made by hapū representatives is that the Wairoa River reaches all the way to Poutō, at the mouth of the 'Kaipara Harbour'. It was explained that in Ngāti Whātua tradition, the northern arm of what is known as the Kaipara Harbour today was actually referred to as 'Wairoa'<sup>32</sup>. Further, that the name 'Kaipara' referred to the southern arm only of the harbour and not the entire harbour as is understood today. This is because, in the past, the Kaipara was not a harbour but rather two waterways that came together where they entered the sea. The two water bodies were separated by a peninsula of land called Tāporapora which, in the past, was much larger than it is today.

These iwi/hapū views also led to consideration of other rivers that flow into the Wairoa. They include the Mangakāhia and the Kaihū rivers among others. Hence, the area under study in this project is very large. Its southern boundary is marked by Poutō on the northern side of the mouth of

the modern-day Kaipara Harbour. It includes all of the peninsula heading in a northerly direction towards Dargaville. The study area also reaches across to the eastern side of the Kaipara to include the Ōruawharo, Tamatea and Arapāoa rivers, tributaries and environs.



32. This was elaborated further in an interview with Te Kurataiaho Kapea of Ngāti Whātua, 28 April 2020.





## 2.1 BROAD GEOGRAPHIC AREA

The geographic area described below represents the study area of the research. Broadly, it can be described as follows:

- Commencing at Poutō on the northern head of the mouth of the Kaipara Harbour
- Proceeding northward toward Dargaville and into the Wairoa River as it is popularly understood today.
- Proceeding in a north-easterly direction toward Tangiterōia
- Continuing northward and into the Mangakāhia and Wairua rivers
- Follows the Wairua River to its point of origin at Whakapara
- Follows the Mangakāhia River to its point of origin within the Mataraua Forest

The study area includes various tributaries and other rivers that flow into the Wairoa, Mangakāhia and Wairua rivers. Some of these include (not exhaustive):

- Kaihū River
- Tangowahine Stream
- Hikurangi River
- Ōpouteke River
- Awarua River
- Whakapara River

## 2.2 FEATURES OF THE STUDY AREA

Some of the key features of the study area include:

- The seaward end of the Wairoa River today represents the northern branch of the Kaipara Harbour. This end of the river contains seawater.
- The confluence of various rivers including the Wairoa/ Mangakāhia/ Wairua and Awarua
- Wairua, Pūrua and Māngere falls
- The Porotī Springs is near the Wairua River

## 2.3 MARAE OF THE STUDY AREA

Of the broad and general area, from south to north (this list is not exhaustive and highlights those on the main stem of some of the key river systems):

### Wairoa River

- Waikāretu, Poutō
- Naumai, Naumai
- Rīpia, Rīpia
- Kāpehu, Mititai
- Ōtūrei, Dargaville
- Te Houhanga, Dargaville
- Tangiterōia, Tangiterōia

### Wairua River

- Korokota
- Whakapara, Whakapara

### Mangakāhia River

- Parakao (Te Aroha), Parakao
- Te Tārai-o-Rahiri, Pakotai
- Te Oruoru, Pakotai
- Parahaki, Nukutawhiti

### Kaihū River

- Taita
- Ahikiwi
- Waikaraka
- Tamateuaua, Kaihū

## 3.0 TANGATA WHENUA VIEW OF RIVERS

A critical feature of the Te Kawa Waiora project is to explore the views, understandings and perspectives of tangata whenua communities (iwi/hapū/whānau/marae) regarding the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs. Specifically, we seek to understand how they perceived and interacted with the river historically, how they viewed change in the river since the 19th century and what they think about the river today. This investigation of their views and knowledge aims to create a foundation of understanding upon which positive action might be taken to improve the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river. Ultimately, we seek the contribution of these communities to improving the health of the river.

Before turning to discuss their views directly, it is helpful to explore perspectives and understandings held by other tangata whenua communities regarding their rivers so as to:

- Demonstrate how tangata whenuatanga/indigeneity was/is a worldview and culture commonly held throughout the country in history
- Assist, therefore, in understanding tangata whenua views of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs

Rivers have been a central concern of iwi and hapū for many generations. There are some tangata whenua communities – such as Whanganui and Waikato – where a river is central to their identity, histories and their livelihoods. Hence, it is valuable to explore, briefly at least, the views held by other tangata whenua communities as a way of contextualising the traditional views of the Wairoa River communities regarding their river, its tributaries and environs.



Fox, William, 1812-1893. [Fox, William] 1812-1893. On the Wairoa, Kaipara near Mariners. [1864]. Ref: WC-008. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/23039684



In this section, we explore tangata whenua ideas of rivers by considering views presented by three river communities before the Waitangi Tribunal. These rivers and their communities are:

- Kaituna River, Te Arawa (located between Rotorua and Maketū, Te Arawa)
- Mōhaka River, Ngāti Pāhauwera (Hawke's Bay, Ngāti Kahungunu)
- Whanganui River, Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi (Whanganui)

The Waitangi Tribunal reports concerning each of these rivers contain interesting detail regarding how these iwi/hapū/whānau communities viewed and experienced their rivers. Hence, we will use the relevant Tribunal reports to provide an introduction to the tangata whenua viewpoint of rivers throughout the country. This section does not exhaust the topic and only provides a brief introduction.

## 3.1 KAITUNA RIVER

The Kaituna River connects the Maketū estuary in Te Moana-a-Toitehuatahi (Bay of Plenty) to the inland waters and lakes of Rotoiti and Rotorua. Consequently, it was and remains a tremendously important waterway for the people of Te Arawa.



The Kaituna River claim was brought by Ngāti Pikiao in 1978 and was heard by the Waitangi Tribunal in 1984. They published their report on the claim in the same year<sup>33</sup>. The Tribunal explains that 'Te Arawa is a confederation of Maori tribes...' including:

...the tribes claiming descent from Tamatekapua living on the shores of the Rotorua lakes and surrounding districts down to Maketu itself. Their lands are shaped to European eyes rather like a long handled pan, or to Maori eyes like a taha—a gourd or calabash. The wide interior lands of the central volcanic plateau and the Rotorua Lakes are in the bowl of the pan or the body of the calabash, and the Kaituna River runs down the handle of the pan or the neck of the gourd to the estuary and the sea at Maketu. Most other great Maori tribes have large expanses of coastline from which to fish and gather shellfish but Te Arawa for all the wealth of its forests, farms and horticultural development has a comparatively narrow strip of coast about 50 kms in length, the main feature of which is the Maketu Estuary<sup>34</sup>.

33. See 'Report of the Waitangi Tribunal on the Kaituna River Claim 1984', [Wai 4], Waitangi Tribunal, Department of Justice, Wellington 1984. See here: [https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt\\_DOC\\_68496990/Kaituna%20River%201984.pdf](https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt_DOC_68496990/Kaituna%20River%201984.pdf)

34. Waitangi Tribunal 1984, p. 7

As the Tribunal notes, an interesting feature of the Te Arawa relationship to this area is their likening of their rohe<sup>35</sup> to a tahā<sup>36</sup> where the Kaituna River flows through the neck of the gourd. Additionally, because the Te Arawa rohe is largely inland, the Kaituna River represents the pathway by which Te Arawa people living inland were able to gain access to the sea and vice versa.

The Tribunal report includes rich detail presented by the elders of Te Arawa to the Tribunal. Here is an example:

The report also demonstrates the deep knowledge of Te Arawa elders concerning this river:

The stem anchor of the canoe (named Tuterangi Raruru) is said to have been placed at Te Awahou, roughly where the Kaituna River flows out to sea today following the diversion cut that was made in 1957. The bow anchor (called Tokaparore) was set down at about the place where the Kaituna River used to flow out to sea at Maketu<sup>37</sup>.

Mata Morehu described the course of the Kaituna River from Lake Rotoiti downstream. He told us of the sequence of natural features, illustrating the history of each. He spoke with deep emotion of the place called Te Wai-i-rangi, a stretch of the water near to where the discharge is to take place as the pipeline is now planned. This spot on the river (a lovely clear pool from which the river flows on into a green tunnel of vegetation) was, he said, the place “where my ancestors returning from battle would go to the water and rid themselves of the tapu upon them after the bloodshed of warfare.” He went on to speak of burial caves that line the river in the steep gorges through which it runs, all of which are sacred places to the Ngati Pikiao<sup>38</sup>.

Other elders discussed how certain resources were harvested from the river. They also noted that the water from the Kaituna is the only water available for certain processes:

The Tribunal was moved by the quality of the presentations by the Te Arawa elders. They write:

Mrs Emily Schuster... spoke in detail of the raw materials she and her students gathered from the river banks and she told us, naming each, of the qualities of one type of vegetation after another. “In the Rotorua area,” she said quite sadly, “we have progressed so much that the only place I can take the women is along the Kaituna River. The kiekie<sup>39</sup> is essential and has to be specially treated. To get the true whiteness out of the kiakia (sic) it must be soaked in running water and the only place we can do this is the Kaituna. . . “ Even to the untrained eye the quality of her workmanship was obvious, and the importance to her work of the flora on the Kaituna riverbanks was plainly evident. She told us that she “would lay down her life to save the Kaituna<sup>40</sup>.”

But perhaps the most dramatic moment in the whole hearing was when a white-haired elderly Maori man came forward and introduced himself as Tamati Wharehuia from Te Matai, an elder of his tribe and one of a long line of Chiefs who had lived by the Kaituna River for generations. (He is also known by the European name of Bob Roberts and is one of the claimants).

He told us, as the others had done, of the importance of the river, of its prominent place in tribal history, of the events that had occurred from time to time and from place to place down the whole course of the waterway.

He urged upon us the need to protect it from harm and likened the river to his own people whom he had a duty to protect from harm<sup>41</sup>.

35. Rohe: Tribal area  
36. Tahā: Gourd  
37. Ibid  
38. Ibid, p. 10

41. Ibid, p.11

Of note in this last quote is that Tāmati Wharehuia 'likened the river to his own people who he had a duty to protect from harm.' We can infer from this quote that protecting the river means protecting the people and protecting the people means protecting the river.

Hence, in just a few quotes from this Tribunal report, we see a number of important themes and ideas being expressed that are typical of tangata whenua communities:

- The whole rohe is likened to a tahā
- The Kaituna River flows through the neck of the tahā
- The Kaituna River is the primary way by which Te Arawa people of the inland areas could reach the sea, and vice versa.
- The placing of taonga from Hawaiki (brought on the Te Arawa waka) at various points near the mouth of the river – thus establishing a number of wāhi tapu about the river mouth
- Elders were able to discuss the details of the river, to explain a 'sequence of natural features' and associated histories. There was a particular place (Te Wai-i-rangi) where toa<sup>42</sup> would cleanse themselves after battle. This site is very near the then-proposed sewage outfall.
- Use of resources available in and near the river. The waterways have become so depleted that certain kinds of water can now only be accessed from the Kaituna River
- Likening the river to their people
- A duty to protect from harm

42. Toa: Warriors (lit: prowess, skill, ability)

## 3.2 MŌHAKA RIVER

The Mōhaka River lies on the east coast of the North Island. Its headwaters are located in the Kaimanawa Mountains near Taupō and the river flows in an easterly direction to reach the Pacific Ocean just south of Wairoa township. The iwi of the river is Ngāti Pāhauwera and the centrality of the river to their identity is expressed in the following way:

Ko Tawhirirangi te maunga  
Ko Mohaka te awa  
Ko Kahu-o-te-Rangi te tangata  
Ko Ngati Pahauwera te iwi

*Tawhirirangi is the mountain  
Mohaka is the river  
Kahu-o-te-Rangi is the chief  
Ngati Pahauwera are the people<sup>43</sup>*

Ngāti Pāhauwera lodged a claim about the river before the Waitangi Tribunal in 1990 and the claim was heard by the Tribunal in 1992. The Tribunal released its report in the same year.

Like the Kaituna River report, the Mōhaka River report contains a host of detail expressing a tangata whenua relationship with a river – this time Ngāti Pāhauwera and the Mōhaka river. Here is a composition that appears in the Waitangi Tribunal report, and which offers details about the river according to Ngāti Pāhauwera tradition:

I timata mai ia i tawhiti pamamao  
Ki te mau mai i tona kupu  
Ko ona wehenga,  
ko te Taharua i Poronui  
Ko Te Ripia ki Ahimanawa  
Ko Te Makahu i Kaweka  
Ko te Waipunga i Kaingaroa  
Ko Matakuhia i Tarawera  
Ko haere mai ma waenganui  
O Turanga-kumu-rau  
Ko Te Titi o Kura  
Ka huri ki te tairawhiti

*It begins in the far distance to  
bring its message;  
Its offshoots (tributaries) are  
Taharua at Poronui,  
Ripia at Ahimanawa,  
Makahu at Kaweka,  
Waipunga at Kaingaroa,  
and Te Matakuhia at Tarawera.  
It then flows down between  
Turanga-kumu-rau and Te Titi-o-  
Kura,  
turning eastward along the side*

43. Waitangi Tribunal 1992, p. 8

I te taha o Maungaharuru  
Ka puta mai ko Te Hoe i Huiarau  
He aha ra te mea nei? He aha ra te  
mea nei?

He taniwha? He tipua? He  
tangata?

Hei ! Kahore ! Ko te awa o Mohaka

E huri ana ra, e koki ana mai,

E piko ake nei, e rere atu ra

Ki te marae o Pahauwera I te

ngutuawa

o Te Ika a Maui

Ki a Tangaroa, ki a Paikea

Te Kai-tiaki o Pahauwera e

*of Maungaharuru,  
emerging at Te Hoe in Huiarau.*

*What is this thing? A taniwha?  
A giant? A man? No!*

*It is the Mohaka River! It twists  
and turns*

*And flows on to the marae of  
Ngati Pahauwera*

*at the mouth of Te Ika a Maui  
— to Tangaroa (the God of the  
sea)*

*and to Paikea (a taniwha),  
the guardian of Ngati*

*Pahauwera<sup>44</sup>*

Here is a  
waiata which  
identifies Ngati  
Pahauwera and  
their connection  
with the river:

Kahungunu, te tipuna

Te Huki,

Te Kahu-o-te-Rangi

Puruaute, me Tureia

Anei ra o matou tipuna

Ko Mohaka ra te awa

Tawhirirangi nei te

maunga

Ko te iwi Pahauwera

e Haruru ana te moana

Haruru ana te whenua

Au, au, aue, ha

No reira au, au, aue, ha

*Kahungunu, the  
[founding] ancestor,*

*Te Huki, Te Kahu-o-  
te-Rangi, Puruaute*

*and Tureia*

*are our ancestors.*

*Mohaka is the river,*

*Tawhirirangi is the*

*mountain*

*And the people are*

*[Ngati] Pahauwera.*

*The sea rumbles, the*

*land rumbles au, au*

*aue ha<sup>45</sup>*

## FOLLOWING THIS, THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL'S REPORT INCLUDES COMMENTS AND PERSPECTIVES OFFERED BY ELDERS OF NGĀTI PAHAUWERA.

Here is Mrs  
Wiki Hāpeta:

The people of this house  
[Rongomaiwahine] belong to the  
river. Many of Ngati Pahauwera  
are said to be descended from  
Mawete, Popoia and Paikea the  
names of three taniwha said to be  
in the Mohaka river.

Other witnesses  
stated:

Ko Pahauwera te awa, ko te awa ko  
Pahauwera (Pahauwera is the river,  
the river is us).<sup>46</sup>

Later in the same report, Ngāti Pahauwera state that  
they view the river as a taonga<sup>47</sup>, a theme that comes  
up time and again in iwi perspectives of their rivers  
and of the environment generally.

44. Mohaka River report, pp. 9, 10  
45. Ibid, p.10

46. Ibid, pp.9,10

47. Taonga: Valued and treasured objects both tangible and intangible



The report then discusses aspects of the Ngāti Pāhauwera relationship with the Mōhaka by touching on:

- Mahinga Kai<sup>48</sup>
- Hāngi Stones
- Water

With respect to food gathering, the Tribunal heard much evidence discussing Ngāti Pāhauwera's use of the Mōhaka as a significant food source or 'larder'. They noted that kahawai<sup>49</sup> caught at the mouth of the Mōhaka was particularly prized and is referred to in iwi literature:

He mao kahawai o te wahapu o te awa o Mohaka, e kore a muri e hokia. A kahawai from the mouth of the Mohaka will not return . . . It was Tureia who said . . . there is a day for the kahawai who, having reached the mouth of the Mohaka River, will not return. Nowadays, when any misfortune is imminent, the kahawai shoal at the mouth of the Mohaka. They do not return to sea. We also use this analogy in farewelling departed people<sup>50</sup>.

The Tribunal report mentions significant pā tuna<sup>51</sup> erected on the river and its tributaries, some structures being very large and reaching across the entire width of the river in parts.

Other resources harvested from the river and adjacent forest shoreline were 'birds, rats, timber, firewood, fruit of the kiekie, medicinal plants, dye made from mixing river clay and pigeon oil, and puha. Timber was washed down the river and used for firewood, for building and for canoes<sup>52</sup>.'

Hāngi stones are of particular interest to Ngāti Pāhauwera, as the Tribunal explains:

Of special significance to Ngāti Pāhauwera were hangi stones obtained from the Mohaka river. Flooding dislodges the stones so that they periodically become available. Four types of hangi stones were known and used by Ngāti Pāhauwera:

- taupunga – a greyish type also used as sinkers;
- opunga – a whitish, trachyte rock, also used for weapons and sinkers;
- poutama – a pink type, obtained mainly from the top of the Mohaka river; and
- kowhaturi/kowhatumakauri – a black/blue type.

The Ngāti Pāhauwera whakatauki "Mohakaharara, taupunga, opunga" refers to the different types of hangi stones which will not break when fired – a symbolic reference to the unity within Ngāti Pāhauwera, notwithstanding their differences. Frequently the hangi stones are given as koha to other marae. Ngāti Pāhauwera were especially concerned that gravel extraction and other activities on the river were destroying these stones and thereby limiting the tribe's ability to hand these on to the generations to come<sup>53</sup>.

48. Mahinga kai: Food gathering locations  
49. Kahawai: Silver fish

50. Ibid, p.11  
51. Pā tuna: Eel weir

52. Ibid, p.12

53. Ibid

One elder, Toro Waaka, spoke to the Tribunal regarding the Ngāti Pāhauwera perspective on water itself:

He and others then went on to discuss the use of river water in various healing practices:

Water, Toro Waaka told us, is of paramount importance to Ngāti Pāhauwera : Our spiritual origins began amidst water and darkness . . . Our primal parents were Ranginui and Papatuanuku. Their children caused them to separate and in grief, the tears of Ranginui fell upon Papatuanuku. These tears were absorbed by Papatuanuku and channelled through underground waterways or tomo...

The spiritual use of the water included healing and tohi rights. The spirituality and healing properties of the waters of the Mohaka were described by Charlie King: Ngāti Pāhauwera is at the beginning of the river, at the river mouth here and out to sea. To us, those who stand on the marae, that is the spirit which is upon us. Our sacred mountain, the river of Mohaka, Ngāti Pāhauwera are the people. The spirituality of the river, the mana, the sacredness and the authority relates to Ngāti Pāhauwera solely. The life of the river we do not want interfered with, lest it be lost. It must be left to flow onward, in the way that it did in the days of the elders. If they were here they would be at the river as it flows onward... And : For some families, if they become ill, they go down to [the water] falls for spiritual cleansing. It is not something that affects all of Ngāti Pāhauwera. Only some of the ones from [the place called] Kahungunu go there . . . It is said that it has healing powers... Cordry Huata referred to the river "as the source that quenches the thirst, and as the healing waters"...

These views were elaborated further with the following:

Finally, Ngāti Pāhauwera elders discussed the river as a 'taonga' and their responsibilities as 'kaitiaki' to care for the river. Wi Derek Huata stated:

Mohaka Tomairangi hei whakamakuku  
Mohaka te wairoa [waiora?]

When the river is referred to as a source of healing, it is usually the spiritual reawakening that is being spoken of.

The late Canon Huata spoke of the healing powers of the river for the body and mind, as well as for the spirit: Now those other streams that run into the Mohaka River. What of those? They told us that they were the waters that Ngāti Pāhauwera bathed in, to heal their bodies, to heal their minds, and to cleanse their spirits. In other words to purify.

Ramon Joe, Wiki Hapeta and George Hawkins referred to ritual bathing and healing powers of the water. At least five of the claimants had lost family in the river. As Ramon

Joe said, "Although their beloved ones were taken by the river, they still love it".

The river is a taonga that we as kaitiaki know we have to preserve. Our ancestors taught us to respect the river and if we respected the river, the river looked after us. If the river is desecrated, it will affect the very deep beliefs we have about the river. That is our Taniwha, the life force of the river, our respect for the river. (The evidence of the late Ariel Aranui stated: To the Maori water is the essential ingredient of life, a priceless treasure left by ancestors for the life sustaining use of their descendants. The descendants are in turn, charged with a major kaitiaki (stewardship) duty, to ensure that these treasures are passed on in as good a state or indeed, better, to those following.

Here is a summary of the themes reflected in these quotes from the elders of Ngāti Pāhauwera:

- Ngāti Pāhauwera also use the popular pepeha construction referring to a mountain, a river (or other waterway) and an esteemed ancestor as a statement of their identity ("Ko Tawhirirangi te maunga, Ko Mohaka te awa, Ko Kahu-o-te-Rangi te tangata, Ko Ngati Pāhauwera te iwi"). This speaks to the centrality of natural phenomenon (mountains, waterways) and esteemed ancestors to the identity of a people.
- Ngāti Pāhauwera talk about the river as a whole, the entire system and interact with it as a whole being
- There are strong associations with many ancestors throughout the entire length of the river
- The identity of Ngāti Pāhauwera and their relationship with the river is elaborated further through their descent from three taniwha in the river (Mawete, Popoia, Paikea)
- The deep unity between Ngāti Pāhauwera and the Mōhaka river is expressed in this statement – "Ko Pāhauwera te awa, ko te awa ko Pāhauwera; Pāhauwera is the river, and the river is Pāhauwera". This is a variation of similar statements made by other iwi concerning their relationship with their rivers - Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au. I am the river, the river is me.
- The river is a source of kai and sustenance for Ngāti Pāhauwera. They made use of pā tuna among other ways of harvesting resources.
- The relationship between Ngāti Pāhauwera and the natural world (including the river) is deepened further when some behaviours of native flora and fauna are said to signal, portend and indicate tohu<sup>54</sup> activities in the human world ('...when any misfortune is imminent, the kahawai shoal at the mouth of the Mōhaka. They do not return to sea. We also use this analogy in farewelling departed people:')

- Other kinds of resources were harvested from the Mōhaka including birds, rats, timber, firewood, fruit of the kiekie, medicinal plants, dye made from mixing river clay and pigeon oil, and pūhā<sup>55</sup>.
- Hāngi<sup>56</sup> stones were another resource harvested from the river. Hāngi stones are a further example where an aspect or feature of the natural world denotes or indicates aspects in the human world. The three kinds of hāngi stones found in the Mōhaka River (taupuna, opunga, kōwhatumakauri) do not crack when fired. This is a metaphor for the unity and strength of Ngāti Pāhauwera who similarly 'do not crack when fired'.
- Water itself is sacred, being the tears of Ranginui absorbed into the body of Papatūānuku.
- The river, its tributaries and water from these waterways, was used in healing practises (to cleanse and purify) and other rituals such as tohi<sup>57</sup>
- The river is the 'spirit within us'
- They do not want the life of the river interfered with
- "Although their beloved ones were taken by the river, they still love it"
- The river is a taonga
- The people are the kaitiaki, the people have a duty to care for their taonga.
- "Our ancestors taught us to respect the river."
- "If the river is desecrated, it will affect the very deep beliefs we have about the river."
- - "...water is the essential ingredient of life, a priceless treasure left by ancestors for the life sustaining use of their descendants. The descendants are in turn, charged with a major kaitiaki<sup>58</sup> duty, to ensure that these treasures are passed on in as good a state or indeed, better, to those following."
- There is an interconnectedness between the river and the mountains

54. Tohu: Sign

55. Pūhā: Sowthistle  
56. Hāngi: Earth oven

57. Tohi: Baptism  
58. Kaitiaki: Stewardship

### 3.3 WHANGANUI RIVER

The Whanganui River claim report<sup>59</sup> contains a striking discussion of the tangata whenua view of rivers. It is a celebrated case and the report includes a section entitled 'The Maori Comprehension of Rivers' (Section 2.6 pp. 36-47). It is valuable to summarise the Tribunal's discussion of this theme.

The Tribunal commences by saying that 'It is necessary to consider how Maori saw and related to the river, recalling again the philosophy of their place in the natural order, and the centrality of the river to everyday lives.'<sup>60</sup> They explain that the river was a 'home built around a river life. The region was marginal for major food crops, but the river, with its eels, fish, freshwater shellfish, and waterfowl, provided the staples.'<sup>61</sup> It was also a major pathway by which numerous inland communities could connect with one another and by which they could also reach the sea.

The Tribunal's discussion includes a number of very important points. The following material are direct quotes from the Tribunal's report and are arranged into themes:

#### Kai/Food

- Spring was the time for planting; summer for fishing at the mouth of the river; and autumn for taking eel and lamprey, harvesting, collecting berries, and storing food. People moved up and down the river and changed their places of residence in accordance with their seasonal calendar for gardening, fishing, and gathering food<sup>62</sup>.
- Down through the generations, Whanganui Maori studied the habits of the river's water creatures and became expert in trapping, preserving, and preparing them for eating<sup>63</sup>.
- Food played a very important part in traditional hospitality, and delicacies such as dried fish taken at the mouth of the river and parrots caught in the upper reaches and preserved in calabashes in their own fat had a prized place in gift exchanges within the tribe and with other tribes. Lavish presentations of food for important visitors were a powerful expression of the mana of the people providing them<sup>64</sup>.

#### Relationship to and core understanding of:

- For the Atihaunui people, the river is a doctor, a priest, a larder, a highway, a moat to protect their cliff-top pa, and, with the cliffs, a shelter from winds and storms. It was, as the Tribunal said in its interim report, 'the aortic artery, the central bloodline of that one heart'<sup>65</sup>.
- The emotive bond cannot be described solely in terms of a sentimental regard for the landforms of one's country. Even the centrality of the river to the people's lives is insufficient to explain how they think of it. It is tied as well to the Polynesian comprehension of the environment, where a river can be described as a tupuna or matua as with a caring parent. This points beyond personification to fundamental beliefs<sup>66</sup>.

59. The Whanganui River Claim Report by the Waitangi Tribunal, Wai 167, 1999

60. Ibid, p.36  
61. Ibid

62. Ibid, p.37  
63. Ibid, p.38

64. Ibid, p.38  
65. Ibid, p.38

66. Ibid, p.38



- Accordingly, for Maori the works of nature - the animals, plants, rivers, mountains, and lakes - are either kin, ancestors, or primeval parents according to the case, with each requiring the same respect as one would accord a fellow human being<sup>67</sup>.
- The relationship between the people and the river might therefore be described as god given, at least in their eyes, calling for respect between people and the natural world as Maori saw it, and in which the river is a living being or tupuna with its own mauri and spiritual integrity. People speak and listen to it, for the water is so much their blood as to produce a state of communication<sup>68</sup>.

### Tikanga, Cultural Behaviours

...fishing codes were extremely precise, not only to ensure the peaceful sharing of resources or to maintain stocks but more fundamentally to keep faith with the gods, to maintain water purity, and to avoid any appearance of greed or disrespect. Propitiatory karakia, or prayers, regularly preceded expeditions. New nets were first blessed and then made whakanoa<sup>69</sup> to avoid spiritual contamination. Rules of personal hygiene were punctiliously observed - there were places for bathing and places for religious ceremonies. Fish were not processed or consumed within the watercourse, fish waste was deposited in defined middens, and waste was generally not discharged to water but returned to the cleansing qualities of the land. Times for fishing different species were maintained, the sharing of catches was informally but still definitely required, and food was preserved, not least for personal consumption but to show gratitude to the gods by the sumptuous hosting of visitors. Codes of conduct for the regulation of society were all bound up with rituals of identity between people and the deity<sup>70</sup>.

### Mauri

From the detailed cosmogony of the Maori, it follows further that all things have a mauri, a life-force and personality of their own, and it was certainly the case that a river was seen to be so endowed. Again,

the mauri or the natural bent of a thing was to be respected. People could not alter it or fundamentally change its character without an appropriate propitiation of the associated ancestral god, by ritual and with evidence that the change was necessary for the wellbeing of the related people. Conversely, if the mauri of a river or a forest, for example, were not respected, or if people assumed to assert some dominance over it, it would lose its vitality and force, and its kindred people, those who depend on it, would ultimately suffer. Again, it was to be respected as though it were one's close kin. A group may have another mauri again. A tree has a mauri, but so also does the forest, of which it is part. Likewise, a person has a mauri, while there may be another again for a group to which that person belongs. The mauri of the group may be stronger or preferred, for it is rare that Maori will examine the component parts of a thing without first looking to the ahua, or the shape and appearance of the whole<sup>71</sup>.

### Indivisible nature

It follows that, in rendering native title in its own terms, the river is to be seen as an indivisible whole, not something to be analysed by the constituent parts of water, bed, and banks, or of tidal and non-tidal, navigable and non-navigable portions, as may be necessary for the purposes of English law.

