



NGĀ WHENUA RĀHUI  
2022-2024 BIENNIAL REPORT  
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# Pūrongo Rua Tau

NGĀ WHENUA RĀHUI 2022-2024 BIENNIAL REPORT





**HE AHA RAWA**  
NGĀ WHENUA RĀHUI IS A CONTESTABLE MINISTERIAL FUND

**WHAKATŪRANGA**  
ESTABLISHED TO FACILITATE THE VOLUNTARY PROTECTION OF  
INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY ON MĀORI-OWNED LAND

**TE PŪTAKE**  
PRINCIPLES OF THE FUND ARE GEARED TOWARDS THE OWNERS  
RETAINING TINO RANGATIRATANGA (OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL)

**TE TINO WHĀINGA**  
IN ITS KAUPAPA AND ROLE, THE NGĀ WHENUA RĀHUI FUND IS  
REAFFIRMING THE BOND BETWEEN TANGATA WHENUA AND THEIR LAND

E AKIAKI ANA I A TANGATA WHENUA  
KI TE TIAKI I TE WAO TAPU NUI A TĀNE  
ME TE PŪTAIAO-Ā-NUKU I RUNGA I ŌNA AKE WHENUA.





Te Kārearea  
Image captured by  
Ngā Whenua Rāhui  
Manutaki Rob Whitbourne

# Mō te Whenua, mō te Iwi

This 2022–2024 Biennial Report is a record of commitment, connection, and collective strength. It reflects the ongoing mahi of Ngā Whenua Rāhui to support Māori landowners in protecting, restoring, and revitalising the mauri of their whenua — not just as places of indigenous biodiversity, but as living taonga woven with ancestral memory, responsibility, and purpose.

Over these two years, the landscape of our work has shifted — shaped by climate extremes, growing pressures on indigenous biodiversity and so on. Yet through every challenge, we remain committed to our kaupapa. Kaipupuri whenua (landowners and shareholders) across Aotearoa have continued to exercise tino rangatiratanga, applying mātauranga Māori alongside science, restoring balance to ecosystems, and reaffirming the sacred taura here (bond) between tangata whenua and te taiao.

This report captures more than statistics and agreements. It carries the voices of landowners who refused to give up on their whenua after a cyclone. It shares the vision of uri replanting the hills of Rēkohu so the manu can return. It celebrates the strength of rangatahi stepping into their roles as kaitiaki. It holds space for the legacy of the Amorangi who guided this kaupapa from its beginnings, and for those who now carry it forward.

After more than thirty years of kaupapa Māori conservation, Ngā Whenua Rāhui continues to learn and grow alongside the people it serves. This report honours that legacy. It speaks to the intergenerational work of healing, protecting, and returning life to whenua Māori. And it acknowledges that while landscapes change, the mauri of the whenua endures — and so too does our collective responsibility to uphold it.

***Ko te whenua te tūāpapa o te ora – The land is the foundation of wellbeing.***



# Te Pūrongo Whakamoe

Ngā Tau 2022-2024

KO TE AMORANGI KI MUA  
E KA MAHANA TE AHI TAPU O RUNGA NGĀ TIHI TAPU O PAE MAUNGA.  
E TE TIRAMATE, HOEHOEA TE WAKA WAIRUA KI TE REINGA,  
O RUNGA TE WAKA O TAMARERETI.  
TE HUIHUI O MATARIKI, KĀPUNIPUNI WAIRUA KOUTOU E TE TINĪ, E TE MANO.  
E TANGI KAU KO TE MAPU — AUE HA.  
KO TE HĀPAI Ō KI MURI  
HE TAURANGA UTA, HE TOKA TŪ MOANA NGĀ AMORANGI RANGATIRA,  
KAITIAKI WHENUA, E NGĀ ĀPIHA PAPA ATAWHAI.  
E NANAIORE NEI NGĀ MANU TAKI, MANU HĀPAI, MANU PŪTAIAO,  
MANU PUNARAU KŌRERO E TŪORA AI TĀTOU,  
E TŪHONOHONO AI TĀTOU HAI TAKAWAENGA Ā KAITIAKI I TE WHENUA Ā NUKU.