### Tapu

In evidence before the Maori affairs select committee in 1980, the elder Titi Tihu considered that the river, or the water in the river, was not strictly tapu, though the river contained tapu sites. However, it really depends upon the level at which one is thinking at the time. There is a sense in which all life forms and significant natural phenomena are sacred on account of the scheme we have described; that is, as part of the earth mother or the works of her offspring gods. Certainly, the river was seen as deserving of high respect and as having mana or power. This could apply to all rivers, but the Whanganui River, perhaps because of its length and the large attendant population, was held in special esteem. It was prayed to and was used in ritual, for healing, or as a medium to keep contact with the gods. Its awesome nature was enhanced by the many who had populated its length for generations,

for in the result, numerous ancestral spirits came to be held within its flow. Accordingly, it is still regularly prayed to for healing purposes, as a prelude to an undertaking of some kind, or simply as a matter of course. We understood that some parts of the river were especially sacred on account of a past event - a battle with many deaths, for example. It was also usual that each village had its own wai tapu, or sacred place, where children were dedicated to the gods in tohi (baptism) rites, where the sick were cleansed of spiritual or physical afflictions, and where warriors or tribal emissaries were prepared for pending tasks. Other parts had become synonymous with famous ancestors of some 20 or so generations ago. Their spirits have also mingled with the spirit of the river itself, the people maintaining a substantial record of ancestors within a complex spirit world<sup>73</sup>.

### Taniwha

- Cementing the association of the people and the river is the presence of taniwha, revered water creatures of extraordinary powers, and ngarara, or giant reptiles, which, or who, control the watery domains of particular river caves or beds. These were sometimes deceased forebears whose spirits had taken a taniwha form, but in any event, they were relatives, for both people and taniwha are descendants of the god Tane<sup>74</sup>.
- Most importantly, there was a taniwha for each settlement, and they served to show the right and title of the occupants, and to secure compliance with their law. Though often malevolent, and sometimes indiscriminate in their slaughter, the taniwha were seen as protectors and guardians of both the river and the people. It may have been with that in mind that Titi Tihu advised the Maori affairs select committee in 1980 that the taniwha are 'a local embodiment of the spirit of the river people'. In other accounts, however, the taniwha were tangible. They punished those of the hapu who breached the river-use laws and those from outside the hapu who entered the area with hostile or disrespectful intents. Even today, many Maori are not comfortable when travelling on rivers that are not their own unless in the company of a local person conversant with the ways and whereabouts of these beings<sup>75</sup>.

- ...taniwha are part of the rich tapestry of history and lore that the river brings to mind. They are part of the mix that binds the people and the river together. Ancestors do the same. The naming of ancestors for any part of the river becomes a validation of authority. It is by this process, by myths and legends, stories and song, and the recitation of ancient karakia and genealogies, that Maori continue to assert their river entitlements<sup>76</sup>.

### Water

Water, whether it comes in the form of rain, snow, the mists that fall upon the ground and leave the dew, or the spring that bursts from the earth, comes from the longing and loss in the separation of Rangi-o-te-ra and Papatuanuku in the primal myth. The tears that fall from the sky are the nourishment of the land itself. The life-giving water is founded upon a deep quality of sentiment that, to Maori, puts it beyond the realm of a mere usable commodity and places it on a spiritual plane<sup>77</sup>.

As to the purity of water regimes, to which we have already adverted, we adopt this overview from Professor James Ritchie in evidence before the Tribunal on the Te Whanganui-a-Orotu claim:

- Water has mauri, essential sanctity, both as wai maaori and as wai tai<sup>78</sup>. Water must be kept in its natural state as far as it is possible to do so. The explanations of the origin of water, its different forms, types and so on, in Maaori science, emphasise that ethic. Water, as wai ora<sup>79</sup>, sustains, protects and enhances life. It is avoided if unclean - whether physically or spiritually. It cannot be purified without effort; human effort is not enough, the enlistment of aid beyond the secular is required... It is only through the agency of Papa-tu-a-nuku and her offspring Tangaroa, and his mokopuna Tuutewehiwehi that the mauri of desecrated water can be restored. ... Desecration of water was powerfully sanctioned and the human agencies to enforce them were the kaitiaki, the taniwha of the hapuu and the rangatira. The connection between upstream contamination or other pollution of food sources was known and rigorously policed and sanctioned<sup>80</sup>.

<sup>73</sup>. Ibid pp.40-41    <sup>75</sup>. Ibid p.43  
<sup>74</sup>. Ibid p.42

<sup>76</sup>. Ibid p.44    <sup>78</sup>. Tai: Seaside    <sup>80</sup>. Ibid pp.44-45  
<sup>77</sup>. Ibid p.44    <sup>79</sup>. Ora: wellness, life, health    <sup>81</sup>. Ibid p.46

## Mana

Mana, and the value placed on mana, made respectful behaviour a natural part of everyday life, something not confined to ceremony and ritual, and it was respect, first and foremost, that was accorded the river. This ethic of respect is a central dynamic throughout the Pacific<sup>81</sup>.

## Taonga

The river is thus seen as a taonga - as an ancestral treasure handed down, as a living being related to the people of the place, where that relationship has been further sanctioned and sanctified by antiquity and many ancestral beings. It governed their lives, and like a tupuna, it served both to chastise and to protect. There are stories of those who were punished by the river for transgressions and of those who have encountered its protective power. It was something that they treasured, and though they had possession and control in fact, they did not see it in those terms; rather, they saw themselves as users of something controlled and possessed by gods and forebears. It was a taonga made more valuable because it was beyond possession. On this view of things, the river was not a commodity, not something to be traded. It was inconceivable that such a thing could be done or that anything other than the pre-existing order could continue to prevail<sup>82</sup>.

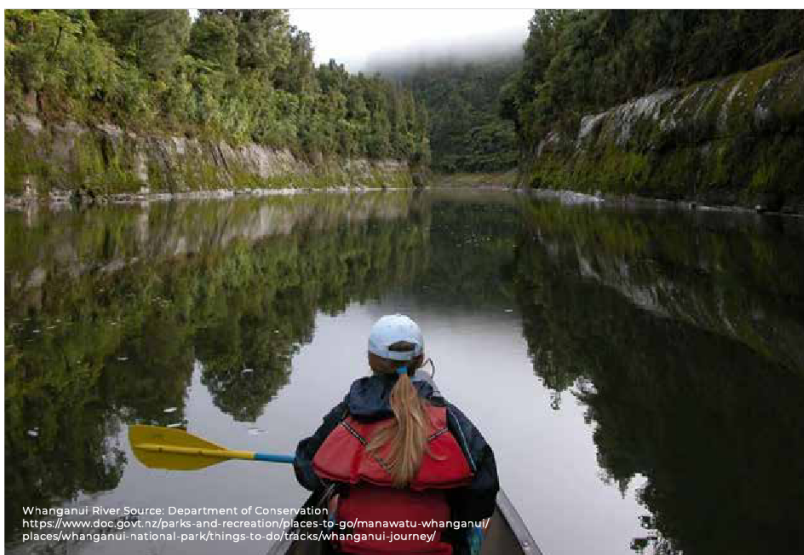
## Identity

Accordingly, what was denied the people, in the subsequent disregard of their association with the river, was not merely a right of user but their status and esteem, and the foundation for their existence as a people. It was central to their lives and to their identity<sup>83</sup>.

## Intergenerational grief

Professor Ritchie's evidence... describes the psychological consequences seen when people are deprived of that which has deep cultural value, when the object of their concerns remains evident before them, and when, as a result, the loss cannot be worked through and put to rest. The grief becomes transmitted through generations and institutionalised, and a deep sadness is evident in visiting sites redolent with meaning and memories. The songs, stories, and speeches on marae keep old associations alive, and anguish is never far away:

- Anonymous, faceless action or simply denial by some unidentifiable 'them' cannot even be confronted to any effect. Helplessness becomes a habit. Psychologists even have a name for it; 'learned helplessness' is that special kind of helplessness which arises from low status, powerlessness, the imputation that somehow you have brought it on yourself, learning how to be a victim. It exists amongst colonised people everywhere, amongst contemporary minorities and has a subtle corroding effect upon self-esteem and competence<sup>84</sup>.



## 3.4 SUMMARY

On the basis of the three examples discussed above, we summarise the tangata whenua view of rivers as follows:

- Rivers are central to the identity of the iwi, hapū, whānau communities who live along those rivers. This sense of identity concerns more than just the ability to harvest resources from those rivers or make use of the river for travel purposes. The river lies at the very core of the identity and humanity of those communities.
- Rivers are not just physical entities. They are a spiritual, emotional, dynamic system, a whole entity and identity containing mana, tapu and mauri.
- Rivers are also inhabited by special energies, identities and qualities such as taniwha.

- Rivers are taonga and for a number of reasons. They are taonga because of their inherent mana, tapu and mauri, particularly the tapu and mana of the water itself and of particular sites and localities. They are also regarded as taonga because of their life sustaining qualities and as sources of kai<sup>85</sup>, resources and sustenance.
- Rivers enable a tangata whenua community to 'communicate' with the source(s) of their divinity, they are the place where that divinity may express itself in the natural world
- Tangata whenua communities maintain a responsibility to care for their rivers and by doing so they care for each other. Care for the river is equivalent to care for people. This responsibility to care is expressed through the concept of kaitiakitanga.

The following quote attributed to the historian Michael King, summarises well the overall tangata whenua relationship with rivers, this time with the Waikato River:

... the tribes of the Waikato Valley are a river people. Five centuries of continuous occupation of its banks have embedded the river deep into the group and individual consciousness. The river's associations grew and ripened with the history of the inhabitants until memories of heroes and villains, of battles, significant journeys and natural disasters, of settlements erected and destroyed – all became part of the river's story, all were commemorated in names and features along its banks. The life of the river became inseparable from the life of the people, and each took the name of the other<sup>86</sup>.

<sup>85</sup>. Kai: Food

<sup>86</sup>. Quoted by Linda Te Aho in 'Te Mana o te Wai: An indigenous perspective on rivers and river management' in River Research and Applications, Volume 35, Issue 10, 2019, pp: 1615-1621. Special Issue, 'International Society for River Science, Waikato Symposium 2017, Integrating Multiple Aquatic Values' <https://doi.org/10.1002/rra.3365>



# 4.0 THE TRADITIONAL TANGATA WHENUA RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WAIROA RIVER

Ko Wairoa, ko Mangakāhia, ko  
Wairua, nga Awa

Ko Te Parawhau, ko Te Uriroi, ko Te  
Māhurehure ngā hapū

Ko Pokapoka (Pokopoko), ko Hoeroa,  
ko Rangiriri whakamau tai ngā  
taniwha

Tihewa mauriora ki te Wheiao, ki te  
Ao Mārama,

Te Ihi Tito

Kaumātua, Te Parawhau,  
Ngā Hapū o Whāngārei

December 2021

We turn now to discuss the traditional tangata whenua/indigenous view of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs. From the outset we wish to state that our discussion of this topic is inadequate and partial. This chapter does not contain an authoritative account of the traditional tangata whenua view of the Wairoa River – this is something that only the tangata whenua themselves can undertake. Rather, this chapter contains a limited introduction to the traditional view of the Wairoa River that we heard in hui wānanga, that was discussed in the interviews and was found in our review of relevant literature, a process of knowledge gathering that was challenged considerably by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is also important to note that there has been a general decline in the presence and application of traditional indigenous knowledge in tangata whenua communities. In some instances, it has been destroyed altogether. The loss of native forests across the study area and the existence of remnant forests today is a good metaphor for the decline and diminution of traditional indigenous knowledge in tangata whenua communities today. It has not disappeared altogether. Important fragments and portions remain, and these communities are desperate to reclaim as much of it as they can and bring it to life again. It's as if 'entering into' their traditional knowledge again is like us entering into the remnant forests today. There is the same sense of relief, of subtle healing going on.

Our interest is to 'get to the heart' of iwi/hapū/whānau concerns regarding their river and environment generally. We wish to uncover the deeper ideas, values and principles that underpin tangata whenua culture both as a means of restoring mātauranga Māori to communities as well as deploying this important knowledge to design and take action to improve the health of the river. It is tempting, and it seems natural, to react to contemporary issues and problems as they arise. However, it is important that tangata whenua communities do not get trapped into reactions but rather 'step back, take time' and ask, "what are we really trying to achieve? What is important, really important, to us? What is our vision for the river and the environment going forward?" Exploring the traditional knowledge of

these communities helps them to understand the deeper ideas and motivations operative in their histories, identities and culture and upon which their vision for the future might be fashioned.

We should note that some tangata whenua communities (notably in Kaipara) arrived in the area in the 19th century. The fact that they arrived at that time does not make them 'less tangata whenua' but rather that the nature of the tangata whenuatanga was achieved through a different historical journey to those communities who arrived in the area several centuries prior. Over time, of course, all of these communities have become interconnected and interrelated to comprise a 'patchwork' of tangata whenua communities across the land and waterways.

Given the amount of mātauranga Māori lost and given the impacts of COVID-19 upon this project, it is important to repeat the point that this chapter does not offer a definitive and comprehensive account of traditional knowledge Māori either found within these communities or relevant to them. It is a sample and an indicator only. It is imperfect. Much more can be said about all the matters discussed here and, no doubt, there are gaps in our presentation.

Second, we are sensitive to the issue regarding items of traditional knowledge that can be found in written documents and those items that are held, known and understood within the communities themselves. Sometimes understandings and knowledge held in a community can be at variance to what can be found in written documents and records.

One of the sad outcomes of colonisation is that, often, the largest repository of traditional knowledge created by a community in history is found in published and unpublished documents held in public collections. Further, even the documents (such as whakapapa books) that are held within whānau, for example, do not necessarily find expression and impact within the community for whom they were created. Consequently, in this chapter, we identify clearly the source of information presented so as to understand first, the origin of the information and, second, to be able identify those knowledge items

that were obtained through our interactions with the communities (eg: hui wānanga, interviews) and those that were obtained by other means (eg: documentary research).

Despite these limitations and barriers, it is important to acknowledge that an amount of traditional knowledge and its influence does remain alive and present nonetheless within these communities. Further, valuable fragments and portions can also be found in documentary records in public and private collections. The information that we discovered through this research, as partial and introductory as it might be, clearly suggests an indigenous relationship to these waterways in much the same vein as that seen in other tangata whenua communities throughout the country.

## 4.1 THE PERMANENCE OF THE LAND, THE IMPERMANENCE OF HUMANKIND

It seems fitting that the first item of traditional literature about the Wairoa that we discovered in our research relates to a fundamental tenet of the tangata whenua worldview - namely, the permanence of the natural world and the impermanence and perishability of humankind. Unfortunately, we were not able to determine the provenance of the following pepeha, however because it was found amongst Tai Tokerau sources of information, we feel confident that it does concern the Wairoa River of the north.

It reads as follows:

Ko te Wairoa tangata e  
haere, Ko te Wairoa ia e  
kore e haere.

*People of the Wairoa  
depart life, but the Wairoa  
current never leaves<sup>87</sup>.*

87. Tāhuhu Kōrero, Sayings of Tai Tokerau by Merata Kāwharu, p.178. Auckland University Press 2008.

The pepeha reflects the enduring nature of the natural world and the impermanence of humankind. There are many whakatauki reflecting this theme. Here are three:

Rārangi maunga tū te ao, tū te pō; Rārangi tangata, ngaro noa, ngaro noa. A line of mountains stands, day and night But a line of people are destined to perish.

Tātai whetū ki te rangi, mau tonu, mau tonu. Tātai tangata ki te whenua, ngaro noa, ngaro noa. The stars above remain, everlasting People on the earth, however, perish.

Toitū te whenua, whatungarongaro te tangata. The land endures, people perish<sup>88</sup>.

The theme of the enduring nature of the land and the impermanence of human life also aligns with the traditional tangata whenua yearning for unification of the natural world. That is to say, in traditional philosophy, the more one aligns to and becomes an instrument of the natural world, the more one overcomes the frailties and corruptibility of human life and achieves permanence and even immortality.

However, it is perhaps ironic given the deterioration of the Wairoa River and its environs, that the first piece of traditional knowledge discovered in this research speaks to the theme of the impermanence of humankind and the perishability of nature. It reflects the profound change in the natural world and humankind's relationship to it that has occurred over the last 150-200 years. Where once humans saw themselves as finite and perishable and the natural world as eternal and permanent, now even the natural world itself is under threat through the impacts of human existence.

## 4.2 TANIWHA

A second and important piece of information reflecting a traditional indigenous view of the river, concerns taniwha. In numerous interviews and in hui wānanga<sup>89</sup> references were made to two taniwha, Rangiriri and Pokopoko, who were/are said to frequent the waters of the Kaipara and Wairoa areas. Rangiriri was referred to in a number of the hui wānanga<sup>90</sup> conducted for this project and also in various interviews.

Rex Nathan, of Ōtūrei Marae, Dargaville, for example, (interviewed 20 April 2020) stated that Rangiriri was 'he whakangau tai' or a taniwha that would move against the tide.

Te Kurataiaho Kapea of Ngāti Whātua and Te Uri-o-Hau (interviewed 28 April 2020) made the following comments:

...kei a Rangiriri te mana o Te Wairoa, tūturu, tūturu, kei a ia, e mōhio ana te iwi, e mōhio ana ngā hapū, kei a Rangiriri, he taniwha kaha. Nā, ko ōna tohu, ko tōna ariā, i runga o Te Wairoa, he rākau tōtara, he tūporo tōtara.

*The mana of Te Wairoa is truly with Rangiriri. All the people know, all the subtribes agree that Rangiriri is a strong taniwha. Rangiriri presents itself as a tōtara tree, or a part of the tōtara tree<sup>91</sup>.*

He continued:

Ki te nohongia, mai rā anō tēnei, ki te nohongia e te kāruhiruhi, arā e te kawau...he manu tupua... ko tēnei nā... ā raro i ngā parirau he pūwherowhero... ka rewa te parirau... ka pūwherowhero o raro...ka mōhio he kāruhiruhi, he tohu mate... ki te nohongia te rākau rā e te kāruhiruhi kua mōhio he rangatira nui ka mate... he pono ērā kōrero, tae noa ki te reanga o taku karani pāpā...

*Should a shag alight upon Rangiriri, that is the shag known as a kāruhiruhi which is distinguished by red underneath its wings, if it should alight upon Rangiriri, then it is known that someone has died, a chief, a person of great importance... this is true and this was the way from long ago till the time of the generation of my grandfather...<sup>92</sup>*

88. See Riley 2013.

89. These taniwha were discussed at our hui at Ripia Marae, Te Houhanga-a-Rongo Marae and Te Kōwhiri Marae.

90. At the hui held at Ripia Marae near Dargaville, 14-15 November 2020, reference was also made to another taniwha called 'Kahukura'.

91. Te Kurataiaho Kapea, interviewed by Charles Royal, 28 April 2020.

92. Kapea interview, 28 April 2020.

Willie Wright of Te Uri-o-Hau (interviewed 6 May 2020) made some additional and important comments. He referred to Pokopoko as a peaceful taniwha, as reflected in this expression:

Pokopoko whiti te rā.  
*Pokopoko who lets the sun shine.*

He explained that at the 1883 opening of a new house at Aotea, Te Keene Tangaroa of Ngāti Whātua welcomed Ngāpuhi to the opening by using this expression. He used it deliberately to nurture peace between Ngāti Whātua and Ngāpuhi as conflict between the two peoples had reached a peak in 1825 with the battle of Te Ika-a-Ranganui.

Willie also stated that Pokopoko lived in a pool in the Ōrewa River called 'Te Rua Taniwha' and that when Pokopoko died, his body was placed in a tree and his 'life form' was transferred into Rangiriri. Finally, Willie also referred to 'tuoro', which are large eels of a taniwha like character.

Here is a description of these two taniwha by the author James Cowan based upon information he received from the Te Roroa elder, Te Rore Tāoho, and another called Hāpeta:

A kind of Maori banshee was—and perhaps still is—the enchanted log Rangiriri, which, when I last heard of it, lay stranded below Dargaville, on the Northern Wairoa River. Rangiriri is a rakau tipua, a demon-tree. It is a log of totara, whose erratic cruises up and down the river were looked on by the Ngāti-Whatua natives with superstitious dread. Rangiriri used to play some queer pranks on the Wairoa. He would sometimes run into a raft of logs and break it up for sheer mischief. He would be seen steering straight up the river, with his wooden tail sticking up, right against the ebb-tide, or he would take a run down stream in spite of the fact that a strong flood-tide was setting in his teeth. That sort of thing invested him with supernatural attributes. Often, again, a bird, a kukupa (pigeon), or a kawau (shag)—the bird of ill-omen—would be seen perched silently on the log as it ploughed its ghostly way through the yellow waters of the Wairoa. That was a sign that never failed. It told the riverside people that some one of their headmen was soon to die. As fateful and significant an omen as the down-flashing of the summer forked-lightning on the sacred peak of Tutamoe was the appearance of that demon-log at a kainga on the river-bank. When Rangiriri left his bed on the muddy shores and went nosing up the river, it would not be long before the tangi's mournful wail was raised along the Wairoa<sup>93</sup>.



Cowan goes on to discuss his informants and offers further detail about the presence of Rangiriri in the Wairoa/Kaipara area.

This and other folk-tales of the Wairoa were told me by the chief Te Rore Taoho. He was a wizened grey old fellow, wearing a shark's-tooth pendant in each ear. Squatting beside him in his weatherboard house by the Kaihu's banks, was another veteran, the tattooed, saturnine Hapeta. And the tales came forth of the Taniwha of the Kaipara and Wairoa. There were taniwha and demons of land and water haunting all this district, said the old men, in the days that are past. From the Kaipara Heads right up the Wairoa and the Kaihu, these dragons held sway. The high clay and sandy hills at the mouth of the Kaipara were once the homes of powerful sea-gods. If a canoe and its crew disappeared there, was it not the work of the water-monster, who raised the angry waves and drew the dug-out and paddlers down into his awful maw? Koia ano! These taniwha must certainly be propitiated if the mariner is to live. And when pakeha ships go to pieces on the Kaipara Heads shoals, who shall say that it is not the work of the taniwha?<sup>94</sup>

Cowan's text discusses another taniwha, Pokopoko, who was said to frequent the waters of the Kaipara:

The great dragon of the Kaipara was Pokopoko (apparently a deified or taniwha-fied hero of olden days) who dwelt in a cave under a half-tide rock at the western head of the Kaipara River, close to which the white man's steamers pass. Not far away is Shelly Beach, a native settlement, and in its vicinity are the vestiges of a cliff on which once stood the great Okāka Pa. This was Pokopoko's hunting-ground. Here he was wont to assemble his army of sea-monsters, of gambolling taniwha and marakihau; they would gather here and perform their singular evolutions before the dread cavernous eyes of their sea-lord. And he would place his sacred brand on their backs, a mark in kokowai (red ochre), and the wonderful inspection parade of the Maori Tritons would be dismissed. The only taniwha, say the Northerners, who would not bow before Pokopoko and submit to the sea-god's earmark were Niua and Arai-te-uru, who now dwell under the Heads of Hokianga Harbour.

Possibly the sea-creatures of Pokopoko's marine parade were a school of blackfish, or of porpoises, or a herd of the vanished sea-lions, which would readily become taniwha to any Maori of a reasonably imaginative mind.

Seven generations ago Pokopoko destroyed the Okaka Pa and all its inhabitants. A tohunga named Mawe, who cherished a grudge against the Ngati-Whatua people of the Kaipara, journeyed here from the Bay of Islands and invoked the assistance of the Lord of the Taniwha. He performed his makutu ceremonies and repeated his incantations and called upon Pokopoko to rise and destroy the Pa which stood on the cliff-top. And the monster, responding, roused himself in his salt-sea cave, hung with waving masses of kelp. He raised his voice like the rolling of thunder, and burrowed under the cliff face, and the winds and the waves came at Pokopoko's call, and lightnings flashed and thunder crashed, and in the turmoil of the elements the Pa collapsed, the hill crumbled, tottered and crashed down into the furious surf, carrying with it the people and their dwellings. All perished, and what a feast was Pokopoko's when Okāka fell!<sup>95</sup>

Finally, another kaumātua of Ngāti Whātua and Te Uri-o-Hau, Mihaka Makoare, makes reference to yet another taniwha, 'Humuhumu'. Information about Humuhumu was obtained from Makoare and a summary of this information was published in a 1946 article by Auckland Museum ethnologist George Graham entitled 'Some taniwha and tupua'. It begins:

This Kaipara tupua was named Humuhumu; he dwelt in the lake or rather lagoon, therefore so known as Te Roto o Humuhumu at north Kaipara heads... This tupua was a totara-log, or rather that log was the sign (or tohu) under which Humuhumu lived, and drifted about the lake for many generations. He was a reputed guardian of, and a contemporary arrival from Hawaiki of the Ngati-whatua immigrant canoe Mahuhu which arrived here from the Pacific... he wandered about the waters of his home as often with as against the wind, and regardless of current conditions, favourable or adverse — the sure sign of his mana as a tupua<sup>96</sup>.

94. The Maori Yesterday and Today by James Cowan, pp. 217-220. Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, Christchurch 1930

95. The Maori Yesterday and Today, by James Cowan, pp.217-220. Whitcombe and Tombs, Christchurch 1930. Te Kurataiao Kapea mentioned 'Pokopoko whiti te rā, Pokopoko herehere taniwha.'

96. From an article entitled 'Some Taniwha and Tupua' by George Graham in Journal of the Polynesian Society, 1946, Volume 55, No. 1, p.36



Lake Humuhumu near Poutū Source: <https://lakes380.com/lakes/humuhumu/>

The article explains that Humuhumu disappeared in about 1820 ('perhaps became water logged') and that this disappearance was an 'ill-omen':

Indeed, some months thereafter, came the already fire-armed Ngapuhi under Tareha. 'These marauders laid waste the ripening cultivations, destroyed many villages and decimated the people. Many refugees fled to the supposed security of the Tauhara? pa, and there held out for some time. At last the pa was captured by the Ngapuhi, after a resistance which was regarded as an epic in the long drawn-out story of Maori inter-tribal warfare. 'Thus was fulfilled the omen of a pa-horo (fallen pa) of which the disappearance of the tupua Humuhumu was considered to have been the portent<sup>97</sup>.

The article further explains that Humuhumu appeared again briefly in 1885 only to disappear again, portending another calamitous event, this time an influenza epidemic:

Interestingly, the article also relates to Humuhumu's re-appearance and disappearance to another event:

Humuhumu reappeared again about 1885 but for a brief period of several months. Subsequent thereto, came a severe epidemic (a whiu), an illness of the nature of rewharewha (influenza). This, occasioned the deaths of many people, including prominent chiefs, throughout Kaipara, Humuhumu has never again reappeared, thus terminating his uncanny career<sup>98</sup>.

Connected also with this final brief re-appearance and disappearance of 1885, was the belief that the doings of Humuhumu's were not unconnected with King Tawhiao's visit to Kaipara at that time. He had come with a retinue of Waikato chiefs to an assembly held at Aotea (Shelly Beach, south Kaipara heads) ; his object was diplomatically to invite the Kaipara tribes to join the Kingite movement; or at least to co-operate with him. This they declined, also diplomatically but politely, to do. A dissatisfied King returned to his Waikato territory. Hence in Maori opinion, that refusal led to an ill aftermath, the consequent epidemic, regarded as the sinister effects of probable makutu or whaiwhai-aitu (ill will of the deities), resulting from probable Maori royal displeasure<sup>99</sup>.

97. Ibid.

98. Ibid.  
99. Ibid.

## Discussion of Taniwha

These extracts offer a glimpse into a phenomenon that was a significant feature of tangata whenua life in days gone by. This section is by no means exhaustive and ought not be considered an authoritative discussion of taniwha traditions in the study area. Rather, these fragments indicate aspects of an important phenomenon that tangata whenua communities, even today, continue to refer to and discuss.

Taniwha are a feature of a worldview which, at its heart, sees the natural world as superior to humankind. Humans do not have dominance and control over the natural world but rather humankind is but one component among many within the natural world - an idea expressed widely in indigenously philosophy and repeated again in this pepeha:

*Ko te Wairoa tangata e  
haere, Ko te Wairoa ia e  
kore e haere.*

*People of the Wairoa  
depart life, but the Wairoa  
current never leaves*

Given the superiority of the natural order - and, given too, that humankind lived primarily in the natural world - it was natural that in this worldview people would see and experience the world filled with powers, dynamic energies and presences of many kinds, both benevolent and malevolent.

*A multiplicity of  
atua<sup>100</sup>, tupua<sup>101</sup> and  
taniwha<sup>102</sup> inhabit  
the natural world and  
this is reflected in the  
quote from Cowan:*

There were taniwha and demons of land and water haunting all this district, said the old men, in the days that are past. From the Kaipara Heads right up the Wairoa and the Kaihu, these dragons held sway... The high clay and sandy hills at the mouth of the Kaipara were once the homes of powerful sea-gods<sup>103</sup>.

*And also in  
this quote:*

...This was Pokopoko's hunting-ground. Here he was wont to assemble his army of sea-monsters, of gambolling taniwha and marakihau<sup>104</sup>; they would gather here and perform their singular evolutions before the dread cavernous eyes of their sea-lord. And he would place his sacred brand on their backs, a mark in kokowai (red ochre), and the wonderful inspection parade of the Maori Tritons would be dismissed<sup>105</sup>.

Additionally, taniwha are understood to be a certain kind of being in the natural world. They live in caves, caverns and lairs which are called 'rua taniwha'. At our hui wānanga held at Rīpia Marae near Dargaville (November 2020), we heard that Rangiriri lived at a place called Tatarakihi near Te Kōpuru. In the case of Humuhumu, his lair was in Lake Humuhumu near Poutō.

Taniwha often appear as enchanted logs of wood that float on water. They are a physical object into which supernatural power has injected itself. The wood is now a 'rākau tipua', a 'demon-tree' as Cowan states. As such it possesses an agency and power of its own. It has autonomy and independence. Certain laws of nature appear to have no effect upon them. They can move against the currents in the water or against the winds. This is reflected in the expression pertaining to Rangiriri which reads, 'he whakangau tai' and 'e ngau i te tai' (who works against the tide).

One of the reasons taniwha are so remarkable is their connection to human affairs. There is a mystical connection between taniwha and the fortunes of the local community.

100. Atua: God

101. Tupua: Supernatural being

102. During our interview with Hōri Kingi of Ngārara-i-tunua (23 August 2020), he referred to patupaiarehe that lived in caves and elevated spaces in and around the Ngārara-i-tunua/Hikurangi area.

103. The Maori Yesterday and Today by James Cowan, pp. 217-220. Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, Christchurch 1930

104. Marakihau are akin to mermaids.

105. The Maori Yesterday and Today by James Cowan, pp. 217-220. Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, Christchurch 1930

They can portend omens, both good and bad, as Te Kurataiaho Kapea explains:

he tohu mate... ki te nohongia te rākau rā e te kāruhiruhi kua mohio he rangatira nui ka mate... he pono ērā kōrero, tae noa ki te reanga o taku karani papa...

if it should alight upon Rangiriri, then it is known that someone has died, a chief, a person of great importance... this is true and this was the way from long ago till the time of the generation of my grandfather...<sup>106</sup>

Cowan explained that the appearance of the kāruhiruhi<sup>107</sup> upon Rangiriri is 'As fateful and significant an omen as the down-flashing of the summer forked-lightning on the sacred peak of Tutamoe.' A further example is that of the 1885 reappearance of Humuhumu which, it was suggested, portended an influenza epidemic and possibly events that followed an unsuccessful visit by King Tāwhiao to the region.

This connection between a taniwha and a person is particularly made in the case of Pokopoko.

Interestingly, Pokopoko appears to have been regarded in a positive light:

Kāhore ia i kite i te konihi, i te kōhuru, engari tāna he riri nui; houhia ake te rongo, mutu tonu ake.

*He would not consider stealth [or] or murder but his fighting was in the open [and] when peace was made, that was the end of it*<sup>108</sup>.

McRae refers to 'Pokopoko-whiti-te-rā' (Pokopoko who makes the sun shine) which in turn refers to the chief who is able to bring about and keep peace. She quotes S. Percy Smith who writes as follows:

The Maoris well know how to introduce references to their ancient history into their speeches, and to apply them to existing circumstances. Thus, at a large meeting of Maoris at Aotea, Kaipara, in April 1883, on the occasion of opening a new runanga or meeting house, and where several of the Nga-Puhi tribe were present whose fathers had been enemies of Ngati-Whatua, Te Keene Tangaroa addressing the guests said, 'Welcome O Nga-Puhi, my elder brothers; come to the house of Pokopoko-whiti-te-ra, &c.' In this the speaker was alluding to their present meeting in peace after their ancient enmity<sup>109</sup>.

Another critically important aspect of taniwha is that they establish certain protocols and procedures to be adhered to by humans. If they are not adhered to then ill fortune will follow:

Now again Humuhumu's brief appearance in 1885 was also regarded as a fore-warning also of his displeasure and of impending misfortune resulting from still other ill doings of his people. For among other indiscreet actions they had gathered shell-fish (kakaehi) and eels in the sacred water of Humuhumu. From that lake such foods might not be gathered, nor birds there snared or shot; yet all such transgressions had been committed to supply the gathering at Aotea. Hence, in fact, the epidemic, and the final disappearance of Humuhumu in disgust because of those mistaken doings of his people, whom he had desired to protect. They had become an incredulous people, had degraded his tapu, belittled his mana, the ways of their ancestors<sup>110</sup>.

106. From an interview with Te Kurataiaho Kapea of Ngāti Whātua, 28 April 2020.

107. Kāruhiruhi: Native shag with red underwings

108. From Māori Oral Tradition: He Kōrero nō te Ao Tawhito by Jane McRae, p. 109, Auckland University Press, 2017 (quoting from Kawharu 2009).

109. Ibid. Willie Wright referred to this event in our interview with him. Noted earlier.

110. Ibid



This quote from Cowan further reflects this idea:

If a canoe and its crew disappeared there, was it not the work of the water-monster, who raised the angry waves and drew the dug-out and paddlers down into his awful maw? Koia ano! These taniwha must certainly be propitiated if the mariner is to live. And when pakeha ships go to pieces on the Kaipara Heads shoals, who shall say that it is not the work of the taniwha?'<sup>111</sup>

The relationship between humans and taniwha is further reflected in the idea that rangatira<sup>112</sup> can also be regarded as a taniwha. That just like the 'rākau tipua', a chief has also been imbued with a supernatural power and they too are no longer beholden to the laws of the natural world. A rangatira can achieve independent agency, autonomy and power - an idea reflected in the following Ngāti Whātua expression which speaks to both the number of taniwha and how the status of taniwha is accorded to both some kind of supernatural presence in the waterways as well as the rangatira of the same place.

Te awa i tere ai te taniwha, he piko he taniwha, he piko he taniwha.  
The river in which taniwha swim, at every bend a taniwha, at every bend a chief<sup>113</sup>.

Finally, a hui attendee at the Te Houhanga Marae hui (17, 18 July 2021) described the river this way:

Ko te awa he atua.  
The river is a god.

Today, we struggle to understand taniwha because we live in a reality where humankind has dominance over the natural order. Daily we are provided evidence of our ability to dominate and control nature - from living in modern homes to driving in cars, from eating foods whose origins are unknown to living in urbanised environments. Looking out upon farmland, for example, reminds us of how much the landscape has been denuded of forest and native biodiversity, how much we have

gained control and dominance over the natural world. All of these daily experiences - and much more - serve to reinforce in our consciousness a sense of our own superiority toward the natural world.

Hence, the belief in taniwha is relegated to an historical and less developed period in human cultural evolution (it is asserted) where technologies were limited and where humankind thus lived within the natural world. There were no 'indoors' or built environments such as we have today. Rather, human life was lived (in these communities at least) in the forests and upon the waterways, within nature.

A critical outcome of living in an urbanised environment, is that we are much less attuned to the rhythms and dynamic qualities of the natural world. That is to say, even if we visited a forest, for example, our experience and understanding of it would be so different to those who live in the forest permanently. We are far less attuned, far less sensitised to the nuances and presences of the natural world.

## 4.3 THE FIVE BROTHERS

A third theme that emerged during our visit to Rīpia Marae, near Dargaville (14, 15 Nov 2020), and again at Te Kōwhai Marae near Ruawai (27 Nov 2021) was the story concerning a group of five mountains - 'five brothers' - who were said to have travelled from the east to make their home in Wairoa.

These 'five brothers' or maunga<sup>114</sup> were:

- Maungaraho (near Tokatoka)
- Ōkirirahi (an island in the river)
- Kewipohutai (near Tokatoka)
- Tokatoka (the local, well known and striking maunga)
- Motuwheke (just south of Rīpia)

<sup>114</sup> Maunga: Mountain

<sup>111</sup> The Maori Yesterday and Today by James Cowan, pp. 217-220. Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, Christchurch 1930

<sup>112</sup> Rangatira: Chief, leader  
<sup>113</sup> Riley 2013, p. 537

These mountains made their way to the Wairoa River and are now located there. Maungaraho and Kewipohutai stand near Tokatoka and Ōkirirahi is said to be an island lying in the river itself. Motuwheteke is located just south of Rīpia Marae and it is said that while his legs remain in the river, his body lies upon the land. (Motuwheteke is discussed further in Section 5.0.)

Tokatoka is the most well-known of the 'five brothers'. It is a dramatic and striking maunga located just south of Dargaville (toward Ruawai) adjacent to the inland bank of the Wairoa River. Here is an explanation of Tokatoka again from James Cowan with information from Te Rore Tāoho of Te Roroa and Ngāti Whātua:

Tokatoka is a sharp-topped volcanic peak rising above the eastern bank of the Northern Wairoa River. "Rocks upon rocks" is the meaning of the name. It has a story and a song, that fantastic peak, lifting like a huge marlinspike above the woods and farms. High up there on Tokatoka's precipitous crag there dwelt a hundred years ago the warrior-chief Taoho, head of the Ngati-Whatua tribe. Taoho's house (said his son, the old man Te Rore Taoho, of Ahikiwi) was close to the Puru (the "Plug"), that rocky projection which juts out from the western face of the peak, the Tokatoka citadel which no foe had ever scaled. This is the tribal warsong of the Ngati-Whatua and Te Roroa, the thundering ngeri of the river-dwellers, enjoining the warriors to be as firm as the great rock Tokatoka, which they regarded as a type of their clan and country:—

A-a! Ko te Puru-e!	<i>'Tis the firm-set rock,*</i>
A-a! Ko te Puru,	<i>The steadfast rock,</i>
Ko te Puru ki	<i>The rock of Tokatoka's</i>
Tokatoka!	<i>height!</i>
Kia ueue;	<i>Put forth your strength!</i>
E kore te riri	<i>The tide of war</i>
E tae mai	<i>Ne'er shall the heart of</i>
Ki roto o Kaipara.	<i>Kaipara touch.</i>
Kia toa!	<i>O tribe, be brave!</i>
A-a-ae! Te riri!	<i>Ah, yes, indeed, 'tis war.</i> <sup>115</sup>

The symbolism of the plug is explained in Riley 2013 as follows:

Te Kurataiaho Kapea offers the following comment:

The saying is derived from the plug which is supposed to stop up the opening of the sky out of which Tāwhirimātea, god of gales and strong winds, lets forth a tempest on man when he so wishes.<sup>116</sup>

Tokatoka puru i te tai... Arā, pēnei me te kō... ā wairua nei... kātahi ka poua ki roto i Te Wairoa, ka tū te ia o te tai... e kore e neke, e kore te hoa riri e hipa.. Tokatoka puru i te tai...e kore tētahi mea e neke...he whakaatu i tō mātou mana i runga i te wai...<sup>117</sup>

*Tokatoka that blocks the tides... like a large digging implement... it is spiritual... it is erected in Te Wairoa and the tides stop... it ceases to flow, enemies are not able to pass... Tokatoka that blocks the tides... nothing can move... a sign of the mana and authority upon the waterways...*

The idea here is that just as a peak like Tokatoka is able to 'plug up' the sky and prevent the tempests and storms from entering the area and wreaking havoc, so too can a mighty chief. This is the person who is able to keep their people free from harm so that they remain in relatively peaceful circumstances. This is what is meant by the line from the ngeri composition which reads:

*E kore te riri e tae mai ki roto o Kaipara. Anger and warfare will not teach Kaipara.*

115. From Legends of the Maori by James Cowan, p. 295, Southern Reprints 1987

116. Riley 2013, p. 550

117. From an interview with Te Kurataiaho Kapea of Ngāti Whātua, 28 April 2020.

Hence, in this example, both Tokatoka the mountain and Tāoho the rangatira are referred to as 'Te Puru o Kaipara'.<sup>118</sup>



The story of the 'five brothers' again reflects a worldview which sees the natural world not only alive with animals, spirits and presences of many different kinds but even the mountains themselves have agency and autonomy. It is similar to the most well-known story of the 'mountains that move' in tangata whenua communities - the story concerning Tongariro, Pihanga, Taranaki and more of the central plateau of the North Island. It is said that the mountains battled over the hand of Pihanga. Taranaki was one of the defeated suitors and he left to travel to the west where he now stands.<sup>119</sup>

## 4.4 TRADITIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KAIPARA AND WAIROA

A fourth important piece of information concerned the traditional view of the river and its relationship to what is now known as the Kaipara Harbour. Historically, the name 'Kaipara' referred to the southern arm of the harbour only, while Wairoa referred to the northern arm. This is because there was once a large peninsula of land called Tāporapora reaching from inland and toward the mouth of the harbour which separated the two bodies of water. Tāporapora was much larger in the past than it is today.

<sup>118</sup> The symbolism is well known throughout the iwi world. See also 'Te Puru o Tāmaki' (<https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-tai/ngati-whanua-orakei-toru>). See also the idea of places of 'safe haven' in the area. Check Lit Review.

<sup>119</sup> The story of the 'battle of the mountains' near Taupō is perhaps the most well known example of this kind of story. See here: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/whenua-how-the-land-was-shaped/page-4>

Te Kurataiaho Kapea explained that following the arrival of the Māhuhukiterangi waka, the people settled the area and established various wāhi tapu (including tūahu and whare kura) upon Tāporapora itself.

Here is how it is described in the Te Uri-o-Hau Settlement Act 2002:

Manukapua (cloud of birds) is extremely significant to Te Uri o Hau because it is the remains of Taporapora, the tauranga waka (landing place) of our ancestral waka (canoe), the Mahuhu ki te Rangi.

When the Mahuhu ki te Rangi and its crew arrived in the Kaipara region from Hawaiki, they named the tauranga waka Taporapora after a remembered place in Hawaiki. Te Uri o Hau traditional history recalled by our kaumatua and kuia states that Taporapora was then a peninsula that extended from the present day location of Manukapua out to the Tasman sea creating a north and south channel at the mouth of the Kaipara Harbour.

Rongomai (Ariki of the Mahuhu ki te Rangi) and some crew members settled and built their wharenuī (meeting house) on Taporapora. The tupuna (ancestors) used the wharenuī to recite ancient knowledge, karakia (incantation), waiata (songs) and whakapapa (genealogy) with rangatira (chiefs) from around the region. This wharenuī housed their taonga (treasures) brought with them from Hawaiki.

Rongomai married a wahine (woman) from the surrounding area and relocated his kaianga (village) from Taporapora to Manukapua and the Okahukura peninsula. From this kaianga he used the surrounding land and water to gather kai (food) for the people.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>120</sup> <https://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2002/0036/latest/DLM156177.html>

However, sometime later, Whakataupōtiki took Māhuhu out to sea and uttered a karakia which caused an enormous storm (he tūpuhi nui) to arise.

This storm made its way inland and such was its force that Tāporapora disappeared under the water. Te Kurataiaho Kapea states:

Te Uri o Hau whaikorero (oration) passed down from generation to generation talks of Rongomai's drowning and of a great tempest that washed away Taporapora because Rongomai did not perform the appropriate karakia before he went fishing.<sup>121</sup>

Ko Tāporapora kua ngaro ki te moana, kei reira tonu a Manukapua, me te mātārae tino whenua nei ko Ōkahukura kei reira tonu i tēnei rā. Ka kiia tērā āhuetanga ko Te Tāraitanga.<sup>122</sup>

*Tāporapora disappeared into the sea, however, Manukapua remains there as well as the peninsula called Ōkahura. This whole event was called 'the fashioning'.*

Since the disappearance of Tāporapora, the two bodies of water became more singular in shape, taking the form of a harbour. However, in Ngāti Whātua and Te Uri-o-Hau tradition, they were still considered as two bodies of water (Wairoa, Kaipara) and it was only after European arrival that the name 'Kaipara Harbour' was applied to the whole water body. The name Wairoa was then left to the river that entered the harbour at its northern end.

## 4.5 NGARU

An intriguing tradition (among many intriguing stories) that we heard in our hui wānanga was the story of three waves or ngaru.<sup>123</sup> We first heard this story or tradition referred to at our hui wānanga at Ripia Marae (14,15 Nov 2021) by Sylvester Bully Leaf who said:

E toru ngā ngaru, hei      *There are three waves*  
whakawātea i te wai.      *that clear the waters.*

He went on to name  
each of these ngaru as:

Hoeroa	Takutai	Rangimārie
<i>a long paddle</i>	<i>seashore</i>	<i>peace</i>

Te Kurataiaho  
Kapea made  
the following  
statement:

E toru ngā ngaru kei runga i te wai o Te Wairoa... he phenomena... mai i uta ki tai... he wai ka tupu ka whati mai i te awa...i ngā rā o mua, i te wā e ora mārika ana te Taiao, he ngaru nui...ka mimiti haere i roto i ngā tau... kua ngaro... te memehatanga o taua ngaru i te hē o te Taiao...te tuatuaanga o te ngāhere... ka heke atu te paru ki roto i ngā awa ririki...

*There were three waves on the Wairoa... these were a natural phenomenon... from inland to the sea, there was a build-up of water that broke in the river... in the past, when the environment was healthy, there were large waves... however they have diminished over the years... and have gone... they have disappeared through the degradation of the environment... the felling of the forests... sediment and mud now make their way into the streams and tributaries...<sup>124</sup>*

121. <https://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2002/0036/atest/DLM156177.html>

122. From an interview with Te Kurataiaho Kapea of Ngāti Whātua, 28 April 2020.

123. Ngaru: wave

124. From an interview with Te Kurataiaho Kapea of Ngāti Whātua, 28 April 2020



Reference was also made to these ngaru during the hui at Te Kōwhai marae. Tokotoko Retimana named the three ngaru as hoeroa, kahukura and rangimārie and some discussion took place as to their meaning. Some thought that the ngaru referred to inland freshwater moving during storm and deluge events. Others wondered whether the ngaru referred to the movement of seawater from the seaward side toward the land, particularly at the mouth of the harbour, much like the three ngaru tradition of the Hokianga Harbour (Ngaru-nui, Ngaru-roa, Ngaru-pae-whenua).

## 4.6 KAI

Of course, the Wairoa was a source of kai, nourishment and sustenance for the tangata whenua:

For many generations and still today the waters surrounding Manukapua provide kaimoana (seafood) such as patiki (flounder), kanae (mullet), pioke (shark), tamure (snapper), kuakua (scallop), pipi, and kutae (mussel) for Te Uri o Hau. The shifting sandbars of the Kaipara Harbour protect this source of kai for Te Uri o Hau. The whenua of Manukapua and the surrounding area provided manu (birds) of many species and many of those species still nest and roost here today.

*The mauri (life force) of Manukapua represents the essence that binds the physical and spiritual elements of all things together, generating and upholding life. All elements of the natural environment possess a life force and all forms of life are related. Mauri is a critical element of the spiritual relationship for Te Uri o Hau.*<sup>125</sup>

Attendees at the Te Houhanga Marae hui discussed flounder, mullet, snapper, gurnard, tuna, kahawai, stingray - all species that were traditionally harvested in the Wairoa.

During the hui at Rīpia Marae, we heard that 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 length where various resources could be harvested. Hence, the river communities could move around the river at various times of the year to harvest resources according to agreements between each other. This annual process also fostered kinship ties along the river. Harvested species included tāmure<sup>126</sup>, ngaehe<sup>127</sup> and kanae<sup>128</sup>. Other species included toheroa, tuatua<sup>129</sup>, pātiki<sup>130</sup>, mussels, oysters, and tuna<sup>131</sup> (he nanao tuna).

*'The river was our motorway, we all had jetties, all the way to Tangiteroria.'*<sup>132</sup>

56 <https://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2002/0036/latest/DLM156177.html>

126. Tāmure: Snapper  
127. Ngaehe: Dogfish

128. Kanae: Mullet  
129. Tuatua: Edible mollusc

130. Pātiki: Flounder  
131. Tuna: Eel

132. A statement made at our hui wānanga held at Rīpia Marae, near Te Kōpuru (14-15 November 2020)

At our hui at Te Kōwhai Marae, we heard how the Kaipara and Wairoa were referred to as Te Kete Kai o Ngāti Whātua, 'the food basket of Ngāti Whātua'. The hui also discussed a host of matters associated with kai including:

- The tikanga of collecting and gathering kai - where, when, how and by whom the kai is to be collected. With respect to when and where to collect kai, reference was made to Maramataka<sup>133</sup>, the traditional Māori way by which time is marked and kai is collected
- Tikanga<sup>134</sup> concerning the preparation of kai - utilising certain recipes and ways of preparing kai, understanding that kai can also be used to communicate messages from those preparing kai to those receiving the kai.
- Tikanga concerning the presentation of kai - in formal hākari<sup>135</sup> of the past, there were various customs pertaining to the way kai was unveiled and placed before guests. Once again, the manner of the presentation communicated certain ideas and messages to be received by the guests.

At Tau Henare Marae, we heard about kēwai<sup>136</sup> (freshwater crayfish) and tuna and how they were collected in inland areas.

## 4.7 TIKANGA

Interactions with the natural world were governed by a host of tikanga, protocols and procedures. We noted earlier how various sanctions and protocols were put in place by taniwha (and the consequences if these were not adhered to!).

A famous tikanga in Kaipara/Wairoa is the sanction against the eating of the araara or trevally. This tikanga was put in place following the death of Rongomai. When his body was found, it had been eaten by the araara and so from that time, no araara was eaten from the Kaipara/Wairoa. Here is an explanation found in an article by George Graham and published in the Journal of the Polynesian Society:

...Rongomai also took a wife from the people of Taporapora. He then went to live at Manukapua and at Okahukura, where he resided permanently. Having neglected some uru-uru-whenua ceremonies before going fishing, he was drowned. His body was gnawed by the araara (trevally) and tamure (snapper). It was cast up on the rocks near Waikaretu and badly pounded by the sea waves. Hence the name of that rocky foreshore between Pouto and Waikaretu, "Te Akitanga-o-Rongomai." Because of this, that former good fishing ground was long disused. His descendants, the Ngati-rongo, do not to this day eat the flesh of those fish.<sup>137</sup>

A further tikanga concerns the area at the mouth of the Kaipara/Wairoa which is a difficult and occasionally treacherous stretch of water. Riley 2013 also includes the following expression:

E kore koe e puta i ngā  
toretore o Waihi.

*You will not be able to pass  
through the rough waters  
of Waihi.*<sup>138</sup>

137. 'Mahuhu: The Ancestral Canoe of Ngati-whātua [Kaipara]' by George Graham in The Journal of the Polynesian Society Vol. 48, No. 4 [192] (December, 1939), pp. 186-191.

138. Riley 2013, p. 537

133. Maramataka: lunar calendar  
134. Tikanga: Procedure

135. Hākari: Food presentation  
136. Kēwai: Freshwater crayfish

Waihi is located near the mouth of the Wairoa. This is further expressed as follows:

The George Graham article on the Māhuhukiterangi waka includes the following explanation:

Finally, Te Kurataiaho Kapea offers the following:

Tāporapora whakatahuri waka, whakarere wahine.

*Tāporapora overturns canoes and makes widows (of men's wives).*

Rongomai's death was attributed to the jealousy of his brothers-in-law and their acts of witchcraft, which caused the capsize of his canoe when crossing the Taporapora channel. Hence the words in part of his widow's lament: Taporapora whakatahuri waka, whakarere wahine. (Taporapora that capsizes canoes, and bereaves women). This remains a proverb to these times, because of the many lives lost in crossing that Kaipara channel.<sup>139</sup>

... he maumahara ki te āhuatanga i pā ki a Rongomai... he tohutohu, he whakamaumahara ki te iwi ki te kaha mōrearea o te moana, kia tūpato...ia whakatupuranga i muri mai, ka hia waka i tauri...he waka taua, he waka haere ki te hī... ka mahue mai nei he wāhine hei pouwaru.. engari, toa tonu aua wāhine...

... this is in memory of the events that affected Rongomai... it is a direction and warning to the people to be careful about the waters here... in every generation there has been at least one boat that has capsized... whether a war canoe or a fishing canoe... and so women are widowed... however, they were strong women...<sup>140</sup>

At the Te Houhanga Marae hui, we heard about the following:

- Rituals and customs associated with ancestral places, such as tohi, pure (cleansing rituals) and more
- The river as a place where one is cleansed (bathing, washing)
- The place of the Maramataka to guide many things including the tuna harvest
- The importance of environmental tohu (including flooding) and knowing how to read them.

Finally, at the Te Houhanga Marae hui, reference was made to three tohorā (whales) that were stranded at Mangawhare. They were subsequently named for three marae, Ōtūrei, Rīpia, Waikāretu (one tohorā was called Manaaki and is associated with Rīpia Marae).

## 4.8 PLACE NAMES

Placenames, too, offer a glimpse into the traditional tangata whenua view. At Te Aroha Marae, Mangakāhia, we heard about the following:

- Mangakāhia: a type of plant that used to grow along the edge of the river (possibly referring to the kahia or kohia plant)
- Pakotai: the crackle of the western tide, was heard as far inland as this location
- Ōmiru – the name of the Wairua Falls
- Parakao: Concerns a type of kūmara, te para o te kaokao (te reka o te kumara)
- Pakotai – te pako o te tai (the 'crack' of the tide), ngā tai e rua (two tides)





## 4.9 WĀHI TAPU

As we saw in our earlier discussion regarding taniwha, the traditional tangata whenua view saw and experienced the natural world as alive with a multiplicity of identities, entities and supernatural characters of many different kinds.

Consequently, the natural world was replete with wāhi tapu or sites made sacred through:

- their association with deities and gods
- their association with events of great mana and tapu; or
- their association with deified and sacred ancestors
- a combination of the above

The defining feature of a wāhi tapu is that it is a place where some kind of mana has expressed itself and thus the locality has become sacred or tapu. Wāhi Tapu were either places in which one frequented and conducted rituals so that one became similarly endowed with the mana of those places; or they were places to be avoided lest one breach the sanctions that the gods themselves had put in place. At the Te Houhanga Marae, we heard about wāhi tapu - such as ancestral sites including pā<sup>141</sup>, kāinga<sup>142</sup>, battle sites and more - located all along the river.

That the natural world is alive with presences and mana is again reflected in the following quote from an 1838 publication by one Joel Polack:

I was answered by the plaintive ti-ti-ti of the Kori-maku bird (sic, probably korimako, bellbird), who sat perched on a raoui (sic, probably a pou rāhui), whose original carving had long since been obliterated, and covered with ivy like moss. The canoes were hastily paddled past this spot, as the poor Korimaku (sic) was instantly recognised as the Atua, or spirit, of the chief, whose bones had been buried long since in

the sepulchre below. I was told by Tamaroa, who was well learned in the traditions of these parts, that the monument we had just passed had been erected to the memory of a great warrior chief of Kaipara, named Tamiteri, who had fallen in battle, fighting the tribes of Waikato. His body had been recovered, but the head had been purloined by the enemy, who had preserved it after the native fashion. It was added, he had become a river-god, and kept at this station, upsetting canoes, and playing divers feats of a similar nature, such as causing the river at times to be impassable, by raising heavy swells, as some satisfaction for the detention of his head ... our companions in the canoe listened with the most eager attention to the truths uttered by this choreographer.<sup>143</sup>

Here is another quote concerning a place called Tauhara written by Cyril Halfpenny:

...at the mouth of that creek was an old cemetery site, the wind uncovered human remains very often. In fact all of the coast line has been at numerous spots and dune internment sites. I remember a bone-scraping gathering thereabouts (hahunga) about 1881, and was told it was the last event of that kind.<sup>144</sup>

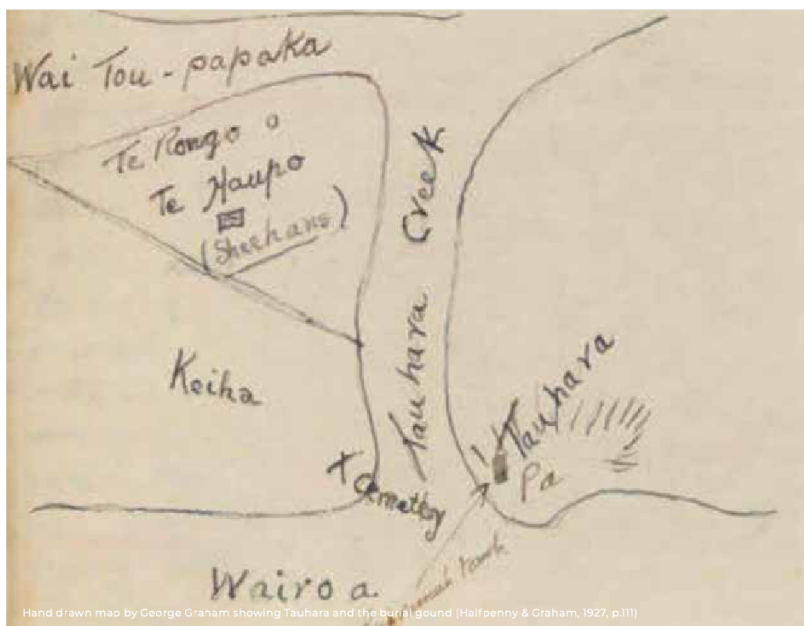
In another letter to Halfpenny dated 16 February 1926, George Graham noted that Tauhara Point's "Pareo-Tonga" (Pare-o-tonga) referred to the cliff-front and Tauhara is the pā. There is a story which states that when the tihi<sup>145</sup> falls into the sea, a result of gradual erosion, then some dire calamity will result such as the death of the surviving rangatira. He explained:

North of Tauhara is a prominent cliff front where there is a cave or fissure wherein the dead people of rank were interred.<sup>146</sup>

141. Pā: Fortified village  
142. Kāinga: Home

143. Polack, 1838, pp. 147-8  
144. From a letter to Halfpenny by George Graham dated 14 April 1926. See Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 130

145. Tihi: Pinnacle of the pā  
146. Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 111



Polack (1838) include the following note about Tauhara:

The north-west head of the (Wairoa) river was about three miles distant ... The valley of Te-Taohara (sic, probably Tauhara) was strictly tapued. Here was fought the last battle with the unfortunate tribes of this river, the remnant that was saved being taken for slaves. The groves that formed the Wai-tapu, for the bones of the miserable slain, lay in front of us as we landed. On this beach the vanquished were devoured. On my advancing near the Wai-tapu, the natives, in a piteous tone, begged me not to go near, as the spirits (wairua) of the place would kill them, or at least make them ill, for having brought a white man to this village of the dead. I moved away from the place, which from its solitary and dreary aspect, together with the details

given me of the former unhappy people, and the treacherous manner in which they were murdered, gave me a great dislike to the spot. The clear notes of the little korimaku (sic) bird, hopping among the branches of the Wai-tapu, struck on my ear like a primitive requiem to the departed, of whom not a descendant existed in the broad lands of their birth containing the treasured cemeteries of their ancestors.<sup>147</sup>

## 4.10 OTHER MATTERS

Finally, during our hui wānanga, we heard about two further matters:

- The Wairoa River as an arterial route to travel inland
- The Wairoa River as a place to recreate and have fun

Attendees at the Te Houhanga Marae Hui described the Wairoa River as the 'super highway', the primary arterial route by which people and goods were able to reach inland communities, both in pre-European times and today. They also discussed how the river was a place in which to play, to have fun and to recreate.