ANEI E WHAI AKE NEI KO NGĀ PŪRONGO KŌRERO O NGĀ WHENUA RĀHUI,  
MŌ TĒNEI HUIHUINGA WHAKAMOE TAU.

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# From the Amorangi

We were saddened by the passing of members Piriniha Prentice and Paki Nikora, who both served the komiti with unwavering energy and passion, leaving an indelible mark on our community and its kaupapa. And to them we leave these words, “mate atu he tētēkura, ara mai rā he tētēkura” as a way to express the cycle of life and the continuity of all things. And in this, we welcomed new members Bubs Smith (Ngāti Tūwharetoa) and Martin Wikaira (Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Ngā Puhi). With a history of working with iwi, hapū and whānau, and in the crown sector, they both bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the komiti.

The incredible contributions of Tā Tumu Te Heuheu and Kevin Prime to Ngā Whenua Rāhui and te taiao are honoured in this biennial report, marking the end of an era led by visionary and dedicated rangatira who have helped shape our kaupapa since 1991. Their retirements have provided an opportunity for them to be acknowledged as Honorary Life Members of the komiti.

As we reflect on the contributions of our past and present members, it is also important to consider the broader context of our work and the challenges we face. A United Nations article highlighted that we are losing an indigenous language around the globe at a rate of one every two weeks.

There are approximately 6,700 indigenous languages around the world and an estimated 3,000 that are endangered or at risk of being lost from our global community by 2100.

The article then drew the correlation between the loss of indigenous languages and the loss of indigenous biodiversity. That deeply, struck a chord.

Amidst these concerning trends, Ngā Whenua Rāhui celebrated 25 years of working with whānau to support the protection of our flora and fauna, our ngahere, our atua, our indigenous biodiversity. During this same time, we have seen the exciting evolution and growth of kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori, wānanga and kapa haka, amongst other rebirths of what it is to be Māori.

So, twenty-five plus years of context tell us Te Ao Māori is positively progressing on a number of fronts, and they are all connected. We have always known about the interconnectedness of all things, how the mauri of one thing impacts another. We witness it yet again. As our purpose enables ngahere to again fill with birdsong, so too does the normalisation of our reo throughout Aotearoa. For the komiti and our kaimahi the context has also changed as we build resilience, systemise our mahi, align best practices, grow capacity and imbue mātauranga through all we do. The challenges of the next twenty-five years will demand all of this.

**Mavis Mullins** - Chairperson

# Ngā Whāinga

Strengthen Our Core Business	The position of indigenous biodiversity in Aotearoa is improved
Grow our Expertise	Provide a framework and the means to train people to better manage indigenous biodiversity
Embrace Emerging Opportunities	Achieve more by working with others than by working on our own
Raise our Profile and Visibility	Increase understanding of NWR and MKT Funds and our role in the protection of indigenous biodiversity



# Komiti Amorangi

o Ngā Whenua Rāhui

Amorangi are ministerially appointed iwi members who provide oversight of our work and advise the Minister of Conservation on the use of the funds administered by Ngā Whenua Rāhui.

Tā Tumu Te Heuheu and Kevin Prime are our longest serving amorangi, each sitting on the Ngā Whenua Rāhui Komiti since its inception in 1991.