## 4.11 SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

In summary, we return to our point regarding the amount of cultural knowledge loss that has taken place within these communities over the past 150 years or so. Evidence of this was found throughout the research. Each community visited and each community member interviewed demonstrated the diminished influence and impact of this traditional worldview upon them. Consequently, what has emerged through the research is a partial and incomplete picture of the traditional tangata whenua worldview.

<sup>147</sup> Polack, 1838, pp. 201-2

It is possible, however, to bring together an interim, partial and incomplete answer to Research Question 1 which states:

This interim, partial and incomplete answer reads as follows:

What is the traditional tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of the river and its tributaries?

The tangata whenua:

- viewed the natural world as eternal and permanent while humankind were perishable and impermanent.
- believed the natural world to be inhabited by a multiplicity of identities, energies and qualities - some endowed with supernatural power - possessing their own autonomy, agency and independence. Some of these identities included taniwha, maunga and ngaru. They were also associated with specific localities which rendered those places sacred (wāhi tapu).
- believed that human beings could take on some of the attributes and powers of the natural world, thereby achieving their own autonomy, agency and power. In some examples, a taniwha is both an 'enchanted' feature of the natural world (such as a log of wood) and a local rangatira associated with the same place.

- Possessed a host of names and naming customs for places, features and localities which reflect both aspects of the natural world and/or relationships to those places. Traditional placenames offer a glimpse into the way these communities traditionally viewed and experienced their places.
- believed that the harvesting, the preparation and the presentation of kai was a profound part of being human and participating in human life and culture. The harvesting of kai, for example, was an expression of mana whenua in that it demonstrated not only the right to harvest kai from certain places but also the idea that kai was an expression of mana whenua - and that partaking of mana whenua (in the form of kai) brought mana into oneself.
- maintained an array of tikanga, customs, protocols and procedures associated with all aspects of life such as the harvesting of kai. Maramataka, for example, was used to guide such things as when to harvest kai, what type of kai and where.
- regarded Wairoa as the body of water in the north of what is known today as the Kaipara. The concept of the 'Kaipara Harbour' is modern.
- used the Wairoa as a way of travelling inland (and returning to the sea). Localities on the river were also places to recreate.

This is a brief summary of themes and ideas brought to light through this research. We stress that this is a partial picture of the traditional tangata whenua worldview.

The loss of cultural knowledge over the years points to and indicates the diminished impact and influence this worldview and this knowledge has upon these communities today. Given the history of colonisation, and the massive and radical changes that have taken place in the environment, the diminished influence of this worldview today is not surprising.

Despite this reality, however, it is important to note: the deep interest that these communities have in their traditional knowledge and the desire to repatriate this knowledge, as fragmented and incomplete as it might be, to help inform their decision-making today.

Further, this deep interest in their traditional knowledge is fuelled, first by a desire to deepen their knowledge and understanding of their identities, histories, value systems and worldview. Secondly by a desire to explore and understand how some of the ideas found in this traditional knowledge might yield new, useful and exciting innovations and possibilities going forward (discussed in Section 7.0).



Great Britain, Hydrographic Office. Great Britain, Hydrographic Office. Kaipara Harbour [map with ms annotations], 1938. New Zealand Geographic Board: Selection of maps of New Zealand. Ref. MapColl-NZGB-5/26/345/ACC-55031. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/36175944



# 5.0 THE TANGATA WHENUA VIEW OF CHANGE IN THE WAIROA RIVER

The European colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand brought about massive and radical change to tangata whenua communities and to the environment. After an initial period in which European settlers created a life for themselves within the world of the tangata whenua - where iwi, hapū and whānau communities still managed all aspects of life - slowly, but surely European colonisation began to take hold. No single point in time can be determined as the 'commencement point' of colonisation (after Cook's arrival, of course). However, it is useful to point out a number of significant events which are iconic in the colonisation of this country. For example, Samuel Marsden's fateful arrival to the Bay of Islands in December 1814 and, more particularly, the delivery of the first Christian sermon is undoubtedly historical in that it signals the arrival of a new worldview in the form of Christianity. Although Christianity is not responsible for all aspects of colonisation, it is important to remember that it was largely a Christian culture that brought colonisation to Aotearoa during those fateful days. It is also important to recall the significant role that the churches played in the colonial project.

Another significant event (or series of events) signalling a massive change in Aotearoa was the advent of 'land purchasing'. This began with the 1839 arrival of the New Zealand Company who 'purchased' large areas of land. While many of these so-called 'purchases' were voided (by, among other things, the work of the 1842 Spain

Commission), it nonetheless introduced the iwi world to the idea that one could buy and sell land. Such a phenomenon, as we know, was to have a devastating impact upon iwi, hapū and whānau communities in the centuries to come. Where once they owned all the land in this country, today Māori land holdings total perhaps 4% of the country<sup>148</sup>. This in itself is a simple indicator of the degree to which the world of the tangata whenua was dismantled, diminished, alienated and in some instances, destroyed altogether.

Of course, the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 was a further critical step in the European colonisation of New Zealand. It created a right which enabled the British Crown to establish Government in this country. A further, and less well known, provision in the Treaty was the creation of the right of pre-emption that was granted to the Crown. Here is how the text reads in Te Tiriti o Waitangi:

Otiia ko nga Rangatira o te wakaminenga me nga Rangatira katoa atu ka tuku ki te Kuini te hokonga o era wahi wenua e pai ai te tangata nona te Wenua – ki te ritenga o te utu e wakaritea ai e ratou ko te kai hoko e meatia nei e te Kuini hei kai hoko mona.<sup>149</sup>

Here is the text in the Treaty of Waitangi:

...but the Chiefs of the United Tribes and the individual Chiefs yield to Her Majesty the exclusive right of Preemption over such lands as the proprietors thereof may be disposed to alienate at such prices as may be agreed upon between the respective Proprietors and persons appointed by Her Majesty to treat with them in that behalf.<sup>150</sup>

148. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/interactive/maori-land-1860-2000>

149. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/treaty/read-the-treaty/maori-text>

150. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/treaty/read-the-treaty/english-text>

This provision meant that if Māori wished to sell land, they could sell to the Crown only. The effect of this provision was that it halted competition with other parties (such as the New Zealand Company) and meant that the Crown now had a monopoly on the purchase of Māori land. This provision stayed in place till the passing (there were a few exceptions) of the Native Lands Act 1862. The Act did away with this provision and enabled anybody to purchase land from Māori (except in the Manawatū area).

...Her Majesty may be pleased to waive in favour of the Natives so much of the said Treaty of Waitangi as reserves to Her Majesty the right of preemption of their lands and to establish Courts and to make other provision for ascertaining and defining the lights of the Natives to their lands and for otherwise giving effect to the provisions of this Act...<sup>151</sup>

The Act also set up the framework which led to the establishment of the Native Land Court which was achieved with the Native Lands Act 1865.

The impact of these provisions and Acts of Parliament was to enable the widespread 'individualisation of title', a system which determined individual owners of blocks of land. This determination of title ownership was the first step toward the alienation of that land from its owners. Once ownership was determined in this way, the land was now able to be traded in the newly introduced economy which the might of the British Crown and Government was determined to see established in Aotearoa. It was for this reason - the hastening of land alienation from Māori - that the Native and Māori Land Courts became known in Māori circles as 'Te Kōti Tango Whenua'.<sup>152</sup>

We need not rehearse the full history of the alienation of Māori land throughout the country in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is a vast and devastating history that resulted in intergenerational trauma,

poverty and destitution for many Māori. It also placed the entire tangata whenua world onto the 'back foot' where it had to make innumerable adjustments, changes and alterations to cope with this enforced change. For some iwi communities (in Waikato, for example), the changes were 'overnight' with vast tracts of iwi land confiscated. In other iwi communities, the alienation of land was gradual, over a period of decades. However, the result was still the same - leaving many Māori to live on tiny remnant blocks and others landless altogether. This was despite the fact that Te Tiriti o Waitangi says this:

Ko te Kuini o Ingarani ka wakarite ka wakaee ki nga Rangitira ki nga hapu – ki nga tangata katoa o Nu Tirani te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou whenua o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa.

And the Treaty of Waitangi says this:

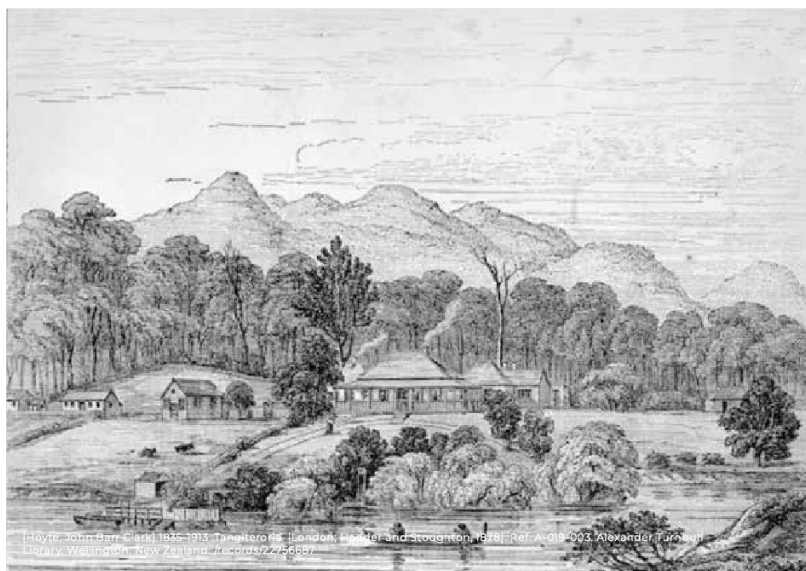
Her Majesty the Queen of England confirms and guarantees to the Chiefs and Tribes of New Zealand and to the respective families and individuals thereof the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession;

It was the widespread alienation of the land that really initiated the weight and thrust of colonisation - and once this was under way, Aotearoa was never to be the same again. The loss of land meant the loss of resources, an economic base and ultimately the loss of political influence and power. It is generally true that as more land was alienated from Māori, Māori political influence and power diminished. Conversely, as more and more land went into Pākehā hands, so Pākehā political power and influence increased. Hence, the alienation of land from Māori was an essential process by which the Crown could then implement its plans to establish Government in this country and introduce an entirely new economic system.

151. [http://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/hist\\_act/nla186226v1862n4225/](http://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/hist_act/nla186226v1862n4225/) Of course, it is arguable that this action taken by the Crown represents a breach to the Treaty as it reflects a change in the intended consequences and impacts of the Treaty without discussion with the Māori Treaty partner. Although, on the face of it, the provision in the 1862 Act impacted the Crown only (in that it did away with the Crown's right of pre-emption), its actual impact was to speed up the alienation of land from Māori.

152. See Te Kōti Tango Whenua: The Native Land Court 1864-1909 by David Williams, Huia Publishers 1999. See also: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-koti-whenua-maori-land-court/page-2>

70 See Te Kōti Tango Whenua: The Native Land Court 1864-1909 by David Williams, Huia Publishers 1999. See also: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-koti-whenua-maori-land-court/page-2>



## 5.1 THE FELLING OF THE FORESTS AND THE NEW ECONOMY

No area of the country escaped colonisation - and so the same forces and processes seen elsewhere in the country were also applied in the Wairoa catchment area. It began, first, with a small group of settlers purchasing small pieces of land and with the arrival of missionaries. However, it steadily grew as more and more land was alienated into Pākehā hands and the new economy could begin to take hold. In the Wairoa area, the next step was to fell the forests.

Writing in *The Great Northern Wairoa* (1982), Bradley describes how the Wairoa area was viewed in the early days of colonisation:

Regarding the flatlands along the river, Bradley writes as follows:

These quotes offer a glimpse of the sheer scale of the ambition to fundamentally change the world of the Wairoa. The experience of one Thomas Forsaith is an excellent example of the arrival of an individual signalling the arrival of the new economy:

The Northern Wairoa was at one time simply looked upon as a great timber district with surrounding gum-fields both of which would in time be worked out. Many predicted that when the last log went down the river the last man would go with it. How wrong they were! The Wairoa was then a 'Maiden District' and its development was only just beginning. This is a strange comment to make on a district that had just finished producing more wealth than the rest of the Colony put together.<sup>154</sup>

There were 100,000 acres of very rich alluvial flats which, when drained, would and could carry one cow to the acre. Experts stated that once developed, the Wairoa would smother Taranaki. Added to all this was the wonderful transport system, 'the river'. The flats fringed the river for over 40 miles on each bank and extended back into the hills.<sup>155</sup>

In 1838, Thomas Forsaith chartered the *Coromandel*, loaded it with trade goods and lumber making machinery, and immigrated to New Zealand. In 1839, he purchased two blocks of land in the Kaipara district and established a trading station at Mangawhare<sup>156</sup> on the Northern Wairoa River. He also erected a mill to cut kauri spars (then selling at £17 each) for the British Government, and imported cattle and farm implements to break in his land. By May 1841, he had cleared and fenced 12 acres, of which 10 acres were sown in wheat.<sup>157</sup>

153. Shows a canoe with two seated men, paddling past a homestead and outbuildings on the banks of the river. The homestead is the mission station at Kaipara which was conducted by the Reverend J Builer.

154. Bradley 1982, p.31  
155. Ibid

156. Present day Dargaville.  
157. Bradley 1982, p.36



Here are further quotes, all from Bradley 1982, which point to the extent of the project now under way:

"Ships would sail right up to Tangiterōria and navigating the narrow stretches called for skill of the highest degree. Later, when the Wairoa Bridge was opened, steamers of 1300 tonnes went through the lifting span ... Today a large ship could not pass under the bridge as there is very little water at low tide owing to sifting" (Bradley, 1982, p. 15)

"Steamers of 4000 tonnes could use the river with no tolls or maintenance" (Bradley, 1982, p. 31).

"The swamplands could carry two sheep per acre and the gum country's value had not yet been ascertained but later carried as much stock as other parts of the Wairoa" (Bradley, 1982, p. 31).

"The extent of development of the Northern Wairoa was built on its easy water transport. Boats of all descriptions plied its waters carting away the wealth. Timber, gum and flax and later cream boats" (Bradley, 1982, p. 32).



Here is a further quote from Buller 1878:

It was far up, on the last-named of those rivers, that our station was being formed. Vessels of heavy burden can go up fifty miles or more. After that the river gradually narrows, is tortuous in its course, and suited only for steamers.<sup>159</sup>

158. 'In the foreground are five men moving a log with ropes. Beyond them is a saw-pit with prepared timber and there is further timber cut into planks in the right foreground, with two axes and a jacket. There are two millers' huts, many trunks and tree-stumps and large stands of kauri trees. The artist is likely to visited this timber camp between 26 and 29 December 1839 and the camp's location should be somewhere between Te Kopuru (south of Dargaville) and the confluence of the Mangakahia and Wairua Rivers, probably in the upper Wairoa, not far from Tangiterōria. It appears likely to have been a timber camp established by ex-Wesleyan Mission Society

159. Buller, 1878, p. 62



The experience of tangata whenua communities and their members through this large-scale change is varied. Of course, members of these communities were involved in these changes and the degree to which they willingly participated in this change is variable. Writing in 1843, Dieffenbach wrote the following:

The first natives I fell in with were a cheerful and industrious set, near the head of the Wairoa, who were cutting and squaring kauri-trees in a very workmanlike manner.<sup>160</sup>

The following account highlights the acceptance of colonial authority by tangata whenua. In 1839, Thomas Forsaith, an English trader, politician and pastor, had established a trading station at Mangawhare on the Northern Wairoa River. Mold (2016) writes:

In February 1842, while Forsaith and his wife were visiting Sydney, a Maori skull was discovered on his property. Local chiefs claimed that a tapu had been broken and exacted utu, or payment, by plundering the station. Forsaith petitioned Governor Hobson for compensation. The claim was investigated by George Clarke the Protector of Aborigines. His report cleared Forsaith of complicity, and the chiefs responsible agreed to cede him a small block of land (10 square miles) by way of settlement.<sup>161</sup>

It is easy to be cynical about this quote for the party petitioned for compensation was a Crown agent (the 'Protector of Aborigines'). It is possible to suggest that this 'Protector' was never going to find in favour of the tangata whenua. Further, it is notable that the nature of the compensation arrived at was to alienate yet more Māori land rather than seeking the return of property that had been 'plundered' as would be the usual course of action.

These few quotes and brief discussion provide a view of the nature and scale of change that took place in the 19th and 20th centuries. It was an enforced change brought about by the European colonisation of Aotearoa. It saw the widespread alienation of tangata whenua land and the felling of the forests - consequently a radical and fundamental change to the world that tangata whenua communities inhabited. While colonisation did bring some benefits - literacy, for example, technologies, an end to inter-iwi conflict and more - it is inarguable that on balance colonisation was a difficult and traumatising experience that left Māori people, including the tangata whenua communities of the Wairoa River, reeling and having to 'survive' rather than to thrive.

## 5.2 HUI WĀNANGA

In this section, we explore the experience and views of these tangata whenua communities regarding the change that has taken place in the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs since the 19th century. We once again repeat that our discussion is by no means exhaustive or authoritative. Rather, we present a number of points and views that are indicative of the experiences and views of these communities as a way of understanding their experience through this history.

We begin by exploring views and perspectives expressed in our hui wānanga and in interviews. We then consider two particular examples, raised in the hui and interviews, of changes in the area that were of great concern to the tangata whenua. The first is the destruction of a maunga called Motuwheteke and the impact that this has had on the community at Rīpia. The second concerns the problematic history

missionary William White, with a gang of Sydney sawyers, at a site known as Mangarata. See The Unknown Kaipara: Five Aspects of its History 1250-1875 by Brian Byrne, p.165-168 for further information.  
[https://natlib.govt.nz/records/22890170?search%5B%5D%5Bplace\\_authority\\_id%5D=-319159&search%5Bpage%5D=3&search%5Bpath%5D=photos](https://natlib.govt.nz/records/22890170?search%5B%5D%5Bplace_authority_id%5D=-319159&search%5Bpage%5D=3&search%5Bpath%5D=photos)

160. Dieffenbach 1843, p. 260

161. Mold 2016, p. 36

regarding the establishment of the Wairua Falls Power Station near Whāngārei. This is problematic for the tangata whenua in that it fundamentally changed the environment there. However, at the same time it provided employment for the local community. We also include a brief note about the arrival of other tangata whenua communities to the area (particularly near Dargaville) and its effect upon local relationships.

During our visit to Te Aroha Marae, Mangakāhia (5-6 Sep 2020), we heard about the movement of the people from Maungakōhatu across the river to the current site of the marae. The people were encouraged to do so by the local authorities as, it was argued, it would mean access to water, electricity and roading. The cost, however, of this move was diminished access (and alienation for some) to their traditional wāhi tapu upon Maungakōhatu. It meant a diminishment of their mana whenua relationship to those places. In some senses, the people there moved from being tangata whenua to being a Māori community who, in the eyes of local Government, just happened to live in this area.

Hence, for the tangata whenua of Mangakāhia, one of their largest and most impactful experiences since the 19th century was the movement away from their traditional kāinga and pā and into a new space where, it was promised, they would receive local Government support.

While visiting a local place called 'Waimatenui' (at Twin Bridges), hui attendees listed a host of issues they are seeing in their local waterways, as follows:

- The presence of exotic and invasive species of flora and fauna along the river banks
- The beds of waterways appear to have been raised more than what was thought previously. This is through an increase in sedimentation – that even this far up the catchment, sediment can be clearly seen.
- The presence of significant pine plantations, some located on steep embankments and hillsides, and some felled recently.
- The remains of older bridges and other structures can be seen in the waterways.

At our hui at Rīpia Marae, Dargaville (14-15 Nov 2020) we had a significant conversation about change. It addressed three points as follows:

- We heard of the deeply concerning issues pertaining to Motuwheteke, a traditional maunga that was destroyed through the extraction of aggregate for roads (see below)
- 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 communities along the river. Species included snapper, ngaehe and kanae. 'The river was our motorway, we all had jetties, all the way to Tangitērōia'
- Other species included toheroa, tuatua, patiki, mussels, oysters, and tuna (he nanao tuna).
- Foods grown and eaten included kānga pirau<sup>162</sup>, kūmara<sup>163</sup>, kamokamo<sup>164</sup>, watermelons, passionfruit, apples, peaches, blackberries, salted meat, chickens, and ducks

162. Kānga pirau: Fermented corn  
163. Kūmara: Sweet Potato

164. Kamokamo: Marrow

This discussion highlights these aspects of the change that has taken place:

- the destruction of wāhi tapu (Motuwhetake)
- the way the introduction of electricity into the district lead to decreased reliance and interactions between whānau
- how patterns and tikanga of resource harvesting - which includes significant collaboration and cooperation between whānau along the river - diminished over time contributing once again to the fragmentation of communities
- the introduction of new kai (passionfruit, apples, peaches, blackberries, chicken, ducks, meat etc) represented a new diet

At the hui at Tau Henare Marae, Pipiwai (17-18 April), we once again heard about problems with the Hikurangi swamp area - once the largest wetland in the southern hemisphere – that has now been drained for farmland. Te Orewai assert that a large proportion of the enormous amount of sediment that reaches the Wairoa River daily is sourced in the Hikurangi rēpō. Consequently, they argue that it is not possible to improve the Wairoa River without addressing the Hikurangi rēpō. The change in Hikurangi has resulted in a host of issues such as loss of native species, decrease in water quantity and quality, increase in toxins, rise in sediment and much more.

During the hui, we also visited two sites of significance to Te Orewai that both, again, speak to unwanted change since the 19th century. The first site was called Te Hoanga, an area at the confluence of two streams. This was an area for working stone, however, it has been affected detrimentally by the felling of the forests, a lower water table, toxins and more. The second site was a pā called Rāhui-kurī which has also been affected detrimentally by forestry, farming and more.

At the Whakapara Marae hui (26 June 2021), we once again heard about problems with the Hikurangi swamp. They drew particular attention to three waterways – the Waiotū, the Waiariki and Whakapara itself which is sometimes referred to as Waimā. Te Raa Nehua explained that these three waterways all flow into the Wairua River (which crosses the Hikurangi swamp) which in turn flows into the Wairoa River.

Like Te Orewai of Pipiwai, Ngāti Hau argue that it is not possible to address the poor condition of the Wairoa River without addressing the Hikurangi swamp which one hui participant described as once the 'food bowl of the hapū'.

Other matters raised in this part of the discussion included the presence of mercury in the local waterways (artificially raised through mining activities) and the question of the ownership of water. Like so many tangata whenua communities, hui participants also expressed their frustrations regarding the actions and inactions of local government, and they called for resourced, long term 'ground up' kaitiaki action. These frustrations are heightened further as a host of tangata whenua led projects are already taking place throughout the catchment, however, these projects are vulnerable as they continuously rely on volunteer contributions and limited funding. Meanwhile, 'resourced' local government activities continue with limited improvements in areas that really matter.

At the hui wānanga held at Te Houhanga Marae, Dargaville (17-18 July 2021) numerous statements were made about change in the river and other kinds of loss that accompanied this change:

- The river is wider and deeper now
- Dredging and digging has taken place
- Farming practises have had a huge impact
- Logging, timber was taken from here to places like America, England, Holland, Spain
- The water is browner (silt, decrease in vegetation)
- The process from swamp to open farmland has had major impacts
- 50,000 kauri trees were taken from the Kaipara
- A large farm owned by one owner (indicates radically different ideas about land usage and relationship to land)
- Drains and canals dug by hand
- Creeks filled in; land developed
- Changes in family status
- Loss of two dairy companies
- Decrease in harakeke
- Loss of traditional waka use and types
- Loss of use of traditional Maramataka, mātauranga

On the 30th of October 2021, the research team convened an online kōrero of three hours in length with members of the Ngārara-i-tunua marae community (a small number of attendees from other marae were present as well). This online kōrero was convened to replace the Ngārara-i-tunua hui wānanga that was cancelled owing to COVID-19.

The key point made in this hui - regarding change since the 19th century - concerned the Hikurangi Swamp and drainage scheme. Hui attendees were and still are greatly concerned about how the Hikurangi Swamp drainage scheme turned the 'food bowl' of the people into dairy farming. With the drainage of the swamp and the removal of native species of flora and fauna (and the introduction of exotic species), the entire area is now problematic in that, among other things, it is producing large amounts of sediment that flow into local waterways and eventually into the Wairoa River.

At our final hui held at Te Kōwhai Marae, near Ruawai (27 Nov 2021), a number of views were expressed regarding the change that has taken place since the 19th century:

- Movement into poverty and living with the effects of colonisation,
- All sorts of things we believe to be traditional today are actually things that have come into our culture through living with pastoral farming.
- Sometimes people ate a combination of foods from the land and kai bought from elsewhere. For example, cakes and sweets (using ingredients from elsewhere) were eaten after eating vegetables, for example, grown locally. One result was the introduction of diabetes, and also how some people became reliant upon diabetes pills.
- It was customary to ensure that there was no waste of fish. Pākehā fishermen knew this too, they never allowed fish to go to waste. In later times, commercial fishing came into the harbour and overfished the fishing stocks. Such was the level of frustration that one day, shots were fired in protest.
- Mikaera Miru talked about 'hundreds' of flounder jumping in the sea



just below the marae at Tino Pai. "You could hear the splash, splash, splash and you could see the mullet jumping out of the water... the mullet has gone. Right in front of the marae there was a sand ledge... and you could walk along that ledge and there were millions of pipis<sup>165</sup>... And then schnapper used to come in to feed on the pipis. But all those pipis have gone... the mullet has been decimated... there were pūpū<sup>166</sup>... there were kutae... hundreds of crabs... Today, I tell the kids don't you touch those crabs... you leave what few crabs there are... This is all gone..."

- "Was it over-fished or was it mud?" A mixture of environmental changes and increased fishing caused the depletion of fish stocks.
- Mina Henare Toka talked about how we would watch people from outside the area "coming in to take a thousand scallops, go home and put it in their freezer."
- Causes of environmental degradation, including species loss, include:
  - » Sedimentation
  - » Unmanaged fishing
  - » Toxins and fertilisers released into the waterways
  - » Algae bloom
- Mikaera talked about a farmer using helicopters to spray gorse and then aeroplanes to release fertiliser on his land immediately adjacent to scallop beds. Although the farmer is careful to ensure that the fertiliser falls on his land, it still makes its way into waterways. This is also aided by rain.
- Dianne Bradshaw talked about her experiences of gathering kai with her kuia<sup>167</sup>. She talked about how quick and efficient they were, and how they knew the waterways intimately. They didn't waste energy and knew how to move with the water and the currents. "The kuia were absolute experts at collecting kai."
- Olivia talked about orchards and tāpapa<sup>168</sup> 'everywhere' in the valley. Then there were a small number of cows. They would also eat

kaimoana<sup>169</sup>, of course. "In my time in the 1970s, I used to live to eat. I used to come up here and get oranges... go down to Auntie Sophie's and raid the feijoa and figs, over to Curtis's and raid some peaches, go down to Auntie Greta's and raid whatever was down there..."

- Farming caused change in the valley and the orchards slowly disappeared. "We got into the farming thing... got a cow shed with an electric motor... milked maybe 40, 50 cows each day..."
- Urbanisation too caused huge change; the people left. "The boys left... went down to Silverdale..."
- Some land remains in whānau ownership, but the largest amount of land has been alienated.
- There was a proposal to create a northern cycle way that would have gone through an urupā. The whānau opposed it. It would also pass through an inundation zone. Monies would have been spent on a cycleway when there are greater priorities for development in the area (such as improving the roads)
- How much was land alienation a factor in the change in the valley? Very significant. Small amounts of land remain.
- A local quarry owned by Māori was taken under provisions for 'Abandoned Quarries in Northland'.
- Internal conflicts exist as well, as with any human community. Hence, our communities have not only had to deal with external pressures of the Crown, but also had to deal with internal questions of identity, mana whenua etc.
- Mikaera, "Our parents had to go away to get jobs, Māori couldn't get loans to improve their lands, but Pākehā could.... my father moved across to Te Hana because of the dairy factory there... as they moved away, they moved deeper and deeper into the Pākehā world... One of the biggest impacts upon us as Māori has been the loss of our tikanga... we need to come back to this marae and leave the Pākehā world outside... on the tikanga of our tupuna... we need to teach our tamariki... we have all this raruraru of the Pākehā world washing over us... it's time to kick all that Pākehā stuff to touch..."

165. Pipi: Edible bivalve  
166. Pūpū: Mollusc

167. Kuia: Female elder  
168. Tāpapa: Tilled earth, garden

169. Kaimoana: Seafood

## 5.3 INTERVIEWS

Rex Nathan of Ōtūrei Marae, Dargaville (interviewed 22 April 2020), made the following comments:

“It was deforestation... when they cut all the kauri logs down... unfenced streams and rivers... draining of the wetlands... lead to erosion over the years... so much build-up of silt...”

Sharon Moengaroa Murray of Kaihū (interviewed 21 July 2020) stated that pine trees present the biggest impact on the river. The plantations were established by two incorporations along the river upon leased land and with no consultation of the ‘hau kāinga’<sup>170</sup>

“They do not care what we as hau kāinga say or think and what our whenua and awa need....We never had pine trees growing up, it was all native.”

The plantations drain water from the soil and some trees fall into the river creating blockages and other damage. The pines are allowed to grow to the edges of the waterways, fertilisers are used in the areas around the pine trees and these flow into the water ways. The felling of pine trees also creates huge impacts on the river, and all this negatively affected native species:

“The tuna heke is from Kaihu out to the sea. The biggest eeling ground is at the halfway point i.e Kaiwi & Taharoa lakes. We used to eel in the drain between the two lakes. The Council put in a small culvert so that they could provide tourists with a better road to the campground. Now the eels can't easily make their way from Kaiwi to Taharoa and then out to sea.”

“Small culverts limit how many eels can get through in a night, the majority migrate on the night of the first big rain of the year.”

“Kēwai, a native freshwater crayfish fifty years ago so plentiful and along the whole awa. Today we can't find any kēwai and this shows the impacts of what's going into the awa.”

Hori Kīngi of Ngārara-i-tunua (interviewed 23 August 2020) discussed tuna at length. He explained that he was taught by his elders about ways of harvesting and caring for tuna, that there were particular tikanga to follow when interacting with tuna. He lamented, however, how so many of these tikanga are not followed today. When he was young, he was taught to pāwhara<sup>171</sup> the tuna before going to school in the morning. However, this often meant that he would be late to school. His teacher finally told him to prepare the tuna after school, which is the incorrect time according to tikanga taught to him by his elders.

Sharon Kaipo and Carol Dodd of Mangakāhia (interviewed 5 August 2020) discussed the gardens and terraces along the river next to the marae. The green pastures and clear blue water are a cherished memory. From the marae one could go down to the terraces and dive into the river. The erosion of the terraces, however, is affecting the river badly and they suggest that it will reach the marae in about 20 years' time. Carol and Sharon have seen significant changes over time.

“All the land has subsided into the river, yes, it is erosion and climate change but also due to the actions of the councils too.”

They also spoke about the impacts of forestry upon their pā and environs:

“You have fires burning, you have roads on and around the maunga. We have at the foot of the pā is the river and across it is a newly built bridge. These are the things happening in and around our awa, maunga and our ancient landscape for organisations to destroy.”

Emily Neho of Awarua (interviewed 25 August 2021) has noticed significant changes in the river over time:

“...it has shrunk from when the rivers were quite wide and now and they have shrunk to a different dimension altogether.”

<sup>170</sup>. Hau Kāinga: Local people

<sup>171</sup>. Pāwhara: Cut open

Emily believes today the awa has stayed fresh and not so contaminated like other rivers in the area and this can be from being away from the larger towns. The main change is the dramatic drop in the water levels and the high flooding in Awarua.

Lillian Netana Patuawa (interviewed 22 September 2020) was raised in Maropiu along the Kaihū River. She described the river as “our life force”. Their whānau did not have electricity and so relied on the river for many things. Lillian emphasised they “did everything in the awa.<sup>172</sup>”:

“The river was so clean and pristine back when we were growing up... The smell and the vegetation were just beautiful, the sad thing is... you do not see that today.”

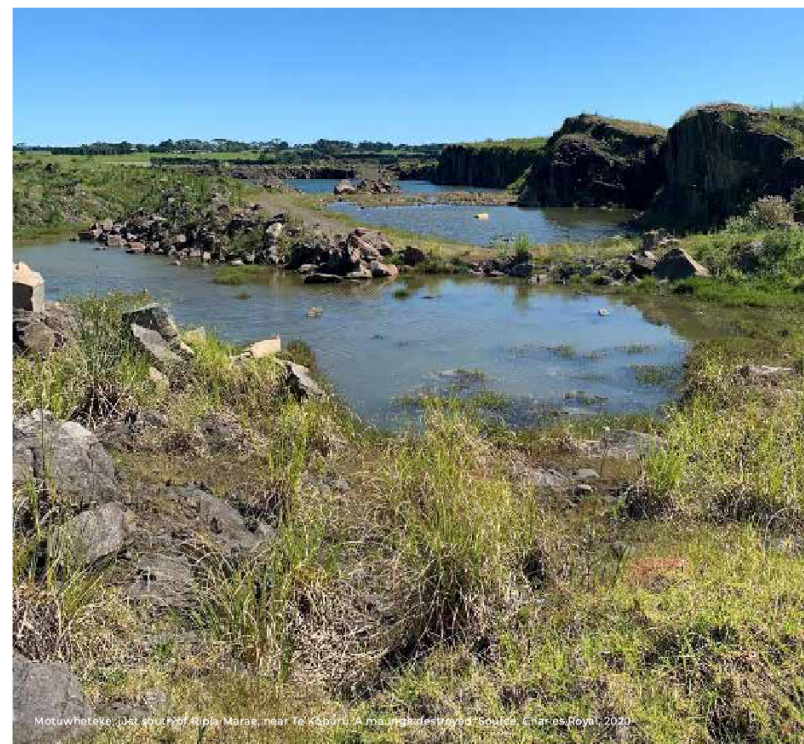
“During summertime when the water levels in our tanks were low, we had to get river water to drink. The river was considerably deep, and we did not try to get to the bottom of it. Boats used to come up the river it was that deep. In summer you could not get in, it was that packed with whanau and visitors to the awa. All the trees and the willows would hold back the water and its nothing like what it used to look like...

As a kid it was a big swimming place, and it was our swimming pool. The Maropiu District High School used Moonlight Bay as the local swimming pool. We were all taught to swim in the river, and it was so big to do this but now today it's shallow and not as good as it used to be.”

## 5.4 MOTUWHETEKE, A MAUNGA DESTROYED

One of the saddest stories we heard relating to change in the area concerned the destruction of Motuwheteke, a maunga just south of Rīpia Marae near Te Kōpuru. Motuwheteke is one of five mountains - ‘five brothers’ - that is said to have travelled from the east and made their home in the Wairoa area. Motuwheteke 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 of 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 proposes to extract yet 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 is very wary 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.

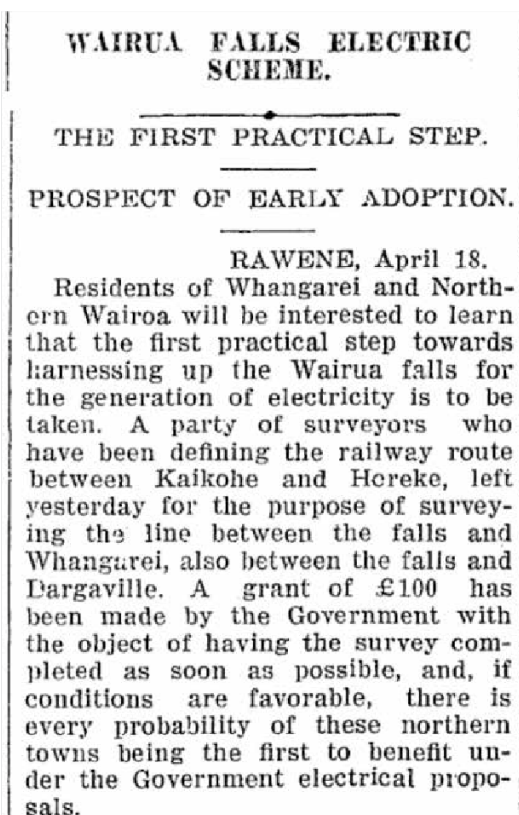


Motuwheteke, just south of Rīpia Marae, near Te Kōpuru. A maunga destroyed. Source: Charles Royal, 2020.



## 5.5 THE WAIRUA FALLS POWER STATION

The Wairua Falls Power Station was commissioned in 1916 and built by the Dominion Portland Cement Company 'to supply electricity to its cement works at Portland, with surplus electricity going to the Whangarei Borough Council and the Maungatapere district.'<sup>173</sup> Construction began in 1914 and the power station opened in September 1916. It opened with two turbo generators and a third was added in 1940. The Whāngārei Borough Council received electricity from the power station till its licence expired in 1957.



Northern Advocate, 18 April 1911, Page 57<sup>174</sup>

During an interview with Millan Ruka, he explained that some of his people, including his grandfather, worked on the power station. They found employment there and helped its development. However, he also stated that the local communities near the power station did not receive power during the early years in the life of the power station.

“(Māori participated) ... But they never got power... it was often said that they were promised power... My grandmother..., I don't remember my grandfather. Her home had no power, no water... No power in the local homesteads.”<sup>175</sup>

He went further to say:

“Then the dissatisfaction came in over the eels... Uncle Henry, always out there eeling...”

During the Rīpia Marae hui, we heard how the introduction of electricity also had effects on relationships. 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.

## 5.6 CHANGING IWI/HAPŪ/WHĀNAU RELATIONSHIPS

A further aspect of change in the fortunes of the tangata whenua in the period since 1840 concerns the movement of peoples from one district to the next the complications that can arise in the inter-iwi/hapū/whānau relationships. A good example of this was the granting of land at Ōtūrei (near Dargaville) by Te Uri-o-Hau/Ngāti Whātua to the Ngāpuhi rangatira, Āperahama Taonui:

<sup>173</sup>. <https://www.engineeringnz.org/programmes/heritage/heritage-records/wairua-falls-power-station/>  
<sup>174</sup>. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NA19110418.2.18.6>

<sup>175</sup>. From an interview with Millan Ruka of Te Parawhau, 21 April 2020



Kinsmen from Ngāti Whātua who had formerly been sheltered at Utakura by his relative, Muriwai, offered him (Āperahama Taonui) sanctuary; subsequently, in February 1873, they gifted him 100 acres at Ōkapakapa and 2,061 acres at Ōtūrei, south of Dargaville, in recognition of his role as prophet and healer. Therefore Āperahama moved from Aoroa to Ōtūrei. He was appointed an assessor for Kaipara in 1873, but earned his living from gum-digging.<sup>176</sup>

Another example - which we heard of at Rīpia Marae and Te Kōwhai Marae - was the journey of a group of Te Rarawa women from north Hokianga into the Wairoa River area. These women had children by British soldiers and moved from north Hokianga under the protection of the Crown. They carried with them a flag upon which the following was written:

Te Rarawa, i raro      Te Rarawa, under  
i te Karauna          the Crown

A further example of the complications that arose in relationships concerned the debates and conflicts caused by claims to land. In 1863, a lengthy article appeared in the newspaper called The Maori Messenger. It reported on a conflict that had arisen concerning lands in the Mangakāhia, Tangihua, Whatitiri, Wairoa, Maungarū and Tūtāmoe areas (all within the study area). The conflict was between Te Tirarau (of Tangiterōria) and another chief called Te Hira Mura Te Awa. It was adjudicated in Auckland and Sir George Grey is recorded as the 'Tumuaki' of the adjudication. We need not present the entire case; except to say, that the process for the individualisation of title (which was to truly begin later that decade) often threw rangatira into conflict.<sup>177</sup>

## 5.7 SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

In this section, we provided an indication and a sample of views concerning change in the environment (and in the people) since the 19th century. Whilst there are things to acknowledge, value and celebrate in the change that has taken place, overall, this change resulted in a diminishment of environmental health and wellbeing and the fragmentation of tangata whenua communities. From a mātauranga Māori point of view, it is possible to suggest that the whole change process has seen the world and people drained of mana, tapu and mauri. Where once the natural world and people were alive with diverse energies and qualities, many of these have diminished and some aspects have been silenced all together.

An interim, partial and incomplete answer to Research Question 2 reads as follows:

These tangata whenua communities:

- Generally view the change in the river (tributaries, environs) since the 19th century negatively. This is because it was imposed upon them; it resulted in language, culture and identity loss, and it resulted in environmental degradation. In some cases, it resulted in the destruction of wāhi tapu and ancestral sites.
- When new infrastructure was introduced, these communities often benefited the least. In the case of the Wairua Falls Power Station, for example, the local Māori community did not receive power until many years later.

<sup>176</sup> Judith Binney, 'Taonui, Āperahama', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1993. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2t7/taonui-aperahama> (accessed 9 December 2021)

<sup>177</sup> [https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/MMTKM18630718.2.29?items\\_per\\_page=10&page=24&phrase=2&query=ngahu&snippet=true](https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/MMTKM18630718.2.29?items_per_page=10&page=24&phrase=2&query=ngahu&snippet=true)

If these communities were asked, 'what created the degradation in the river and the environment generally since the 19th century?', their answer could be summarised as follows:

The long process of colonisation included the following features:

The largely poor state of the river (and the environment generally) arose as a result of a long period of change in the environment and in communities during the European colonisation of New Zealand. Whilst tangata whenua communities did benefit in some ways during this period, it is inarguable that colonisation:

- has produced the worst environmental outcomes ever in the history of this country; and
- was devastating upon tangata whenua communities

Alienation of land, which led to (among other things):

- Fragmentation of communities, migration of people away from their traditional homelands to other parts of the country
- Felling of the forests

Felling of the forests, which led to (among other things):

- Lowering of the water table
- Increased sediment into waterways
- Diminishment and, in some case, extinction of species of flora and fauna
- Destruction of wāhi tapu
- Draining of swamps and wetlands

Draining of swamps and wetlands, which led to (among other things):

Establishment of pastoral farming, which led to (among other things):

Building of infrastructure including roads, bridges, schooling, townships, which led to (among other things):

Introduction of Christianised, general British culture, which led to (among other things):

- Lowering of the water table
- Increased sediment into waterways
- Establishment of pastoral farming
- Introduction of exotic species including sheep, cattle, gorse, ragwort
- Introduction of fertilisers, pesticides and other toxins
- Changes in diet
- Building of infrastructure
- Further artificial manipulations and domination of the environment
- Deculturation of tangata whenua (loss of language and cultural knowledge)
- Introduction of Christianised, general British culture
- Loss of identity, history and culture
- Acculturation into a worldview that saw them as 'lesser' than Pākehā<sup>178</sup>
- Introduction of alcohol and drugs

Given this assessment of change from a tangata whenua perspective, it is important to also acknowledge the resilience of tangata whenua communities to survive these massive changes. In the most trying and difficult circumstances, some members of these tangata whenua communities managed to uphold their identity and their culture.

<sup>178</sup> Pākehā: New Zealander of European descent

# 6.0 THE TANGATA WHENUA VIEW OF THE WAIROA RIVER TODAY

In this final section, we explore the views of the tangata whenua regarding the river today and what they think needs to be done to improve its health, wellbeing and mauri. It is in this part of the research that we turn to discuss questions such as:

- How do communities view and regard the river today?
- What are their goals and aspirations for the river in the years to come?
- What role do they wish to play in the future with respect to improving the river?
- In their view, who else has a role to play in environmental management and what kind of relationship might they have with other parties?
- What do they believe needs to be done now?
- How can we measure the mauri of the river?
- What is the potential role or contribution of mātauranga Māori in environmental management of the future?

From the outset, we state that the tangata whenua communities of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs are concerned about the state of the river. Further, they do wish to contribute to improving the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river, however, they feel frustrated by their inability to move forward substantively with their contributions. Key barriers to progress include a lack of political power and decision-making authority to bring about real impact and change, and a lack of resources and funding to support and sustain their activities going forward. Internal challenges include the need to increase the level of understanding of tangata whenua community members regarding their own tangata whenua knowledge and the need to nurture relationships with the natural world environments of their traditional concern and with each other.

*Please note that we were not able to adequately address the question which asks, 'how can we measure the mauri of the river?' Unfortunately, we did not find an opportunity to explore this question in detail in our hui wānanga and interviews owing to lack of time. Hence, it is not discussed here.<sup>179</sup>*

## 6.1 HUI WĀNANGA

At our Te Aroha Marae hui (Mangakāhia 5,6 Sep 2020), a 'vision' for the future of the river and environs was discussed. This community has witnessed the steady decline in the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river and associated waterways and they wish this to stop. They wish to restore the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river, tributaries and environs. Specifically, this means things such as the following (not exhaustive):

- the restoration of native species of flora and fauna
  - » good soil
  - » good kai
- the uplifting of water quality
  - » available drinking water, clean water
- the care of wāhi tapu and other places and localities of significance to them
- Restore healthier life cycle in the river, all river components functioning together

179. We are aware, however, of work in this area by researchers such as Gail Tipa of Ngāi Tahu and Kēpa Morgan of Te Arawa

Here are some of the points made in that hui:

“I wish to be able to take my moko to catch tuna.’

- Nourishment – more than just the physical food, but a nourishment through relationship to that place
- Responsibility – fostering a sense of responsibility in the child

‘I want to be able to conduct my cultural practices there, such as waitohi<sup>180</sup>

**REGARDING WHAT THEY BELIEVE THEY NEED TO ACHIEVE THESE ASPIRATIONS AND GOALS, HERE ARE SOME OF THEIR IDEAS:**

They seek the redevelopment and re-empowerment of a tangata whenua/mana whenua relationships with their river and associated waterways

They seek the development of a new and empowered hapū/whānau led Kaitiakitanga which includes the following elements:

- Hapū/whānau are empowered and resourced to monitor, manage and make impactful decisions regarding all human interactions and relationships to these waterways.
  - » Inter-hapū cooperatives
  - » Development of mātauranga/Kaitiaki plans
  - » Place-based hapū model (instead of space-based)
  - » Hapū monitoring
- This Kaitiakitanga philosophy and practice is fundamentally about reconstructing a tangata whenua/mana whenua relationship with these waterways and environs (where humans are not superior to the natural order) within the realities of the 21st century. This means, among other things, the restoration and repatriation of whakapapa knowledge, particularly with respect to identity, connection and relationship with natural world environments. It also means ensuring a balance of mātauranga Māori and science
- It includes detailed plans regarding such things as:
  - » riparian planting
  - » eradication of invasive species (weed control), fostering of native species
  - » biodiversity corridors
  - » wetland restoration and much more
  - » plant based food industries (e.g.: rongoā<sup>181</sup>)
- It includes setting targets such as:
  - » Reduce pine by 50%
  - » Reduce paru<sup>182</sup> by 75%
  - » Lower stock rate
- It includes building capacity and capability (including online training)



During our hui held at Rīpia Marae (near Te Kōpuru, 14, 15 Nov 2020), a number of points were made regarding the river and its future, as follows:

- 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, holistic approach
  - » Given 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 reimagining a new desirable state for 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

Discussion continued regarding how whānau, marae, and hapū can start to rekindle the relationship with their awa and traditional landscapes:

- Mapping the river (related matters include opportunity to involve university students, obtain their own vessels, address ownership of IP)
- Mobilise marae to take a stretch of the river, to share their knowledge, giving ownership to the whānau along the river, rebuilding the knowledge of how to read the awa.
- 'Tira hoe waka' in the river from Tangiterōria 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).

During our hui at Tau Henare Marae (Pipīwai, 17,18 April 2021), we learnt about extensive existing efforts by Te Orewai (local hapū) to improve the health and wellbeing of the Pipīwai environment.

A major planting programme is underway, as is significant ongoing monitoring of water quality and freshwater species. We heard about the importance of water security for every kāinga in the valley - having access to enough clean water for their needs. We heard about the significance of the Hikurangi rēpō<sup>183</sup> – once the largest wetland in the southern hemisphere – that has now been drained for farmland. Te Orewai assert that a large proportion of the enormous amount of sediment that reaches the Wairoa River daily is sourced in the Hikurangi rēpō. Consequently, they argue that it is not possible to improve the Wairoa River without addressing the Hikurangi rēpō.

Delaraine Armstrong of Te Orewai and Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngā Wai Māori shared with us recent work regarding mapping of the Te Orewai lands and waterways. Using Google Earth, Delaraine was able to show us the extent of the Te Orewai rohe (which is a larger footprint to their rohe whenua, as key markers for their awa are located in those places) and was also able to point to critically important places in that area including their three maunga – Hikurangi (Te Whāwhānui a Uenuku, pā site of Uenuku Kuare), Matatau (pā site of Mataroria) and Manu Korihi (bird chorus mountain). Delaraine then discussed an environmental monitoring project studying things such as water quality, temperature, pH levels, turbidity and more. Delaraine described the various places where the testing is conducted and was able to share with us some preliminary conclusions arising from their testing.

Te Orewai is an example of a tangata whenua community who are already doing a considerable amount to address environmental degradation in their area. They are contributing solutions and in a committed and dedicated way. They are motivated by a mixture of cultural pride in their whenua<sup>184</sup> and awa (the historical legacy that their tupuna<sup>185</sup> left to them) and a sense of concern for the state of the world that will be left to their mokopuna<sup>186</sup>. They are also angry with the Crown and Government who permitted the natural world of their tupuna to get into the state that it has. They are angry about what might be left to their mokopuna.

## HERE IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF POINTS MADE IN THIS HUI:

## ASPIRATIONS(SAMPLE)

- Better pine forest management (to reduce sedimentation)
- Bring back freshwater mussels
- Empower kaitiaki
- Mana Motuhake over wai
- Rongoa, Oranga
- Effluent control
- Rangatiratanga
- Reconnection, connectivity
- Thriving local economy from whenua and tangata
- Traditional diet
- Hapu authority
- Marae gardens full and orchards
- Native rakau
- Kaitiakitanga, a fulltime paid job
- Marae fully funded
- Freshwater mussels returned
- Education tamariki in Te Ao Maori and recycling
- Landowner cooperation
- All Taonga thriving
- Scaled down animal food production
- Clean water kainga
- Biodiverse forestry
- Mana, manaaki
- Marae hubs with our own lawyers, doctors, professionals etc
- Escape tyranny of government control
- No diabetes
- Healthy whanau
- No pines
- Marae pantry full of dry goods and preserves
- Local economy

During our hui at Whakapara Marae (Whakapara, 26 June 2021) Ngāti Hau explained that their waterways flow into the Hikurangi Swamp and that the waters that flow through the Hikurangi Swamp (including the Wairua River) flow directly into Wairoa River. Like Te Orewai of Pipīwai, Ngāti Hau argue that it is not possible to address the poor condition of the Wairoa River without addressing the Hikurangi Swamp which one hui participant described as once the 'food bowl of the hapū'.

Other matters raised in this part of the discussion included the presence of mercury in the local waterways (artificially raised through mining activities) and the question of the ownership of water. Like so many tangata whenua communities, hui participants also expressed their frustrations regarding actions and inactions of local government, and they called for resourced, long term 'ground up' kaitiaki action. These frustrations are heightened further as a host of tangata whenua led projects are already taking place throughout the catchment, however, these projects are vulnerable as they continuously rely on volunteer contributions and limited funding. Meanwhile, 'resourced' local government activities continue with limited improvements in areas that really matter.

During the hui, Te Raa Nehua delivered a presentation concerning 'oxbow' restoration. An oxbow is an area of land that has been 'orphaned' through the straightening of waterways. An example can be found adjacent to Whakapara Marae. This oxbow was created when a new channel was installed in the Whakapara River to 'straighten' the river. One of the outcomes of creating oxbows is that water bodies can become disconnected and stagnant because they are no longer connected to the main river flow. Te Raa Nehua is leading a project – 'Project Oxbow Restoration' – which is about rehabilitating the land and the waterways in oxbows near Whakapara marae. This includes a host of activities – such as water quality monitoring, the installation of a weir to increase the water flow in the disconnected water areas, planting and much more.



An aspect of Te Raa's presentation concerned relationships with local landowners. The owner of the oxbow land adjacent to the marae is supportive of 'Project Oxbow Restoration'. However, Ngāti Hau is conscious that not all landowners will be similarly supportive. Te Raa believes that a significant barrier to advancing this project relates to the quality of the relationships with local landowners across their takiwā<sup>187</sup>. The question was therefore posed concerning the ability of this research project to develop tools, knowledge and models to achieve good relationships with landowners across a takiwā such as Whakapara. The research team noted this question.

Other matters raised by Ngāti Hau included:

- Riparian and other planting is taking place here and elsewhere. Ngāti Hau are heavily involved.
- The water levels in the Wairoa, Wairua and Whakapara rivers are different. This is significant and important to understand for effective planning.
- Oxbow restoration throughout Hikurangi is required. This is an enormous project that will require significant coordination and collaboration with a variety of stakeholders (some landowners are supportive, some aren't).
- Addressing invasive species is also another urgent issue.
- There are many Government agencies involved in a place like Hikurangi (DOC, local government, MPI etc) as well as other entities (such as Fish and Game, Federated Farmers) making for a complex and confusing context in which to work.

A key feature of Te Houhanga-a-Rongo Marae (Dargaville 17, 18 July 2021) is its proximity to the Kaihū River. A stopbank stands behind the marae and separates it from the river. Hence, discussions at Te Houhanga-a-Rongo took place mindful of the presence of the river. The local people care for their river and are deeply concerned about its health. Where the river runs closest to the Wairoa River, the water quality is poor, and its overall health is not good. However, further northward, the health and wellbeing of the river is much better.

## HERE IS A BRIEF LIST OF IDEAS RAISED IN THIS HUI.

## MANY IDEAS EMERGED INCLUDING

- Creating a regular waka event on the river (modelled on the Whanganui example called 'Tira Hoe Waka')
- Planting programmes
- A 'Save the Wairoa' campaign raising awareness about the river
- Improving political representation
- The use of tikanga to improve relationships to place, rekindling a sense of tapu and atuātanga in the river
- Use of tikanga such as karakia, Katanga, to acknowledge and nurture relationship
- Use the Maramataka to guide planting and harvesting and other interactions
- Help the eels with their migrations, protect the breeders
- Read the tohu
- Educating whanau to grow kai
- Reflect on what Tupuna did and said
- Education, re-establish lines to Taiao, Te Reo, Kura Kaupapa, school holiday programs, stories and legends told in schools
- Farmer and market gardener education
- Media/radio discussions about Te Ao Maori
- Hui wananga about the river (BBQ, family days)
- Awareness through specialised branded apparel
- Partnership - iwi and Govt co-governance
- Bring back traditional waka
- Using tikanga as standard life practices
- Traversing the river, creating our own memories
- Reconnecting traditions



## DURING OUR ONLINE HUI WITH TE NGĀRARA-I-TUNUA MARAE (NEAR WHĀNGĀREI, 30 OCTOBER 2021), NUMEROUS POINTS WERE MADE:

- Winiwini Kīngi called for the restoration of native species such as mānuka<sup>188</sup>, harakeke<sup>189</sup> (the traditional type) and tī kouka<sup>190</sup>.
- Chantez discussed the ongoing stresses and pressures of advocating and achieving change for the environment of the area. This relates to such things as the swamp pump stations. She explained that the aspiration of the Ngārara-i-tunua community is to see Hikurangi return to its natural state as a swamp. However, she is also clear about the barriers to achieving this, including the \$23M each year that is earned through dairying undertaken in the area.
- Nikki Wakefield discussed how the iwi/hapū of Whangārei lost so much land early in the colonisation of the area. She also mentioned the effects of the Resource Management Act 1991 and how it has not been effective in preventing environmental degradation. She touched on the need to create jobs and employment for hapū members so that they can be supported to achieve better environmental outcomes. There was a wish to see the repo provide healthy traditional kai again for the hapū.
- The final session called for a resourced, sustained and mandated 'Kaitiaki network' who are empowered to improve the health and wellbeing of the river and environs.

Finally, the team was able to spend a fruitful day at Te Kōwhai Marae (near Ruawai, 27 Nov 2021) where numerous points were made. Here is a summary:

On this last point, Mikaera Miru said the following:

There is a need to:

- decolonise the diet (diet arising from poverty, pastoral farming, 'when did brisket become a Māori kai?')
- protect the whole water space including the air above it
- give the Kaipara its own rights. There is a need to address the legal status of the Kaipara and Wairoa, much like the way Whanganui is protected.
- understand the Ngāpuhi view because the river begins in the north. What are their thoughts on cleaning it up?
- to disconnect from Government, return to the marae and 'recentre ourselves'

"We have got to stand on our own tikanga... we have this obsession with pleasing the Crown and I'm sick of it...we have to come back onto our marae...we need to come back together as Māori... we need to start learning our tikanga... our connection to Ranginui and Papatūānuku...so that all our decisions come from the marae.... all our maraes come together... we are developing a framework for moving forward into the future... our tikanga moving forward...we go collectively together to the Council after having hui amongst ourselves...this is how our awa is going to be managed going into the future... we want that partnership of Crown and Māori at the table together...always the Crown running the whole process... it's like a machine gobbling us up..."