**Mavis Mullins**  
**Chair**  
Te Atihaunui a Pāpārangi,  
Rangitāne, Ngāti Ranginui



**John Paki**  
**Deputy Chairman**  
Ngāti Wai



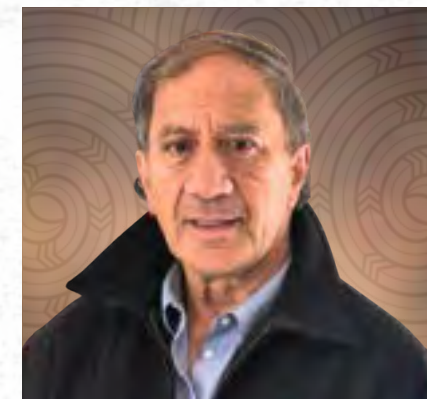
**Mere George**  
**Member**  
Ngāti Whare, Ngāti Manawa,  
Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Tuwharetoa



**Tyrone 'Bubs' Smith**  
**Member**  
Ngāti Tuwharetoa



**Wiki Walker**  
**Member**  
Ngāti Hine

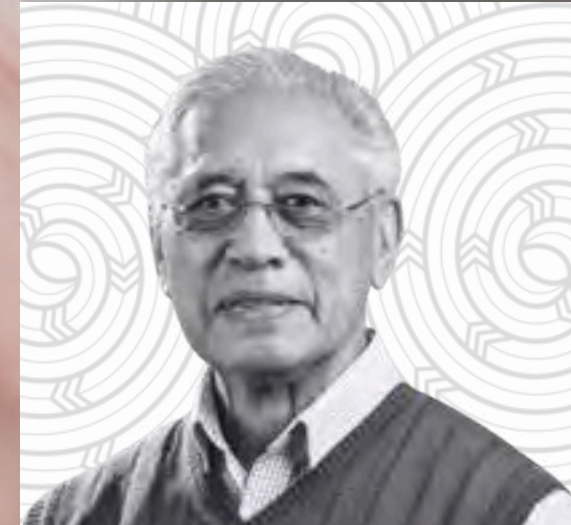


**Martin Wikaera**  
**Member**  
Ngāti Tuwharetoa



# The Echoes of Leadership

NEI A MAHARA KA HOKI KI TE MOEMOEĀ I  
MUA RĀ ANŌ A ĒNEI TĀNGATA MARUWEHI.  
KEI Ō MĀTOU MANU NOHO MĀTĀRAE, ĒNEI  
KA WHAKAMĀNAWA MŌ KOUTOU I  
WHAKATŌ TE KĀKANO,  
KIA PUĀWAI.



TĀ TUMU TE HEUHEU



KEVIN PRIME



MIKE MOHI



# Honouring Three Visionaries

It is the end of an era for Ngā Whenua Rāhui (NWR). Two greatly respected rangatira who’ve been visionary, dedicated and accomplished leaders of our work since it began in 1991 have stepped back. Tā Tumu Te Heuheu (Ngāti Tūwharetoa), who chaired our governing body, Komiti Amorangi, for more than three decades, stepped aside last year. Kevin Prime (Ngāti Hine), who served as deputy chair throughout the same time, also left the komiti in 2023. Meanwhile, a third highly regarded rangatira, who’s been another significant leader of NWR since 1991, is finally easing back on his mahi.

He is Mike Mohi (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāi Tūhoe), a long-time NWR employee whose determined, hardworking and humorous style has earned him legendary status among many Māori landowners. As the first staff member, Mike pioneered the practical implementation of NWR’s kaupapa. He’s held a number of staff roles over the years and currently contributes his vast knowledge to NWR as a consultant.

## Reflections and Contributions

The kaupapa ensured their long, personal dedication to this mahi. For Kevin Prime, the “opportunity to assist Māori in being true kaitiaki ō Papatūānuku” fitted his lifetime commitment to caring for te taiao: waters, land, forests and air. His firm belief and philosophy in caring for Papatūānuku aligned with the kaupapa of NWR. Tā Tumu says his rural whenua farming background (and) Ngāti Tūwharetoa origins enabled him to understand the constant challenges of official procedures and processes for developing Māori land. NWR’s “hugely important kaupapa” kept him focused as a “determined advocate for Māori whenua supports”.