"We have to have a balance at the governance level, at government level to have a meaningful say in the management of the harbour. For me, I believe the way forward is for all the marae to come together, to talk about this take..."

"The approach has got to be to stop asking the Crown, we gotta stop that crap...we keep on asking...we have to say this is how it is going to go...we have to continue to uphold that mantle of mana whenua...we've got to stand up to the Crown..."

### There is a need to:

- "talk about the mana over the river... the mana of tangata whenua to actually have a say...the mauri of the Wairoa River, of the whole of the Kaipara has been desecrated..."
- Care for both land and water ("land and water do go together, we have to look after our land..." "We have to try and find a way to look after our land a lot better..." )
- Find a way to manage waste better
- Involve tangata whenua in significant decision making: "We are the Kaipara, therefore, how can you have a Kaipara remediation plan without me in it?"
- Educate and upskill our people. Mina Henare Toka said:

"...where the Kaipara is sick, so is the people... for me it is about the future generations that we can mould... don't wait until you are 58 to find out who you are...you start researching what's happened to you as a person, assimilation, if you start understanding that... it's like the movie the Matrix, you've got to unplug, you've got to take that blue pill..."

### Other comments regarding the statement of the environment were made:

- A lot of salt water has got into our bores and aquifers
  - » A lot of stored water is for agriculture
  - » "We have to ask, what is available for our marae and papakāinga<sup>191</sup>?"
  - » There is nitrate in our waters.
  - » "Is our drinking water safe up here, no it's not."
  - » "We're getting less rain, we're not recharging the aquifer... the aquifers are running dry..."
  - » "What water are we drinking now? Are we drinking water that was rain 100 years ago?"
- "Finding a way to manage our waste better."
- "If you get a really good rain... it'll be about an hour, and here it is all flooded..."
- "We have been met with doubt and cynicism; however, we have also had some gains."
- "Kaitiaki are often expected to make contributions voluntarily. There seems to be no recognition that all of this costs people."
- "Our people have to be involved, if our people want change, they have to be involved...it's no use for giving an opinion after the fact...a lot of our people do not know anything about the Wairoa..."
- "What we are doing today is one of the most important things...it's important to find out about our own history again...it's good to find out versions of the same truth..."
- "Tikanga is number one...ki te kore tātou e tū ki te mahi i ngā tikanga, me pēhea ngā tamariki?... I offered my services to Rodney College on ngā tikanga me te mau rākau, but they turned me down. They said they didn't need it... where's the resolution, we're still at the table...I know the Council, tino hōhā...mā te wā, kua tae ki tā mātou nei wā..."

<sup>191</sup> Papa Kāinga: Original home

## 6.2 INTERVIEWS

Millan Ruka (interviewed 21 April 2020) is passionate about these waterways and has taken it upon himself to monitor activities and to highlight problems when they arise. He talked about pollution issues (such as large quantities of engine oil being dumped into a waterway in Whāngārei) and where landowners have artificially changed the landscape to suit themselves (he described an instance where a landowner had concreted the lip of a waterfall causing problems with that waterway).

Millan proposed the idea of a 'river patrols'. He pointed out that in urban areas such as Whāngārei, the local councils have staff who patrol streets, parking metres and other public facilities. However, there are no active monitoring procedures upon waterways. Millan believes that Māori should conduct these 'river patrols' as he believes that it is 'Maoridom's time'. He asks, "after 50 years of the Water and Soil Act and the RMA, where has it got us?"

He also suggests that much better coordination between hapū needs to be achieved and he advocated for more hapū management plans. He said that hapū need to collaborate, share knowledge and information so that more powerful responses to development proposals and the requirements of the RMA can be achieved.

Ultimately, he says that "we're just not connected with the river enough...". Reconnection with the waterways is his primary concern; that iwi, hapū and whānau are not connecting enough with the rivers and waterways and hence caring for them appropriately.

Millan and his important work is profiled in a new book entitled *Wai Pasifika: Indigenous Ways in a Changing Climate* by David Young:

Over a decade Millan, of Porotī and Mangakāhia hapū..., has become a recognised voice of quiet persuasion and hard evidence. He has held the Northland Regional Council - the agency responsible for freshwater monitoring and enforcement - to account over the state of his region's beloved springs, streams and rivers, defiled by poor policy and inadequate oversight.

Millan was so moved by the (poor) state of the Wairua River that he spent \$100,000 of his savings on a suitable river craft and monitoring equipment to record its 'devastating' pollution levels. He set up Environmental River Patrol Aotearoa... Drawing on his considerable reserves of patience, he applied his project management skills with tikanga (correct way) to guide his controversial mission.

This peaceful warrior brings the rigour and focus that are needed for restoration of the mauri, wairua and mana of his land and people.<sup>192</sup>

Rex Nathan of Ōtūrei Marae, Dargaville (interviewed 22 April 2020) pointed to the Kaipara Integrated Management Group which brings together a host of relevant parties to work together to find solutions. He believes that a sense of coordination and collaboration is essential. He also states that various projects need to be conducted including native planting which he believes is 'essential'. It can achieve various things including preventing the build-up of silt and erosion.

Willie Wright of Te Uri-o-Hau (interviewed 20 May 2020) is clear that the 'colonial system' and mismanagement has failed the Kaipara and Wairoa and have damaged these waterways terribly. He argues that the only way forward is by empowering the mana whenua around these waterways and participating (and sometimes leading) 'integrated management' projects.

He also discussed several particular initiatives, including the restoration of old wāhi tapu, marae and other sites around the waterways and the restoration of wharves. He mentioned frustrations that he and his people have had with local government not taking their issues seriously and not treating them as a 'Treaty partner'. He made the following statement:

"...the good thing that I am seeing is that mana whenua are holding up their hand, they are not going to let that hand come down at all... why we are keeping our hand up is because of the mauri of the Wairoa River, is because of the mauri of the Kaipara Harbour...it is about the health of our communities, our people...I feel confident that as we move into the future, with our kids, our mokos... I can see a hope, I can feel a hope..."

192. From *Wai Pasifika: Indigenous Ways in a Changing Climate*, pp 98-100, by David Young. Otago University Press 2021.

He also concludes by saying:

“Mana whenua, we have been very generous...all Treaty claims thus far... have accepted full and final settlement where the value has been less than 4% of the value lost...we recognise the importance of the nation, our people went to the First World War, the Second World War, they gave their lives... to be recognised and to be treated fairly... not one claim has exceeded 4%... we are generous people, we know that, we feel it, and that's what brought us more to the table...I like to think that we are still nice people... generosity sometimes can only go so far...”

Sharron Moengaroa Murray of Kaihū (interviewed 21 July 2020) believes that rules need to be put in place regarding the planting of pine trees. However, she was also cynical as to whether local Government would seriously support tangata whenua views:

“The river for them is money, the river for us is mauri.”

Hori Kīngi of Ngārara-i-tunua (interviewed 23 August 2022) leads a large kaupapa for Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngā Wai Māori, a local group who work hard to protect water. His vision is to have kaupapa Māori water management systems in place for all our people. The kōrero that was handed down when Hori was young is fading today but then it is evolving. Hori fears the new technologies can overtake our traditional Māori practices in and around the river. Hori is determined to continue to practise and teach the ways of his tupuna and loves teaching the young children in Ngārara-tunua and all our tributaries of Te Wairoa.

Emily Noho of Awarua (interviewed 25 August 2021) states that there are still tuna and other taonga species for kai within the awa, despite many changes. Pine and forestry industry has not impacted Awarua as much as other places.

“The awa has provided sustenance for us all over many generations and the awa will keep doing this as we are being more cautious of what is important for us to grow. The awa today and my experiences with the awa I see it still brings a lot of oranga mō te iwi kōnei ki Awarua (life for the people of Awarua) anyway.”

## 6.3 HIKURANGI SWAMP

From the outset of the research, and throughout the project, we constantly heard concerns about the Hikurangi Swamp. At our hui wānanga both at Pipiwai and Whakapara, both hapū communities were clear that the Wairoa River cannot be improved without addressing the issue of the Hikurangi Swamp. The Hikurangi Swamp is a special area within the entire catchment and is thus worthy of focused discussion. It is described as follows:

(The) Hikurangi Swamp Scheme is a land drainage and flood protection scheme managed by Whangarei District Council, providing protection to 5,600 ha of low-lying pastoral farmland within a catchment of 55,000 ha. The scheme was progressively implemented over the last century with major stopbanks and pump stations being installed in the 1970's and has extensively modified what was one of the largest wetlands in the southern hemisphere. This has resulted in major impacts on the eel fishery which is of significant cultural and historic importance for local landlocked iwi as well as a commercial source.<sup>193</sup>

Ngāti Hau of Whakapara lament the change that has taken place in this area and its depleted and poor condition. They showed us a water pump station located near Rushbrook Rd which was installed to remove water during significant flooding events. The purpose is to protect farmlands. Each water pump station is located on enormous channels dug into the earth to straighten waterways and drain water away from adjacent farmland. The whole 'scheme' has been incredibly invasive and impactful upon the landscape. One of the key issues that Ngāti Hau raised during this visit was the destruction of tuna through swimming into the pump stations. Ngāti Hau is deeply concerned about this and are working with local authorities to prevent this from happening. Ngāti Hau have a deep desire to continue to be able to serve healthy local tuna on their wharekai table as an expression of their mana whenua.

193. From 'Managing Fish Passage in the Hikurangi Swamp Land Drainage and Flood Protection Scheme' by Conal Summers, Whangarei District Council. See here: [https://www.watarnz.org.nz/Attachment?Action=Download&Attachment\\_id=821](https://www.watarnz.org.nz/Attachment?Action=Download&Attachment_id=821)



The people of Ngārara-i-tunua are also deeply concerned about the Hikurangi Swamp Drainage Scheme and its various aspects (such as the pump stations). This scheme turned the swamp from a 'food bowl' of the people to a large dairying area. The waterways of the swamp were also an important way by which the people were able to move quickly through the landscape.

They discussed the ongoing stresses and pressures of advocating and achieving change for the environment of the area. This relates to such things as the swamp pump stations. The people of Ngārara-i-tunua are also deeply concerned about the Hikurangi Swamp Drainage Scheme and its various aspects (such as the pump stations). This scheme turned the swamp from a 'food bowl' of the people to a large dairying area. The waterways of the swamp were also an important way by which the people were able to move quickly through the landscape.

Brandon Edwards  
of Ngāti Hau  
(interviewed 3  
August 2020) stated:

"(The Hikurangi Swamp) ... is a mediation ground between Tāne and Tangaroa and acts as a sponge to soak up sediment that naturally flows down water ways and prevents it proceeding down further for example to the Kaipara."

He further states:

"If you look at the Hikurangi Swamp now it's all dairy farms and I don't judge any of the whānau there, but they are predominantly conventional intensive high input dairy farms and so a significant wetland area which had a natural function of protecting the harbour was converted into turbo-charged conventional intensive high input dairy farms by changing the flow of the wai and putting in stop banks and is now no longer able to perform its natural function effectively."



## 6.4 SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

The final question posed in this research was:

What is the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of the river now?

This primary question was underpinned by these questions:

What do they believe needs to be done now?

How can we measure the mauri of the river?

How can the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) help with improving the river and its tributaries?

We can summarise the answer to the question as to their view of the river now as follows:

These tangata whenua communities are alarmed at the poor current state of the river and the environment generally. They have seen a steady decline in the health of the river over time and efforts to halt the decline in recent years have had limited impact. Features of the poor health of the environment, identified by these communities, include such things as:

- poor water quality, diminished water levels and quantities, diminished access to quality water
- diminished presence of native species of flora and fauna. In some examples, species extinction has occurred
- diminished life sustaining capacities and capabilities of native ecosystems
- a changed diet arising from:
  - » diminished native flora and fauna
  - » introduction of pastoral farming
  - » a new economic system that sources food from outside the district
- destruction of wāhi tapu

For these tangata whenua communities, this environmental degradation has been accompanied by:

- Limited access by members of these communities to their traditional places and localities for a variety of purposes, such as kai harvest
- Fragmented communities where the majority of community members live elsewhere. This has implications for the ability of these communities to:
  - » sustain meaningful tangata whenua lifestyles
  - » coordinate and collaborate together for various purposes and reasons (social cohesion is continuously challenged)
- Significant language and culture knowledge loss

Regarding what these communities believe ought to happen now and what their role and contribution might be to improving the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river, tributaries and environs, on the whole, their view can be summarised by the need for:

### Vision

These communities have a vision regarding the health and wellbeing of the environment and of people. They wish to see a much better, less exploitative relationship between people and the natural world. They wish to rekindle and express in more powerful ways a kinship relationship with the natural world which instils in people an ethic of 'deep care' toward the environment and each other. They wish to restore their wāhi tapu - their sacred and ancestral places (as expressions of their tangata whenuatanga) – and to nurture, once again, the natural, organic life sustaining capabilities of the natural world. They wish to achieve a 'mana enhancing relationship' between people and also, between people and the natural world.

## Kaitiakitanga, Kaitiaki Network

These communities assert the need for a resourced, sustained and empowered Kaitiaki network throughout the catchment area, led by tangata whenua communities representing 'ground up' action based upon an ethic, philosophy and practice of deep care (kaitiakitanga) arising from deep identification with these natural world environments. Such an approach is a community led, 'flax roots' initiative advanced in such a way as to supplement approaches provided by Crown/ Government.

### The rationale for this approach is as follows:

- Tangata Whenua communities hold the Crown/Government responsible for the perilous state that the environment is now in.
- Further, they assert that if in the environmental and community management of the future only the Crown/Government is empowered to design and implement management systems, this will not lead to better environmental and community outcomes. This is because this approach represents 'more of the same' and these communities have little faith that the Crown/ Government is truly capable of providing the kind of management that environments at local levels truly need.
  - » Tangata Whenua communities are alarmed and deeply concerned by the limitations and problems of Crown/Government power and management and its ongoing inability to successfully address issues of environmental health and wellbeing.

- Consequently, tangata whenua communities assert that space and opportunity must be created to enable alternative approaches, including those conceived, created and implemented by tangata whenua communities, to be explored, developed and applied for the benefit of the environment and for all people.
- Tangata whenua communities are deeply committed to developing approaches to environmental management to supplement those developed and implemented by the Crown/ Government.
- For some years now, tangata whenua communities have been exploring and advancing an approach called Kaitiakitanga<sup>194</sup> which is:
  - » Led by tangata whenua communities
  - » Grounded deeply in indigenous knowledge/mātauranga Māori appropriate for today and tomorrow
- Tangata Whenua communities recognise the Crown's Treaty derived right to conduct 'government' or kāwanatanga. The Crown will continue to exercise this right into the future and tangata whenua communities do not seek to fundamentally inhibit the Crown from exercising this right to management in this regard.
- Like the Crown, tangata whenua communities too have a right derived from Te Tiriti o Waitangi to maintain a critically important role in environmental management and seek to exercise that right
- Tangata whenuatanga, mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori and so on, represent significant opportunities to develop alternative and innovative approaches to environmental management. This includes such things as an entirely different understanding of the environment, its place in human health and wellbeing and more.



# 7.0 TE KAWA WAIORA – MAKING CHANGE

In this section, we draw together the various threads, ideas and perspectives discovered through the research to formulate the basis (the beginnings at least) upon which positive action might be taken to improve the health and wellbeing of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs, particularly by tangata whenua communities. We stress that this section contains our interpretation of what we found through the research - together with some additional details - in an effort to provide suggestions and proposals as to how this research might be utilised and applied. We also wish to reiterate that our research is by no means comprehensive, and we are aware of perspectives, concepts and tikanga - such as rāhui<sup>196</sup> - that are well known throughout the Māori world but are not included in our research here. We are at pains to state that because concepts like rāhui were not discussed in our hui wānanga and interviews, we do not assume that they are not present in the tangata whenua communities of the study area.

The overall purpose of the research was to discover ways by which tangata whenua communities of the Wairoa River may contribute to improving the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river. Consequently, the orientation of this research is primarily toward tangata whenua communities and what they may be able to contribute rather than to Crown agencies such as Local Government. More particularly, we are interested to discover distinctive contributions by the tangata whenua, contributions that cannot be sourced from any other community or entity in the study area.

It appears to us that the most profound and distinctive contributions that tangata whenua communities can make is to an overall vision for the river and perspectives on the health and wellbeing of both the river and the people of the river. While tangata whenua communities are implementing mitigation and restoration projects - such as planting

programmes, pest eradication projects, water quality monitoring and more - and do have resources such as people, assets, organisations and resources to help, all of this is to be advanced within an ethic and practice of Kaitiakitanga. They are not interested in harnessing and applying their resources and assets merely to contribute to an existing environmental management regime. Rather, they wish to empower and enable their own 'Kaitiaki' approaches to supplement that offered by the Crown/Government.

We heard many ideas expressed in hui wānanga and in interviews - and further perspectives were discovered in our documentary research. Some of these ideas and perspectives appear in Sections 4.0-6.0 of this report and we offer the following summary:

The Wairoa River, including its tributaries and environs, are deeply important to the tangata whenua communities of the river and they are profoundly saddened by its current 'disastrous' state, by its poor health and diminished wellbeing. They mourn the loss of indigenous biodiversity, the desecration of wāhi tapu/sacred sites, the pollution of waterways, the diminishment of water sources and so much more. Consequently, they wish to see life returned to and renewed in the river and environs which, they believe, will mean life renewed within themselves.

Tangata Whenua leaders lament the number of their community members who are disconnected, even estranged, from their river. These leaders cannot help but draw connections between the river's poor health and their own poor state as tangata whenua possessing mana whenua, a people defined by a kinship relationship with the river. The disconnection of people from the environment was a critical feature of colonisation as domination of the natural world is achieved when humankind creates 'distance' between itself and the environment.



Consequently, tangata whenua communities argue that any vision for the future of the river and any subsequent actions taken to achieve that vision must involve the repairing of the relationship between people and the natural world - or at least it must entail an 'evolution' of this relationship to a point where it is mana enhancing of people and the natural world together.

Tangata Whenua communities understand that it is not possible to 'go backwards' to restore the river to a state it enjoyed historically. Hence, they seek to articulate a vision for the future that is informed nonetheless about how they perceived and experienced the river in history. They also assert that this vision must include people and the environment as one. Undertaking mitigation projects such as planting programmes, water quality monitoring and so on without addressing the fundamental relationship between people and the environment, and without considering who should be empowered to lead environmental management into the future, will only lead to failure.

Additionally, tangata whenua communities of the study area have identified a number of key projects that must, in their view, be undertaken. These projects include the rehabilitation of the Hikurangi rēpō which produces enormous amounts of sedimentation that flows into waterways and the Wairoa River. Other projects include planting programmes, water quality monitoring, protection and rehabilitation of wāhi tapu and much more.

Ultimately, tangata whenua communities seek the creation of a 'new sacred', for want of a better term. They seek a renewal of the mana, tapu and mauri of the natural world and of themselves - a renewal of mana whenua - within the realities, challenges and opportunities of the days ahead. Further, they seek this renewal of mana, tapu and mauri not just for themselves but for all those who live within the river environment.

Finally, tangata whenua communities hold the Crown and its agencies responsible for the current disastrous state of the river and do not believe that the Crown will be able to heal and restore the river on its own. It will require an 'on the ground, grass roots' action led by tangata

whenua communities to supplement that provided by the Crown. This is because Crown decision-making is not undertaken by those 'on the ground', those who have profound relationships to specific places and who are committed to an ethic of deep care. Further, tangata whenua communities wish to act upon their right to advance environmental management as they see fit, a right expressed in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Consequently, tangata whenua communities of the river call for the establishment of a sustained and resourced 'Kaitiaki network' along the river, which is able to bring about this new vision, this 'new way'. This Kaitiaki network is to be led by the tangata whenua, to involve the many communities who live along the river and will implement a programme of activities whose overall goal is to achieve a mana enhancing/kinship-based relationship with the river.

**In this section,  
we discuss  
the following  
matters:**

- The potential contribution of mātauranga Māori to understanding, achieving and sustaining environmental and community health and wellbeing
- The creation of a 'kawa waiora', new rituals and ceremonies of community and relationship to the waterways to nurture an ethic of kaitiakitanga/deep care in those communities - as a significant component and foundation to the envisaged Kaitiaki approach
- The development of a resourced, sustainable Kaitiaki network throughout the catchment area, as an expression of both mātauranga Māori approaches to environmental and community health and wellbeing, and as a way by which tangata whenua communities may achieve and sustain a dynamic and impactful role in this arena.

- A proposed Kaitiakitanga Planning template for Iwi/hapū/whānau/marae (tangata whenua) communities - to assist tangata whenua communities in the articulation of their dreams, aspirations and goals (and to make meaningful contributions to planning instruments such as Farm Environment Plans, see Section 8.0)

The discussion that follows is by no means exhaustive, but rather indicates and suggests the kinds of matters that might be addressed following the completion and assessment of this research.

## 7.1 MANA, TAPU AND MAURI – IDEAS ABOUT THE ‘NEW SACRED’

Mana, tapu and mauri are core concepts in the traditional tangata whenua worldview, within mātauranga Māori. It is possible to suggest that one has not really addressed mātauranga Māori/tangata whenua perspectives until one engages not just with these concepts but experiences the realities which they indicate. Very briefly, mauri is the animating energy of the physical world that sustains life. Without mauri, life itself cannot come to be. Trees and plants can not grow, water becomes dead and lifeless, children cannot be born and more. Among other things, tapu speaks to the restrictions and dedications placed upon people and objects by which mana is able to express itself in those people and/or objects. For example, a garden is dedicated, made tapu<sup>197</sup>, for the purposes of growing vegetables. A person too may be made tapu so that they are dedicated to learning (see below).

Finally, mana refers to non-ordinary powers that are able to express themselves in the world. For example, a garden is set aside and dedicated (tapu) to grow vegetables. Mauri stones and special soils<sup>198</sup> are placed in gardens (mauri) which enhances and intensifies the fertility of the ground and soil. Seeds are planted in the fertile soil and in time vegetables come forth. The mature vegetables represent the mana that is manifesting in the garden. The origin, source, character and type of mana manifesting in the garden is entitled with names like Haumia-tiketike and Rongomātāne, what are referred to as atua<sup>199</sup>.

197. There are other reasons too for the tapu including making clear who ‘owns’ the garden and has a right to its bounty.

198. Confer ‘Ngā Oneone Tapu o Rangiātea’ of Tainui tradition. These are special soils, brimming with mauri, that were brought by Tainui from Hawaiki to Aotearoa and which were utilised to establish gardens when they first arrived here.

199. This explanation of mana, tapu and mauri is based upon the work of Rev Māori Marsden. See *The Woven Universe: Selected Writings of Rev Māori Marsden*, The Estate of Rev Māori Marsden 2003.

This same model was applied time and again across all manner of life and human activities. For example, mauri stones were placed in fishing nets. Here the mana manifesting itself came in the form of fish and the source of this mana was entitled Tinirau (progenitor of fish, child of Tangaroa). Similarly, mauri stones were placed in bird snares. Here the mana came in the form of birds and the atua was Punaweko (progenitor of birds, child of Tāne Mahuta). People too could ingest mauri (confer the hukatai/rehutai traditions<sup>200</sup>) into their bodies whereby they set favourable conditions for knowledge and māramatanga<sup>201</sup> to arrive. The atua manifesting in this example included Tāne-i-te-wānanga (child of earth and sky and the one responsible for obtaining the baskets of the ‘wānanga’ from heavens.)

An important feature of this model is the understanding that one is not able, finally, to command mana to come into being. Just as one cannot direct a plant to grow precisely at a time and in a way that one wishes, one cannot command mana directly. Rather, what one is able to do is set ‘favourable conditions’ by which mana is likely to arrive. These ‘favourable conditions’ include establishing tapu at particular places and by manipulating mauri to create fertile conditions<sup>202</sup>.

The role of the kaitiaki, and the work of kaitiakitanga, is ultimately about nurturing mana, tapu and mauri in the natural world - to set ‘favourable conditions’, through the use of tapu and mauri, by which the non-ordinary powers of life (mana, atua) are able to manifest themselves. The principal tools of kaitiakitanga are rāhui and te whakatakoto mauri - placing tapu and implanting mauri, both temporary and permanent, at particular places.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, it is possible to describe the whole process of change since the 19th century as one which drained the world of its mana, tapu and mauri, or at least placed it at its lowest ebb. Our worldview moved from one of honouring and venerating the fertile, dynamic and alive natural world to one which saw us dominating the natural world and rendering it dry, in some instances infertile, and inferior to humankind. The natural world has been reduced to a collection of exploitable resources in which ecosystems deliver ‘services’ to people. Everywhere we see and feel this desecralisation of the world and the sense of estrangement and disenchantment that accompanies it.

200. Royal 2003, p.59  
201. Māramatanga: Understanding, wisdom

202. Over time, our people became adept at ‘establishing favourable conditions’, so much so that it seems like they were commanding mana to come into being. However, this is not the case as mana, in the traditional view, is from beyond our ordinary circumstances.

## 7.2 CREATING 'TE KAWA WAIORA'

Prior to the establishment of the project, the Waimā, Waitai, Waiora governance group discussed a host of issues regarding how to improve the wellbeing of the river. They particularly considered the contribution that mātauranga Māori (in the form of hapū, whānau, marae knowledge) might inform improving the river. Among other things, the idea of creating a 'kawa waiora' was mooted, a new kind of community ritual to unify the community to each other and to the cause of the river.

Human settlement of the past 180 years has had an undeniably deleterious effect upon the river and environs. One of the key problems has been the degree to which human settlement was and is conducted without due regard for the environment. It is fair to say that the Judeo-Christian worldview idea that 'man shall have dominion over the earth' has truly come to pass in this area and that the consequences of this approach to both human and environmental health has only recently being acknowledged. It is indisputable, therefore, that the next 180 years (and more) of human settlement in the area ought to be conducted with due regard for the environment, with a deep acknowledgement that the fate of humankind is inextricably linked to the fate of the earth. As Rev Māori Marsden said:

This will mean a radical departure from the modern concept of man as the centre of the universe toward an awareness that man's destiny is intimately bound up with the destiny of the earth.<sup>203</sup>

This 'radical departure' will not take place quickly and certainly not without discussion, debate and planning. In the first instance, there is a need to raise awareness, acceptance and consciousness regarding the following ideas:

- The river is in a terrible state and will remain so (worsen even) if nothing is done
- There has not been enough recognition of the connection between the poor health of the river and poor health outcomes experienced by people.
- This terrible state came about because of the way human settlement was conducted in the past 180 years (which was based upon, among other things, the idea that we could change and exploit the environment as we saw fit and without consequences)
- We need to change aspects of human settlement in the next 180 years so that better outcomes for the river, its tributaries and the environment are achieved. We cannot continue as we have done. We must move people out of a mindset that believes two things:
  - » We can continue as we have done in the past
  - » We cannot do anything about improving the health and wellbeing of the river (apathy)
- These 'better outcomes for the river' will produce 'better outcomes for people' as they will enjoy a healthy river where:
  - » the water quality is higher
  - » species of flora and fauna may be harvested
  - » recreational activities can be conducted
  - » transport routes can be more fulsomely utilised and enjoyed
- It is indeed possible to improve the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river, and numerous things can and will be done. These include sediment reduction, planting programs, waste eradication, water quality improvements and more. However, in order to truly effect positive change for the river, there needs to be a unified sense of responsibility and purpose across the entire community regarding the health and wellbeing of the community.

The idea of creating and implementing a 'kawa waiora' is one way of creating this level of consciousness across the community regarding the river. Hence, we pose the following questions:

What is meant by 'te kawa waiora'?

- What is its purpose?
- How would it work?
- How would it be conducted?
- Who would be involved?
- What practical impact or change is desired through te kawa waiora?

## Kawa

In its simplest form, kawa means 'process', an arrangement of actions following a certain order or pattern. Hence, we see in the case of the pāeke<sup>204</sup> kawa upon the marae, the kawa dictates the following actions and their order (this is a simplified view):

- Karanga<sup>205</sup> to welcome people onto the marae
- All tangata whenua speakers orate first
- All manuhiri<sup>206</sup> speakers then speak.
- Each oration is accompanied by a waiata.
- The whole process concludes with hongi and kai.

The tauutuutu<sup>207</sup> kawa on the other hand (sometimes also called tauhokohoko) the kawa dictates that the tangata whenua and manuhiri orators alternate when arising to speak.

Hence, we see in its simplest form, a kawa arranges actions (tikanga) into a certain order or pattern. It determines both which tikanga to undertake and in what order. It also states that tikanga one, for example, must be undertaken in the time of tikanga one and not at any other time. Tikanga three should follow tikanga two and so on. In its simplest form, a kawa is a process that arranges certain behaviours in a certain order.

Rev Māori Marsden explains that a kawa must be strictly adhered to:

Kawa had to be conducted carefully and meticulously. Any break in a ritual chant or a particular action left out of the traditional ceremony was regarded as an ill omen.<sup>3</sup>

This means that the right tikanga is to be enacted in the kawa, that they are enacted correctly and in the right order. If this did not occur - exactly and precisely - then this would be regarded as an ill omen.

One asks, therefore, why such an emphasis upon conducting kawa correctly (carefully and meticulously) and why were mistakes considered an 'ill omen'? We find the beginnings of an answer again in the writings of Rev Māori Marsden who states:

Kawa, to borrow theological terminology, is 'liturgical action'. It is applied to the way in which progressive steps of a religious ritual are ordered. Strict rules were applied to the conduct of kawa and any mistake or contravention of the ritual or failure to complete the ritual was a hapa<sup>208</sup> and was taken as an ill-omen.<sup>4</sup>

'Liturgical action' refers to liturgy which is described in Wikipedia as follows:

Liturgy is the customary public worship performed by a religious group. As a religious phenomenon, liturgy represents a communal response to and participation in the sacred through activities reflecting praise, thanksgiving, remembrance, supplication or repentance. It forms a basis for establishing a relationship with a divine agency, as well as with other participants in the liturgy.<sup>5</sup>

204. Pāeke: Speaking protocol  
205. Karanga: Call

206. Manuhiri: Visitor  
207. Tauutuutu: Alternating speakers

208. Hapa: Transgression



The key points we can take from this are:

- Liturgy is a kind of public worship
- It is a communal response seeking participation in the sacred
- It includes praise, thanksgiving, remembrance, supplication and/or repentance
- It is about forming a relationship with a divine agency

Kawa in mātauranga Māori can be likened to liturgy in that it is a kind of public activity involving a community and it seeks participation with the sacred, with 'forming a relationship with a divine agency'. The purpose of a kawa is to invoke, propitiate and call upon the mana atua of the people who are conducting the kawa. The whole intention is to summon these benevolent spiritual energies to manifest themselves in a certain place, locality or person. It is for this reason that kawa are generally considered to be tapu or sacred – for the whole purpose of a kawa is to summon the gods. This is why Māori Marsden uses the terms 'liturgical action' when explaining kawa.

Hence, we see that kawa is a special kind of process that must be strictly adhered to so as to summon the spiritual powers and manifest them in a place, locality or person. A kawa, to use another theological term, is a ritual. The great American mythologist Joseph Campbell explains the purpose of ritual as follows:

**A ritual is the enactment of a myth. By participating in a ritual, you are participating in a myth.**<sup>209</sup>

The idea here is that all communities and peoples possess sacred stories about the nature of the world. These are referred to as 'world interpreting stories' that offer people an explanation and an orientation to the world. In the Christian tradition, the Bible contains these sacred stories that form the foundation of the Christian worldview. The 'world interpreting stories' of Māori (particularly iwi) tradition are, first, the

'creation stories'. These offered our people a story about the nature of the world, about where it came from and more. These stories were also elaborated further with the host of other pūrākau such as the Hine stories, the Māui stories and much more. This 'fund' of knowledge offered our people a way of thinking and experiencing the world, and of giving life purpose.

Rituals (and liturgies) are ways by which people are able to be affected and changed by these sacred stories. This is because a ritual is an enactment of a sacred story and by participating in the ritual, one is participating in the sacred story, in the myth. They are brought into alignment with the realities and energies which the stories speak to.

**The myths and rites were means of putting the mind in accord with the body and the way of life in accord with the way that nature dictates.**<sup>7</sup>

Given these ideas - and understanding that we wish to create a new kawa today - we ask, what is the 'sacred story' that forms the backdrop of this new kawa? This is a vitally important question for, in order for a kawa/ritual to have real impact, it has to communicate a story that is powerful and inspirational, that really speaks to the reality in which people are living and shows them a way forward to a desired 'place' or state. We could create a kawa/ritual based upon our existing stories, however, we should consider to what degree these stories really speak to our reality today?

Consequently, it is proposed to create a new kawa or ritual the purpose of which is:

To inspire in people, whoever they may be, a sense of deep respect and reverence of the natural world; to inspire in them a sense of wonder and deep responsibility to care for the natural world; to unify the community to a vision of life which sees people and the natural world as one.

209. From *The Power of Myth* by Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers. Anchor Books 1991.  
<https://billmoyers.com/content/ep-3-joseph-campbell-and-the-power-of-myth-the-first-storytellers-audio/>

This new kawa or ritual is to be created out of a profound, authentic and inspiring story about the nature of the environment now rather than in the past

### New Approaches to Kawa

It is important to note new uses of the kawa concept in recent initiatives designed to improve environmental health and wellbeing. We refer to the use of the concept by the people of Urewera and Whanganui as part of the settlement of their respective Treaty claims.

In 2014, the New Zealand Parliament passed the Te Urewera 2014 Act as part of the settlement of the Ngāi Tūhoe Treaty claims. Among other things, the Act established the Te Urewera Board under whose auspices 'Te Kawa o te Urewera' was created<sup>210</sup>. This kawa is described in a document available on the Ngāi Tūhoe website and explains that:

Ko tēnei Kawa he whakaaetana i waenanui i te Tanata Whenua me te Manuhiri e nākau kotahi nei nā kawena ki te tiaki ki te whakaoho i te mauri o Te Urewera.

*This kawa is an agreement by the indigenous people and the visitors who seek to care for and awaken the life force/energy of Te Urewera.*

**It further states:** Deliberatively we are resetting our human relationship and behaviour towards nature. Our disconnection from Te Urewera has changed our humanness. We wish for its return.

**Regarding purpose, the document states:** If Te Kawa has a true purpose it is one that hopes to draw people closer to Te Urewera; to respecting the role that people play in achieving nature's balance if we wish for a secure future; and to encourage progress that inspires sustainable and disciplined prosperity.

The reader is encouraged to read the full document (in both Māori and English). The bulk of the document is dedicated to a number of principles and values which are explained as follows:

### Te Marae

Nature is our mother; respect for one's parent is the highest duty of life, without her we have no purpose together.

### Te Kawa

We check that our moral beliefs are shared.

### Nā Tānata

Authenticating the purpose and focus for relationship and unity.

### Nā Kōrero a Nā Ranatira

Our context, priority and goals show us the duty we owe to Te Urewera for our honour and our permanency.

### Te Ao

Opportunities flow from meeting our obligations and responsibilities..

### Whakairi Whare

Confronting our practice and relationship through evaluating our standards.

### Te Marae o Te Urewera

Te Urewera is ancient and enduring, a fortress of nature alive with history; its scenery is abundant with mystery, adventure, and remote beauty, Te Urewera is a place of spiritual value, with its own mana and Mauri. Te Urewera has an identity in and of herself, inspiring people to commit to her care.

210. <https://www.ngaituhoe.iwi.nz/Te-Kawa-o-Te-Urewera>

In the 'Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims) Settlement Act 2017', the following statements are made:

**Section 12 Te Awa Tupua Recognition** Te Awa Tupua is an indivisible and living whole, comprising the Whanganui River from the mountains to the sea, incorporating all its physical and metaphysical elements.

In a section entitled 'Tupua te kawa', the following provisions are included:

**Section 13 Tupua te kawa** Tupua te Kawa comprises the intrinsic values that represent the essence of Te Awa Tupua, namely—

**Ko Te Kawa Tuatahi** (a) Ko te Awa te mātāpuna o te ora: the River is the source of spiritual and physical sustenance:

Te Awa Tupua is a spiritual and physical entity that supports and sustains both the life and natural resources within the Whanganui River and the health and well-being of the iwi, hapū, and other communities of the River.

**Ko Te Kawa Tuarua** b) E rere kau mai i te Awa nui mai i te Kahui Maunga ki Tangaroa: the great River flows from the mountains to the sea:

Te Awa Tupua is an indivisible and living whole from the mountains to the sea, incorporating the Whanganui River and all of its physical and metaphysical elements.

**Ko Te Kawa Tuatoru** (c) Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au: I am the River and the River is me:

The iwi and hapū of the Whanganui River have an inalienable connection with, and responsibility to, Te Awa Tupua and its health and well-being.

**Ko Te Kawa Tuawhā**

(d) Ngā manga iti, ngā manga nui e honohono kau ana, ka tupu hei Awa Tupua: the small and large streams that flow into one another form one River:

Te Awa Tupua is a singular entity comprised of many elements and communities, working collaboratively for the common purpose of the health and well-being of Te Awa Tupua.<sup>211</sup>

In both the Tūhoe and Whanganui examples cited above, kawa is used to refer to a group of values and principles that, when articulated, represent the narrative and story which a wide range of actions might be taken. It is worth suggesting therefore, that the proposed Kaitiaki network consider developing such a 'kawa' similar to that developed for Te Urewera and Whanganui.

Taking these two approaches together, we see that a new 'Kawa Waiora' is both an approach to relationships with the natural world and a way of ritualising that relationship.

## 7.3 A KAITIAKI NETWORK

While it is important not to oversimplify and generalise the messages and views expressed throughout this research, it is possible to suggest that lying at the heart of contemporary tangata whenua experience is this sense of mourning for the loss of the sacred. This is most profoundly expressed in the degradation of the natural world and the fragmentation of communities. While tangata whenua communities share with other communities their concerns about such things as poor water quality, pollution, the impact of invasive species, the diminishment of native species and more, these are outcomes and evidence of a deeper predicament. Tangata whenua aspirations and concerns will not ultimately be addressed, we suggest, through initiatives such as planting programmes, water quality monitoring, reducing pollution, pest removal and more - as important, necessary

94 Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims) Settlement Act 2017, Section 13

211. Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims) Settlement Act 2017, Section 13

and valuable as these measures are. Rather they can only be addressed when we approach the question of our fundamental vision of the relationship between humankind and the natural world. It is clear that tangata whenua communities mourn the loss of the sacred in the natural world (and in themselves) and seek to restore it in some way or form. This is expressed in initiatives such as the restoration of wāhi tapu and connections with particular species of flora and fauna (in some examples, particular animals were/are regarded as kaitiaki).

It is not possible, however, to restore the sacredness of generations and times past. The world has changed dramatically, fundamentally; so much so that it is unlikely that experiences of the sacred of the past would satisfy the sense of yearning felt today anyway. Instead, what is required is the creation of a new sense of the sacred, one that is inspired by and learns from the past but is fundamentally about the world today and into the future. Consequently, Kaitiakitanga today, we suggest, is ultimately about creating this new vision of the sacred and manifesting it in the world today.

In Crown public policy making at least, there is no unified vision of life that puts the welfare of the natural world and people in unison at its centre. Further, there seems to be no interest in exploring the relationship between humankind and the natural world that is operative within and underpins policy making in this regard. The idea that the natural world is valuable only in that it creates benefits for people is the prevailing view in public policy and, it seems, there is no real appetite to change it.

Of course, these comments concern public policy (local Government etc) and are not meant as a comment about people generally. There are many people, Māori and non-Māori, who do see and experience the natural world in a much more respectful light, who do seek a much deeper relationship with the natural world, who care profoundly for the environment and seek to improve our ways of being within it. However, these ideas, particularly at a fundamental level, are not making their way into the power structures of our society and economy. Exactly how this might be achieved, we are not sure. In the meantime, there are

examples of tangata whenua communities 'getting on and doing it anyway' and our research was able to highlight some.

As mentioned earlier, one of the key outcomes of the research was to hear of tangata whenua aspirations and plans to achieve a greater influence and involvement in environmental management than previously. There is the belief, held by some in tangata whenua communities, that Government (local, regional, central) is not going to address their concerns anyway so they might as well 'just get on and do it'<sup>212</sup>. This is part of the motivation behind numerous initiatives led by tangata whenua communities to improve environmental health and wellbeing. These initiatives are usually conducted under the title of 'Kaitiakitanga' undertaken by people called 'Kaitiaki'.

The idea of some kind of Kaitiaki network for the Wairoa River (and adjacent waterways) has been around for some time. Time and again we heard tangata whenua communities say that they wish to achieve a much more powerful role in environmental and community management, and that they wish this role to be based upon and committed to an expression of Kaitiakitanga in our times.

They articulated various needs such as the following:

- To reconnect their people with the river, its tributaries and environs
- To increase the number of tangata whenua people who are able to actively care for the river, tributaries and environs, who are able to monitor, study and care for the river in an ongoing way
- To be able to do this in resourced and ongoing way

Hence, it is proposed to establish a Kaitiaki network for the following purpose:

To improve the health, wellbeing and mauri of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs, and thereby to improve the health, wellbeing and mauri of people.

212. Others, such as Mikaera Miru of Tino Pahi, Kaipara, believe that tangata whenua communities have to stop turning to the Crown to find answers, to cease interpreting our circumstances and what we believe can achieve through the 'eyes of local Government'.



It will achieve this by: Creating, resourcing and sustaining a network of Kaitiaki (people) located along the river and within its catchment who attend to a variety of tasks, projects and programmes for the benefit of the river, its tributaries and environs.

Features of this Kaitiaki network will include the following:

- To be led by relevant iwi, hapū, whānau and marae
- To be inspired and informed by the traditional knowledge and lived experience of tangata whenua communities
- To be an 'on the ground', ahi kā, flax-roots initiative, comprising people who identify deeply with the river and environs and who are committed to a better future for the river and themselves.
- Because negative change in the river has taken place over generations, there needs to be an intergenerational commitment to improving the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river and environs
- To supplement and coordinate with (and potentially improve) the roles, responsibilities and activities of local and other government agencies relevant to the management of the river and environs

There are many issues to address in establishing a Kaitiaki network, such as:

- How will it function?
- Who will it involve?
- How will it be resourced and funded?
- Why is this a better approach to environmental (river) management?

These and other questions will be addressed in due course. For now, we will focus on philosophical questions (which nonetheless hold practical relevance) such as the following:

- What do we mean by the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river? How is this to be defined?
- How does one 'uplift' the health, wellbeing and mauri of a river?

Related questions include:

- What do we mean by Kaitiakitanga today?
- Who and/or what is a Kaitiaki? What are the criteria that one needs to meet in order for a person or group to achieve the status of 'Kaitiaki'?

Key aspects of the philosophy and practice of this network will include the following:

- The creation of a new sense of the sacred, a new mana, tapu and mauri.
- An emphasis will be placed upon the river as a whole - understanding and acting according to the welfare of the whole system rather than just parts of it.
- This 'holistic' approach acknowledges both the physical dimensions of the river and its 'inner life' - the physical river is a vessel for inanimate energies and qualities that are vital to the health and wellbeing of the river as a whole. Concepts like mauri denote this 'inner life', these 'inner energies' which seek to find expression in the physical plane. When this is achieved, health, wellbeing and fertility is also achieved.

- Consequently, the Kaitiaki network places an emphasis upon nurturing and promoting the inner animating, life sustaining energies of the natural world as much as its physical welfare.
- The Kaitiaki network also asserts that the health, wellbeing and mauri of people is inextricably connected to that of the river. It is not possible to have a fully healthy population and community if the environment (including the river) in which they live is also unwell.
- The goal of the Kaitiaki network is the renewal of the natural life sustaining energies, fertility and regenerative power of the natural world. This has been seriously affected through human settlement and efforts must be taken to restore this.
- However, only the natural world itself can achieve this state. Just as the gardener does not have the power to direct a plant precisely how and when to grow - all he/she can do is establish favourable conditions for growth - so the Kaitiaki network is dedicated to establishing and maintaining favourable conditions for growth, healing and renewal.
- Similarly, only the river can demonstrate this life sustaining power, only the river can 'tell us' about its ability to sustain life. Hence, the need to 'listen to the river' and place it at the centre of our concerns.

### Some practical goals and tasks of this Kaitiaki network include the following:

- Increasing the health and wellbeing of flora and fauna
  - » Eradicating invasive, damaging exotic species and pests
  - » Rehabilitation of native flora and fauna, particularly those species that were historically found in and around the river and which express mana whenua

- Increasing water quality, quantity and access
  - » Increase water quality through the removal of pollutants and rubbish,
  - » Increase water flows and quantity of water, particularly through rehabilitation of water tables, aquifers and the like
- Protection, rehabilitation and creation of wāhi tapu, particularly where this represents evidence of human settlement that is not deleterious to environmental health and wellbeing
  - » Protection and rehabilitation of ancestral and heritage sites, localities and landscapes
  - » Creation of new wāhi tapu as appropriate
- Increasing human health and wellbeing through better relationships with the natural world
  - » Creating better alignment between urban/rural built spaces with the natural world
  - » Enabling better cultural interactions between people and the river and environs (eg: various uses including rituals and ceremonies of various kinds)

### Issues and needs that this Kaitiaki network will address include the problem of:

- Limited and poor monitoring of activities across the entire catchment
- Patchy, inconsistent and uncoordinated action across the catchment to date
- Ineffective harnessing of the goodwill and commitment that already exists in the community to improve the river
- The limited effectiveness of local government

## 7.4 KAITIAKITANGA ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING TEMPLATE

Ultimately, the contributions that tangata whenua and kaitiaki communities may wish to make to planning (including Farm Environment Plans) ought to arise from a vision of success, values and principles that these communities hold concerning the environment. It is not possible for our communities to advocate powerfully for certain ideas and directions without at first meeting together and at length to discuss their aspirations going forward.

To assist Kaitiakitanga/tangata whenua planning, we have prepared a simple planning template (see Appendix Seven) which is designed to assist our communities to do the following collectively:

- Articulate dreams, aspirations and goals regarding the health and wellbeing of the environment and their communities
- Describe and plan various actions and initiatives designed to achieve those aspirations and success overall.

This preliminary planning template includes the following categories (all to be discussed):

- The New Sacred
- Water
- Earth, Soil
- Indigenous Flora and Fauna
- People

It also includes aspirations regarding ownership, governance and management. This part of the template is designed to assist these communities in understanding their aspirations for their role in environmental management of the future.

## 8.0 RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL PARTIES

Up to this point, the focus of this report has been about what the tangata whenua really care about, what their aspirations are and how they might achieve these aspirations. We turn now to briefly consider external parties, particularly Crown agencies and Crown derived contexts, for inevitably tangata whenua communities will need to engage with the Crown and other parties as they move forward with their planning and achieving their goals.

In this section we briefly discuss two initiatives as 'live contexts' in which Kaitiakitanga will need to operate. The first concerns Local Government and particularly Local Government relationships to freshwater as articulated in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater 2020. This is the most up to date statement by Crown/ Government regarding water and its management and it outlines expectations of Local Government with respect to freshwater. The Statement contains numerous provisions relating to the tangata whenua and is an important context in which Kaitiakitanga advocates and Kaitiaki themselves will need to be mindful of.

The second initiative is Farm Environment Plans. From the outset, the Waimā Waitai Waiora group articulated a desire and a need for this research project to generate contributions to Farm Environment Plans.

To this end, we articulate two aspects:

- Specific actions to be taken to achieve, for example, an increase in indigenous biodiversity and protection/rehabilitation of wāhi tapu
- Building relationships with farmers and other non-tangata whenua communities, to enlist their support for the advancement of Kaitiakitanga in specific localities and geographies

## 8.1 NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR FRESHWATER 2020

The National Policy Statement for Freshwater 2020 'provides local authorities with updated direction on how they should manage freshwater under the Resource Management Act 1991.'<sup>213</sup> It includes numerous clauses and provisions enabling contributions from Kaitiakitanga and tangata whenua communities to freshwater management undertaken by local Government.

The Statement is underpinned by a 'fundamental concept' entitled 'Te Mana o te Wai'. This is explained as follows:

- (1) Te Mana o te Wai is a concept that refers to the fundamental importance of water and recognises that protecting the health of freshwater protects the health and well-being of the wider environment. It protects the mauri of the wai. Te Mana o te Wai is about restoring and preserving the balance between the water, the wider environment, and the community.
- (2) Te Mana o te Wai is relevant to all freshwater management and not just to the specific aspects of freshwater management referred to in this National Policy Statement.

### Framework

- (3) Te Mana o te Wai encompasses 6 principles relating to the roles of tangata whenua and other New Zealanders in the management of freshwater, and these principles inform this National Policy Statement and its implementation.

- (4) The 6 principles are:

- (a) Mana whakahaere: the power, authority, and obligations of tangata whenua to make decisions that maintain, protect, and sustain the health and well-being of, and their relationship with, freshwater

- (b) Kaitiakitanga: the obligation of tangata whenua to preserve, restore, enhance, and sustainably use freshwater for the benefit of present and future generations

- (c) Manaakitanga: the process by which tangata whenua show respect, generosity, and care for freshwater and for others

- (d) Governance: the responsibility of those with authority for making decisions about freshwater to do so in a way that prioritises the health and well-being of freshwater now and into the future

- (e) Stewardship: the obligation of all New Zealanders to manage freshwater in a way that ensures it sustains present and future generations

- (f) Care and respect: the responsibility of all New Zealanders to care for freshwater in providing for the health of the nation<sup>214</sup>.

In advancing this 'fundamental concept', local Government is to be mindful of a 'hierarchy of obligations that prioritises:

- (a) first, the health and well-being of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems

- (b) second, the health needs of people (such as drinking water)

- (c) third, the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being, now and in the future.

The Statement includes numerous further provisions and clauses about freshwater management. Because it is directed toward 'local authorities', it does not include specific provisions for tangata whenua-led environmental management initiatives and solutions. For example, the following provisions state:

213. <https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/national-policy-statements/national-policy-statement-freshwater-management/>

214. <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/national-policy-statement-for-freshwater-management-2020.pdf>



Every regional council must engage with communities and tangata whenua to determine how Te Mana o te Wai applies to water bodies and freshwater ecosystems in the region.

- (2) Every regional council must give effect to Te Mana o te Wai, and in doing so must:
- a) actively involve tangata whenua in freshwater management (including decision making processes), as required by clause 3.4; and
  - (b) engage with communities and tangata whenua to identify long-term visions, environmental outcomes...<sup>215</sup>

The tenor of these statements suggest a greater role for tangata whenua communities in freshwater management. It is important, however, to note that the Crown's position as the primary authority to manage freshwater remains intact. This is reflected in sentences state that local government must 'actively involve tangata whenua in freshwater management'. Hence, it is not yet at the point articulated by tangata whenua communities in this research.

## 8.2 FARM ENVIRONMENT PLANS

A number of tools exist in local government and in the private sector which concern land and water management. These are important tools as, when used appropriately, they can affect real and lasting change in the environment. One such tool is the Farm Environment Plan (FEP).

FEPs are plans developed under the auspices of Fonterra (and other consultancy groups) to assist dairy farmers (and other farm types) to improve their farming management practises, particularly with respect to better environmental outcomes. For these purposes Fonterra established the Tiaki Sustainable Dairying Programme which is described as follows:

The Tiaki Sustainable Dairying Programme has been designed exclusively for the use of Fonterra farmers. It enables them to tap into specialised regional knowledge, expertise and services to support best practice farm management, proactively stay ahead of regulatory requirements, and satisfy evolving consumer and market expectations<sup>216</sup>.

### The DairyNZ website explains Farm Environment Plans as follows:

- A FEP is a tool that shows how a farm's natural resources, environment and farm management system can best work together to deliver aspirations of kaitiakitanga (guardianship and stewardship of our land) and dedication to protecting our natural environment for future generations.
- A FEP is a valuable action plan for future activities, and a record of the changes you have made. It can assist with understanding and demonstrating environmental compliance, record progress towards achieving good management, and demonstrate that you are working towards balancing farm productivity while reducing your farm's environmental footprint.<sup>217</sup>

### Benefits

You can record your progress towards achieving good farming practice principles (GFP)

- Helps tell the story of the actions of farmers at a local level
- Helps identify environmental risks and prioritise actions

To continue competing on the global scale, we need to inspire confidence in animal welfare, environmental and production systems, a FEP helps do this.

<sup>215</sup>. Ibid

<sup>216</sup>. <https://www.fonterra.com/nz/en/campaign/tiaki.html>

<sup>217</sup>. <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/environment/review-and-plan/farm-environment-plans/>

## Limitations of Farm Environment Plans

It is important to note that FEPs created under the auspices of Fonterra relate to dairy farms only. Hence, any comprehensive action plan to uplift the health and well-being of the river needs to include FEPs knowing that it relates to dairying only.

As FEPs are very much focused upon a single farm it is unclear whether they are created and applied in relationship to (and in coordination with) other FEPs and other management planning instruments.

## Example FEP: Owl Farm, Cambridge, Waikato<sup>218</sup>

Owl Farm is a farm located near Cambridge, Waikato. Their Farm Environment Plan is available on their website and is typical of a FEP. It is a comprehensive document that touches on many aspects of the farm and its operations. The contents of the document and a brief over of each section is provided below:

Farm Details	Including name, supplier number, plan owner, address, location map, points of note, regional council area, points of note, plan last edit date, land parcels.
Summary of Open Actions	A list of completed and ongoing actions agreed under the plan - including fencing projects, riparian planting, drain realignments, races, drainage issues and more.
Understanding the Risks on Your Farm	Explanation of risk ratings and how they are measured (contamination impact + likelihood of contamination = risk rating)
Risk Rating	Map showing the risk rating for Owl Farm. Noting that it contains a rating for the farm overall as well as for particular areas within the farm.
Farm Management	Overview of farm operations and good farming practices used on this farm. Includes overviews of water use, storage/ infrastructure/waste, wash down pad and biosecurity.
Land Management	Includes land and soil overview, crossing over Te Awa Farm track by Te Awa cycleway, crossing between old wetland, cropping practices, race management, sand quarry, entry/exit race and sub-surface drainage.

218. <https://owlfarm.nz/owl-farm-kpis/environment-sustainable-natural-resources/farm-environment-plans-fep-tiaki-good-farming-practice/>

#### Effluent Management

Includes effluent overview, new effluent pond, effluent irrigation, underpass and old effluent pond.

#### Waterways Management

Includes waterways and biodiversity overview, constructed treatment wetland, older wetland beside effluent pond, riparian buffer between farm and the Waikato River, riparian planting below Avantidrome, mountain biking track, drain in paddock 47, reconstructed wetland, re-alignment of drain, drain heading towards McGraths boundary from swimming pool, retired area to be planted below kibby block and drain leading from driving range towards Waikato River.

#### Nutrient Management

Includes overview, end of season nitrogen report and nitrogen fertiliser applications.

We see that this FEP is quite detailed and contains some specific actions. We also should note that Owl Farm is well resourced. It is owned by St Peter's College, Cambridge, and is operated as a joint venture with Lincoln University.

### Potential Contributions to Farm Environment Plans

With respect to Farm Environment Plans, the broader goals noted above (for the Kaitiaki network) can be translated into specific actions within FEPs, as follows:

#### Increasing the health and wellbeing of flora and fauna

- Eradicating invasive, damaging exotic species and pests
- Rehabilitation of native flora and fauna, particularly those species that were historically found in and around the river and which express mana whenua (eg: the mangakāhia plant in the Mangakāhia Valley)

#### Increasing human health and wellbeing through better relationships with the natural world

- Creating better alignment between urban/rural built spaces with the natural world
- Enabling better cultural interactions between people and the river and environs (eg: various uses including rituals and ceremonies of various kinds)

#### Increasing water quality, quantity and access

- Eradicating invasive, damaging exotic species and pests
- Rehabilitation of native flora and fauna, particularly those species that were historically found in and around the river and which express mana whenua (eg: the mangakāhia plant in the Mangakāhia Valley)

#### Protection, rehabilitation and creation of wāhi tapu, particularly where this represents evidence of human settlement that is not deleterious to environmental health and wellbeing

- Protection and rehabilitation of ancestral and heritage sites, localities and landscapes
- Creation of new wāhi tapu as appropriate

Additionally, as stated earlier, these kinds of actions need to be advanced within a broader vision of Kaitiakitanga whose goal is the restoration of the mana, tapu and mauri of the natural world. This will entail a need for communities to come together because no matter how justified and legitimate tangata whenua aspirations and vision for the environment might be, they will not be achieved if other communities along the river are not able to find their place and role within Kaitiakitanga. The fact remains that the vast majority of land is no longer owned by tangata whenua communities and the ability of tangata whenua communities to fundamentally influence environmental management is minimal. Hence, enlisting the support of the wider community will be essential.

# 9.0 CONCLUSION

We conclude this research report by, first, thanking the tangata whenua communities and members who hosted our team in 2020 and 2021. We thank them for their generosity and support. We particularly thank them for sharing with us their key concerns and their ideas about the future, about what could occur in the days and years ahead. We thank them for contributing to a deep and profound discussion about a new/old vision for the environment and people together, a vision for Kaitiakitanga.

It is clear that urgent action is required to 'turn the situation around' and significantly improve the health and wellbeing of the Wairoa River together with its people. It is also clear that any environmental management regime of the future must involve those who 'live on the ground' and who enjoy deep and significant relationships to the locations and places along the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs. This is because the 'top down, one size fits all approach' taken by the Crown and Government will only get so far in the journey toward the rehabilitation of the health, wellbeing and mauri of the Wairoa River. Only an approach that is committed to 'deep care' and which is capable of a nuanced and passionate relationship with the river will bring about the changes dreamt of and required.

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## Appendices

# APPENDIX ONE: RESEARCH TEAM

## Governance

<https://www.nrc.govt.nz/your-council/about-us/council-projects/waima-waitai-waiora/>

## The 'Waimā, Waitai, Waiora' Project

- Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngā Wai Māori
- Te Roroa
- Te Uri o Hau
- Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group
- Reconnecting Northland
- Living Water - DOC/Fonterra Partnership
- Northland Regional Council
- Sustainable Business Network's Million Metres Streams Project

## Research Committee

Auriole Ruka  
Northland Regional Council

Fiona Kemp  
Te Uri-o-Hau

Tāoho Patuawa  
Te Roroa

Dr Brad Coombes  
University of Auckland

Assoc Prof Te Kawehau Hoskins

University of Auckland

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University of Otago

## Researchers

Dr Charles Royal  
Lead Researcher  
Hineāmaru Davies-Lyndon  
Oral History Researcher

Celia Witehira  
Project Manager  
Robyn Kāmira  
Documentary Researcher

## APPENDIX TWO: SUMMARY OF CONTRACTED OUTPUTS

Objective	By 2022, Te Kawa Waiora will be developed for Farm Environment Plans and implemented in the Wairoa catchment, informed by sustainable land management practices through Mātauranga Māori
Key performance indicators	<p>Te Kawa Waiora is applied to at least three farms in the Wairoa catchment during a trial period in year 2 of the project.</p> <p>Deliver a report to NRC (and stakeholders) to outline the process undertaken, barriers, enablers, resulting in the creation of the 2019 Te Kawa Waiora 'framework'</p> <p>Present at one conference to demonstrate learnings from the development process and how the Te Kawa Waiora 'framework' is being applied in practice.</p>
How will you monitor and evaluate the achievement of this objective?	<p>Te Kawa Waiora 'framework' is presented to NRC and key stakeholders (such as the Northern Wairoa Freshwater Improvement Partnership) by the end of year 2.</p> <p>Implementation of Te Kawa Waiora is documented for three farms across the Wairoa catchment by the end of year 2.</p> <p>From year 3, Farm Environment Plan (FEP) template includes Te Kawa Waiora (explicit or implicit depending on farmer preference) for implementation across all subsequent FEP's.</p>

### Baseline information

Mātauranga Māori principles and recommended actions are not a current feature of FEPs. Kawa is used in other settings as a traditional Māori convention to provide a pathway to achieving a desired outcome. Mātauranga Māori principles are identified in iwi environmental management plans.

### Expected outcome

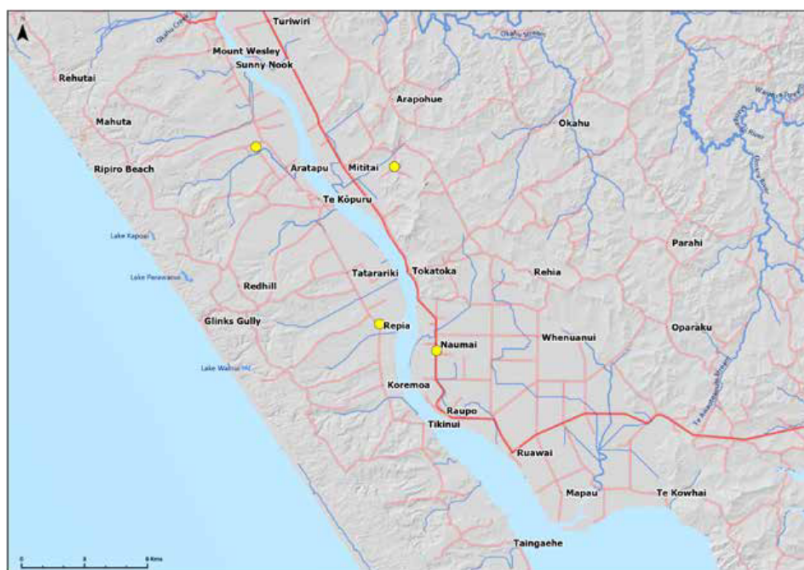
Empowered local iwi, hapū and mana whenua groups to provide leadership for positive behavioural change informed by a shared understanding of traditional and living Māori knowledge and practices that guide people's relationship to land and water in the Wairoa and Kaipara catchments (Kaitiaki).

Other applications of Te Kawa Waiora are identified.

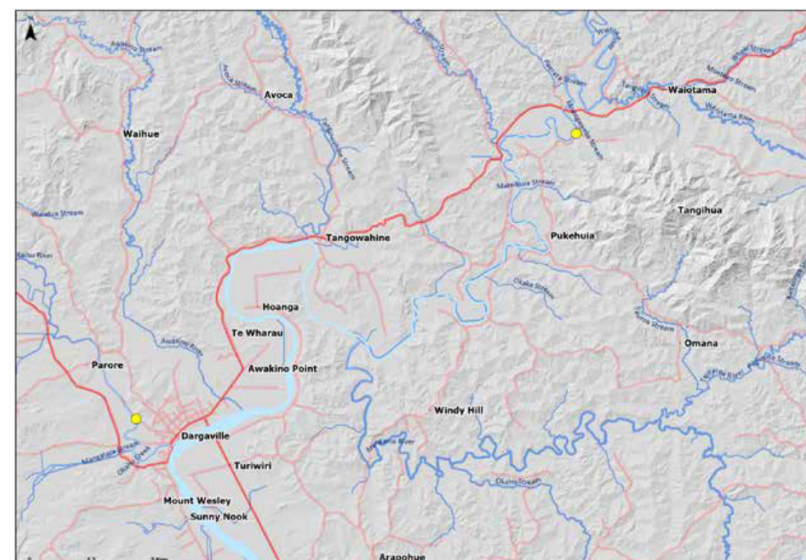
Work with iwi to develop implementation of iwi environmental management

## APPENDIX THREE: MAPS OF THE STUDY AREA

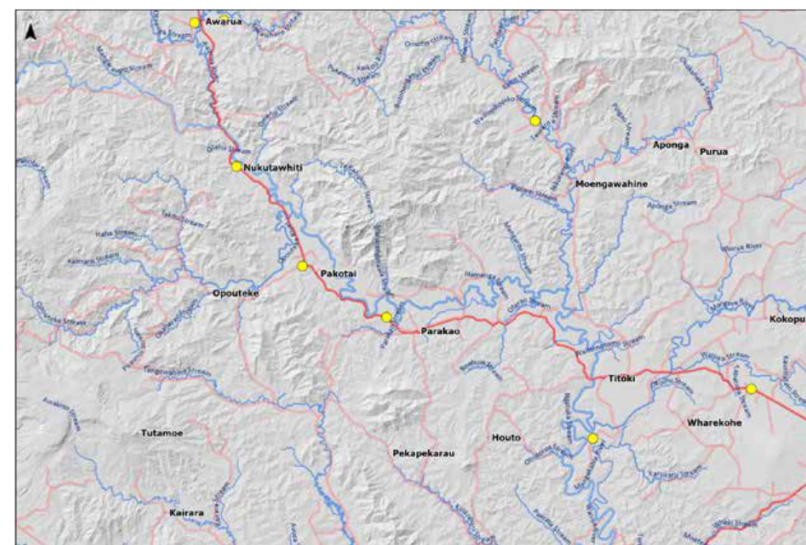
### HERE ARE A NUMBER OF MAPS OF THE STUDY AREA:



Te Kōpuru

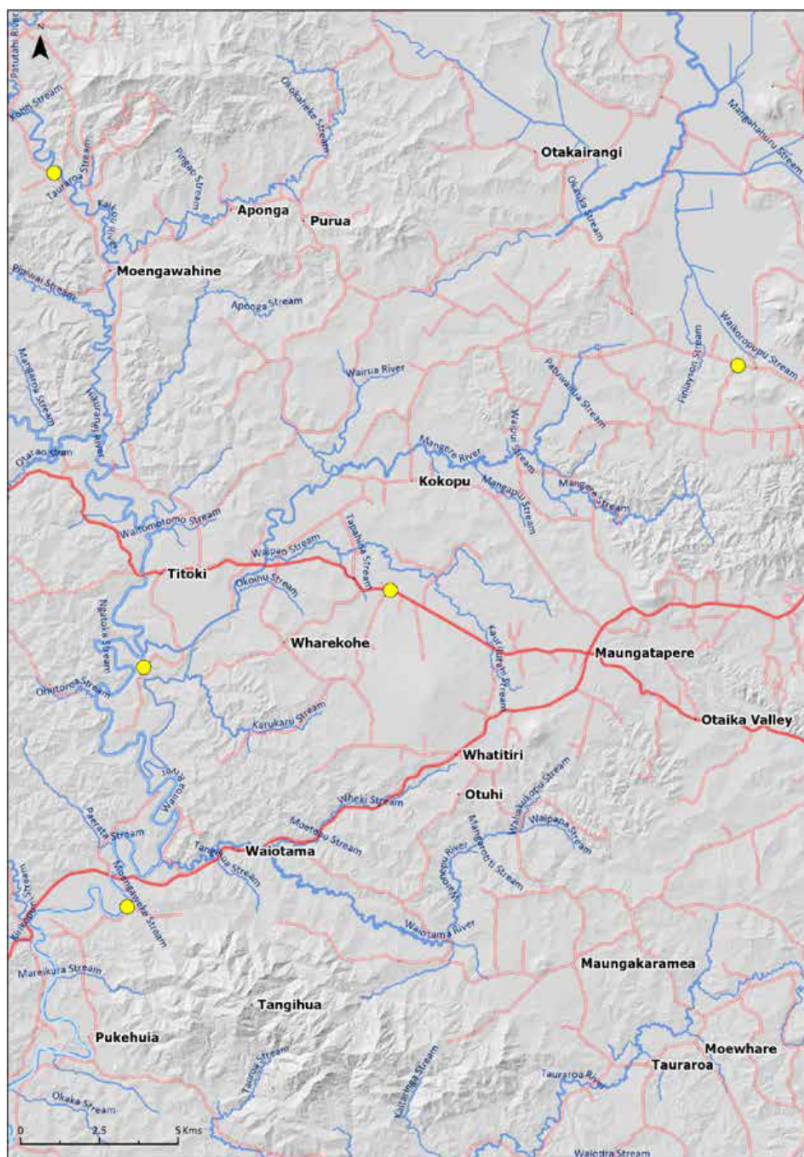


Dargaville

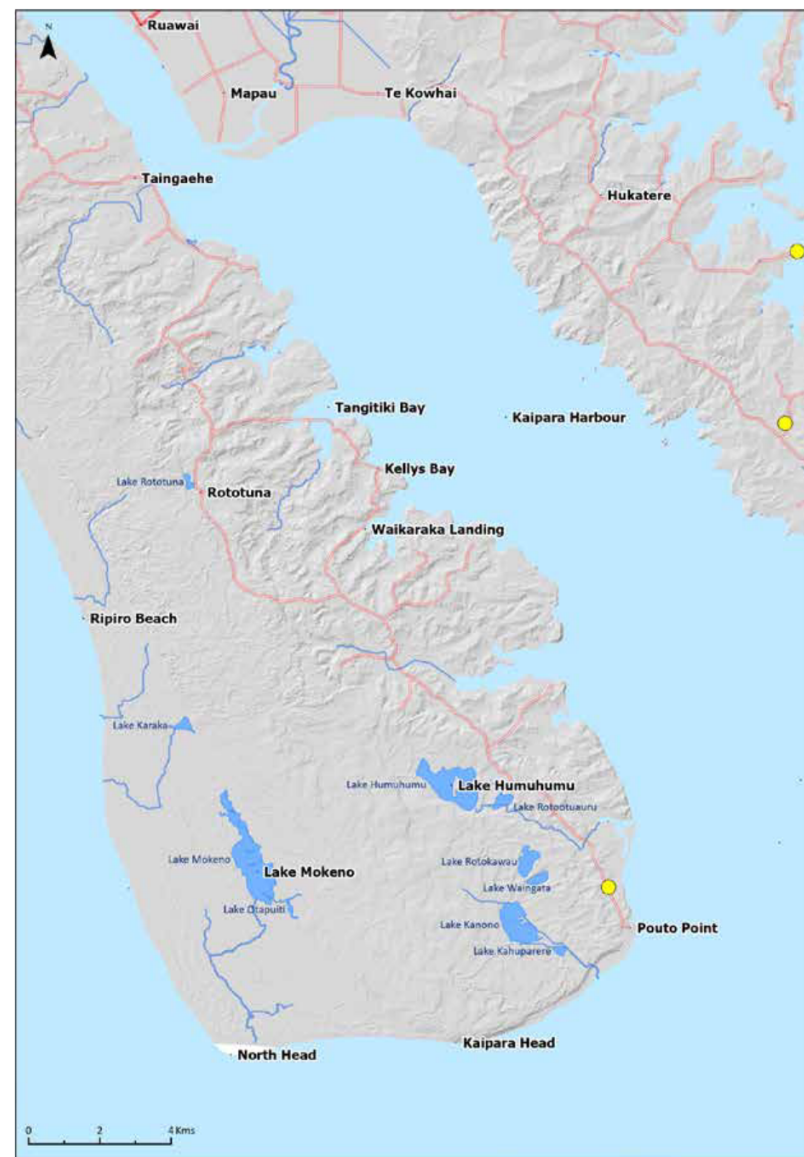


Mangakāhia





Titoki



Poutō





## Research Approach

These questions will be addressed in a variety of ways, including:

- Interviews with kaumātua and other knowledgeable people
- Hui Wānanga conducted upon marae and other significant places within the study area
- Documentary research in public and private collections (eg whakapapa books, manuscripts, letters, publication, reports etc)

The research is being conducted under the auspices of the 'Waimā, Waitai, Waiora' partnership group and a Research Committee.

## Approach to Ethics

The research is being conducted according to the following principles:

- The ultimate purpose of the research is to empower the iwi, hapū, whānau communities of the Wairoa River and its tributaries with respect to enabling their contribution to improve the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river and its tributaries
- As the research involves interactions with iwi members (at individual and collective levels), the Research Team and management is committed to ensure that the health, welfare and safety of those engaged in the research is protected. This includes responding appropriately to the COVID-19 virus outbreak and any other significant health challenge

- The Research Team respects, acknowledges and honours iwi, hapū, whānau ownership and rights in iwi, hapū, whānau knowledge. The Research Team's position regarding knowledge utilised in the research is elaborated in the team's Intellectual and Cultural Property statement.
- Concerning oral history interviews, the Research Team will always secure the consent of an individual and/or group prior to conducting an interview with them. It is recognised that in some cases, the process of gaining permission and consent may require involvement by the individual's whānau and other advocates/kaitiaki as appropriate.
- Additionally, should the Research Team wish to quote an individual (or group as required) and/or otherwise make use of their ideas in the research, the Research Team commits to seeking the permission of the individual concerned.
- With respect to the hui wānanga, the Research Team will always respect and be guided by the appropriate tikanga of the marae upon which Te Kawa Waiora hui wānanga will be conducted.
- The Research Team recognises that so much of the tangata whenua view of the northern Wairoa River and its tributaries is articulated through the Māori language. Hence, the Research Team possesses the capabilities to enable Māori language interactions to take place.
- The Research Team commits to sharing the outcomes of its research with the communities consulted prior to public release so that relevant iwi, hapū and whānau have an opportunity to discuss and comment on these outcomes.

## APPENDIX FIVE: INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL PROPERTY STATEMENT

The following Intellectual and Cultural Property Statement was utilised throughout the Te Kawa Waiora Research Project:

Te Kawa Waiora is an iwi-led research project concerning the health, wellbeing and mauri of the northern Wairoa River and its tributaries. The goal of the research is to address questions of importance to the iwi, hapū and whānau communities of the river as the basis by which their contribution to increasing the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river may be achieved.

### Research Questions

The research addresses the following questions:

#### Question 1

What is the traditional tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of the river and its tributaries?

#### Question 2

What is the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of change in the river since the 19th century?

#### Question 3

What is their view of the river now and what do they believe needs to be done to improve the river?

- How can we measure the mauri of the river?
- What do they believe needs to be done to improve the river?
- How can tangata whenua communities (iwi, hapū, whānau) help with improving the river

### Approach to Intellectual and Cultural Property

The research is being conducted according to the following principles:

- The ultimate purpose of the research is to empower the iwi, hapū, whānau communities of the Wairoa River and its tributaries with respect to enabling their contribution to improving the health, wellbeing and mauri of the river and its tributaries
- The Te Kawa Waiora Research Team recognises that for the Te Kawa Waiora research project to be successful, it must interact with the intellectual and cultural property of the iwi, hapū, whānau and marae communities of the Wairoa River and its tributaries. In interacting with this knowledge, the Te Kawa Waiora Research Team does not make any claim of ownership to the intellectual and cultural property of the iwi, hapū, whānau and marae communities in which we interact.
- The Te Kawa Waiora research team recognises the deep desire of these communities to have as much of their traditional knowledge repatriated to them as possible (where it has been alienated). The Research Team also recognises that much traditional knowledge of these communities has been lost and/or damaged. The Research Team, therefore, commits to always working in ways that assists these communities in the repatriation of their knowledge and intellectual and cultural property to them.
- With respect to oral history interviews, the research team will always seek the consent and permission of the individual to be

interviewed, and in some cases the process for gaining permission and consent may need to involve the individual's whānau and other advocates/kaitiaki as appropriate. Additionally, the following points are made:

- » A copy of interview recordings will be sent to the interviewee
- » A written summary of the interview will be sent to the interviewee
- With respect to the hui wānanga, the research will always respect and be guided by the appropriate authorities, expectations and culture of the marae upon which Te Kawa Waioara hui wānanga will be conducted. Additionally, the following points are made:
  - » Copies of any hui wānanga recordings and other material arising from those hui wānanga will be sent to the relevant marae and to the participants of those hui wānanga (as a means of ensuring the connection between the outcomes of hui wānanga and the participants and the participant marae)
- The research team recognises that so much of the tangata whenua view of the northern Wairoa River and its tributaries is articulated through the Māori language.
- The research team commits to sharing the outcomes of its research prior to public release so that relevant iwi, hapū and whānau have an opportunity to discuss and comment on these outcomes.

## APPENDIX SIX: IWI RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAMME

From the outset, the leaders of this research project were concerned to ensure that it created benefits for local communities that will last beyond the life of the project. One of the key ways by which the project was able to achieve this was through iwi/hapū/marae research training.

To this end, the Research Team designed a modular research training programme for iwi/hapū/whānau communities which was delivered during the second half of 2020 and throughout 2021. The number of delivered training days totalled seven. These usually took place on a Friday prior to scheduled weekend hui wānanga. (Unfortunately, the delivery of this programme was interrupted by COVID-19).

### This training addressed the following questions:

#### What is research?

- What are the components of the research process? How is it conducted?
- What is or could be the relationship between research and tikanga Māori?

#### Why conduct research?

- What is the purpose and/or value of research?
- How is completed research used to create change and generate value?

#### Why should iwi conduct research?

- What is the value of research to iwi, hapū, whānau and marae communities?



### What kinds of research might iwi conduct?

- What issues, challenges and opportunities facing our iwi that they may wish to conduct research about?
- What kinds of research might an iwi wish to be conducted by others for the benefit of that iwi?

### How might an iwi conduct research? What does an 'iwi approach' to research look like?

- Who should do this research? Who should be involved?
- What processes and/or procedures might an iwi use in iwi lead research? What tikanga Māori are relevant to research and might be applied in research?

### The overall outcomes sought for this training included the following:

Building a positive and informed environment for research within iwi, hapū, whānau and marae communities. Normalising research within iwi/marae communities where:

- the benefits of research are understood and valued
- Iwi/marae communities enable research to be conducted and to be successful
- Iwi/marae communities can make use of research and derive benefits and value from research
- Iwi/marae communities can set research priorities

### Training individual researchers in iwi led research

- Creating a cohort of researchers who can lead iwi-led and iwi relevant research, on behalf of their own iwi and for other iwi as well.

Seven seminars were conducted between September 2020 and July 2021 and all, except one (owing to Covid-19), was delivered in person. Here is a list of attendees:

Fiona Kemp (Te Uri o Hau Environs)	Sapphire Davenport (Waikara Marae Te Roroa)
Sean Malcolm (Te Parawhau/Ngati Kahu ki Whangaroa)	Jane Matthews (Te Roroa)
Nicki Wakefield (Te Parawhau/Ngati Hau)	Ani Pitman (Patuharakeke)
Mina Henare-Toka (Te Uri o Hau)	Katarina Tautuhi (Waihau Marae Te Uri o Hau)
Laura Edmonds (Ngati Toro/Piki Te Aroha)	Tokotoko Retimana (Naumai Marae Ngapuhi)
Shereen Worthington (Te Uri o Hau)	Kelly Retimana (Naumai Marae Ngapuhi)
Luke Connelly (Te Uri o Hau)	Tania Te Hira (Ngapuhi)
Shelley Paniora (Te Roroa)	Ruby Barnbes-Martin (Te Roroa)
Jaime Clarkson (Waikara Marae Te Roroa)	Hilda Noho (Te Roroa)
Karen Joyce-Paki (Ngapuhi)	Thalea Tane (Te Roroa)
Millan Ruka (Te Uriroroi)	Kiri Reihana (Otaua)
Delaraine Armstrong (Te Orewai)	Taria Tane (Te Roroa)
Betty Cherrington (Te Orewai)	Mike Leuluai (Ngatiwai)
Chantez Connor-Kingi (Ngati Kahu o Torongare/ Ngati Hine)	Celia Witehira (Ngapuhi/Te Rarawa)
Anahita Djamali, Kelly Drake (NRC)	
Eamon Nathan (RN).	
Bridgette Tapsell, Rangi Ahipene (Village PR)	

Additionally, the following stakeholder representatives attended at various points:

# OVERVIEW OF THE TE KAWA WAIORA IWI RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAMME

## Module One

An Introduction to Research for Iwi

### Questions

What is research?

- What are the components of the research process?

Why conduct research?

- What is the purpose and/or value of research?
- How is completed research used to create change and generate value?

### Description

The purpose of this module is to offer participants an introduction to research itself as 'the disciplined search for understanding regarding a problem or opportunity that is desired to be understood.' The module will discuss the components of research (including research process) before discussing the value and importance of research.

## Module Two

An Introduction to Iwi Research

### Questions

Why should iwi conduct research?

- What is the value of research to iwi, hapū, whānau and marae communities?

What kinds of research might an iwi conduct?

- What issues, challenges and opportunities facing our iwi that they may wish to conduct research about?
- What kinds of research might an iwi wish to be conducted by others for the benefit of that iwi?

## Description

The purpose of this module is to introduce participants to the reasons as to why iwi ought to conduct research. It will explore the value that research can offer to iwi, hapū, whānau and marae communities. It will also explore the kinds of research that iwi may wish to conduct and the kinds of research they wish to be completed through other research providers.

## Module Three

Conducting Iwi Research 1

### Questions

How might an iwi conduct research? What does an 'iwi approach' to research look like?

- Who should do this research? Who should be involved?

### Description

This module concerns how iwi-led research is conducted. It will explore an 'iwi approach to research'

## Module Four

Conducting Iwi Research 2

### Questions

What processes and/or procedures might an iwi use in iwi-led research?

### Description

This module explores at a deeper level the methods and ways by which iwi-led research might be conducted. This includes:

- The Art of High Quality Wānanga
- Conducting Oral Interviews
- Documentary Research in Libraries and Archives

## Module Five

### Supporting Iwi Research

#### Questions

- What are ethics and how do they relate to research?
- What is meant by intellectual and cultural property and how does this relate to research?
- What is meant by 'knowledge management', how does this relate to research and how does this benefit iwi?

#### Description

This module addresses several critical issues that support and underpin research and are vital to a successful research project. They include ethics, IP and knowledge management. Although these aspects are research itself, they are vital dimensions of research and require attention.

## Module Six

### Making Use of Research

#### Questions

How does research lead to or support making positive change?

#### Description

This module concerns the ways by which research is used to support and enable positive change. It addresses questions such as benefit sharing, decision making and action taking that might take place as a consequence of research.

## APPENDIX SEVEN: KAITIAKITANGA PLANNING TEMPLATE

An Environmental Management Planning Template. A tool to assist iwi/hapū/whānau/marae while developing management plans for their environment. DRAFT

### Kaitiakitanga Planning: An Environmental Management Plan Template

This template was written to assist tangata whenua communities - such as iwi, hapū, whānau and/or marae - as they articulate their aspirations for the environment and natural areas of their customary concern and seek to increase their profile and influence in environmental management planning.

The tables below provide ways by which to address the following two questions:

- What aspirations and goals do tangata whenua communities (iwi/hapū/whānau/marae) hold for the environment of their customary concern?
- What aspirations and goals do these communities hold with respect to their role in the governance and management of the environment going forward?

## THIS TEMPLATE IS BASED UPON THE FOLLOWING IDEAS:

### Tangata Whenua communities:

- Care deeply for the environment and the natural world - particularly the areas in which they inherit and maintain mana whenua (and are therefore the tangata whenua of those areas)
- Are deeply concerned about the contemporary state of the environment and believe that decline will continue if new and alternative approaches are not enabled
- Hold the Crown and its agencies accountable for the poor state of the environment today
- Believe that the Crown and its agencies have a responsibility to address increasingly urgent issues facing the health of the environment
- Are sceptical, however, that the Crown and its agencies are capable of addressing these issues satisfactorily (believing that an approach where only the Crown and its agencies are empowered to manage the environment represents 'more of the same').
- Consequently seek new approaches to environmental management, particularly derived from tino rangatiratanga<sup>219</sup> and mātauranga Māori.
- Aspire to achieve a much greater role and influence in environmental management of the future

Consequently, this template was created to help tangata whenua communities achieve a better informed and supported role in environmental management of the future.

In using this template, please note that this is in draft form and represents an example only. It offers indications only of the kinds of issues and aspirations that tangata whenua communities might hold.

The template may be used and changed in any way to assist tangata whenua communities in their consideration of their aspirations for the environment and the role they might play in environmental management going forward.

## THE ASPIRATIONS AND GOALS OF TANGATA WHENUA COMMUNITIES: IWI/HAPŪ/WHĀNAU/MARAE

These tables were designed to assist tangata whenua to answer the following question:

What improvements in the environment do iwi/hapū/whānau/marae communities wish to see in the next 10-20 years, leading to 2040? What are their goals for the environment going forward?



## ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

### Outcome area:

THE NEW SACRED Experiencing the natural world as more than the physical, instilling a new sense of wonder and deep care, deep identification with the natural world

Goal: Creation of new wāhi tapu and sites of significance as an expression of a vibrant and alive tangata whenua community

#### Discussion:

Tangata whenua communities are naturally and understandably concerned with cultural revitalisation, with the restoration of taonga to contemporary generations. However, at some point these communities will make the transition to a new creativity in a bid to awaken a sense of the sacred now.

#### Achieved by:

Creation of new wāhi tapu based upon a determination and commitment to restore a sense of balance between human communities and natural world environments.

Goal: Restoration of existing wāhi tapu and sites of significance

#### Discussion:

Existing wāhi tapu represents places and venues where ancestors have experienced and undertaken an encounter with the sacred. These existing, ancestral and historical wāhi tapu offer suggestions, models and guidance as to the nature of the sacred in history and how they might influence notions and experiences of the sacred today.

#### Achieved by:

Restoration and protection of existing wāhi tapu and associated taonga including relevant knowledge and ways of using and interacting with historical wāhi tapu today and into the future.

### Outcome area: Water

### Goal: High Quality

#### Discussion:

- Life sustaining properties, high quality drinking water
- Ability to harvest kai
- Ability to make use of the water for various rituals including baptisms

#### Achieved by:

- Removal of all pollutants

### Goal: Meaningful Quantity

#### Discussion:

- Water levels are restored
- Aquifers and water tables are rehabilitated

### Goal: Equitable Access

#### Discussion:

- Water is generally available to the community. This is not compromised by inequitable water harvesting.

Outcome area:  
Earth, Soil

Goal: High Quality

Discussion:

- Soils retains their fertility, life sustaining properties

Achieved by:

- Contaminants and pollutants are removed.

Goal: Meaningful Quantity

Discussion:

- Fertile soils are abundant

Goal: Equitable Access

Discussion:

- Communities are able to access good, fertile soils

Outcome area:  
People

Goal: The health of people is intimately connected to the health of the environment and vice versa

Discussion:

- There is a growing awareness and consciousness in the general community regarding the fragility of the natural world.
- There is a growing identification by the general community with the natural world.

Achieved by:

- 'Kawa Waiora', new rituals of community and identity.

Outcome area:  
Indigenous  
flora and  
fauna

Goal: Restoration of indigenous flora

Discussion:

- Including species of particular significance eg: mangakāhia for Mangakāhia

Achieved by:

- Planting programmes
- Removal of pests and invasive species

Goal: Restoration of indigenous fauna

Discussion:

- Including species of particular significance eg: tuna

Achieved by:

- Species restoration

## OUTCOMES PERTAINING TO RIGHTS IN OWNERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Outcome area: Example Goals

### Ownership

Tangata Whenua rights in the ownership and management of water have been clarified.

### Governance

Opportunities to create resourced, sustainable tino rangatiratanga structures exist.

Collaboration relationships between Kāwanatanga and tino rangatiratanga structures are successfully secured.

### Management

A resourced and sustained Kaitiaki Network throughout a catchment area has been successfully established. This includes updated and articulated understandings of Kaitiakitanga as a philosophy and practice of environment management based upon mātauranga Māori and the experience of tangata whenua communities.



Hui wānanga at Rīpia Marae



Sharing of korero associated to Te Hoanga



Some attendees from Te Kowhai Marae hui wānanga







# THE KAWA WAIORA REPORT 2020 — 2021