Meanwhile, Mike Mohi reports he loved the concept of Māori landowners being able to “formally and physically protect what little was left of their natural vegetation, whether native forests or wetlands”. He also loved working with the Komiti Amorangi, and with “some great kaimahi, from the top managers down to the younger ones coming in and learning the job”.

For Tā Tumu, there’ve been numerous standout moments and standout people around Aotearoa during this mahi. But foremost in his mind: “The way that many Māori landowners were able to utilize and progress their own land development, through the systems we at NWR were able to offer and process.” He felt very honoured, he says, to be part of this. In Kevin Prime’s view, one policy decision for Ngā Whenua Rāhui stands out above all else. This was reducing the term of a kawenata agreement with Māori landowners from “in perpetuity” to a review after 25 years. As it happens, the 25-year review of a certain kawenata on a farm near Ōtorohanga last year was a standout moment for Mike Mohi. When endorsing a further term for this covenant, the late Kīngi Tūheitia Pōtatau Te Wherowhero VII, observed, “If this kawenata was good enough for Mum [Te Arikunui Dame Te Atairangikaahu] 25 years ago, it’s good enough for me.”

## Future Aspirations

The rangatira highlight different, but complementary, aspirations for the future of Ngā Whenua Rāhui and whenua Māori. For Tā Tumu, it’s that NWR continues to be “the champion for Māori whenua ownership and development as a sanctioned, single unit - perhaps as a totally funded organization with, but outside, the Department of Conservation”. Mike Mohi wishes for political-level recognition of the “intricacies of multiply owned Māori land that is in an indigenous state”.

Recognition, for example, that getting landowner agreement about formal protection can be a lengthy process, with Māori land held mainly in trusts or incorporations. And Kevin Prime really hopes that NWR continues to “encourage and assist our Māori landowners to be kaitiaki mō Papatūānuku”.

As Ngā Whenua Rāhui (NWR) transitions into a new era, the departure of its long-standing leaders marks a significant moment in its story. The dedication and vision of Tā Tumu Te Heuheu, Kevin Prime, and Mike Mohi have left an indelible mark on the organization and their contributions have shaped NWR's kaupapa, ensuring the protection and development of Māori land for future uri whakaheke.

Moving forward, NWR remains committed to its mahi, deeply appreciating the foundation set by these rangatira, whose dedication has ensured that NWR can continue to support Māori landowners in their role as true kaitiaki mō Papatūānuku. The journey ahead is guided by the principles and aspirations they have championed, promising a future where Māori land and its guardians are respected and empowered.



# Te Kaupapa

TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT REMAINING  
INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY ON PRIVATELY  
OWNED MĀORI LAND THAT REPRESENTS THE FULL  
RANGE OF INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY  
ORIGINALLY PRESENT IN THE LANDSCAPE.

## OUR NATURE

nature has  
stories

## OUR PEOPLE

culture is a product  
of the land

## OUR FUTURE

people disappear,  
the land remains



# Our Years in Review

It has been a time of growth as we supported formal protection and associated work on kawenata over the past two years. Interest in the fund as a mechanism for voluntary protection remains high with 101 applications for kawenata currently working through the application process. Landowners seek to collaborate with us and other funders to achieve their aspirations on their whenua or re-enter into a further 25-year term. There are sometimes delays in the process with changes in Trusts or amendments to past agreements requiring renegotiation. We are thankful for the patience of landowners as we work through the backlog as best we can.

The success of the Māori Land Fund through Jobs for Nature funding has seen some landowners involved in restoration and biodiversity projects that have been successful not just from a conservation, environment and land management perspective but also in the opportunity it provided for whānau to be able to undertake paid work on their whenua and to see their aspirations come to life. As funding comes to an end, we have done a lot of work internally to speed up how we work so that we can provide a more efficient service. These updates include:

- Technology development – Consolidation of information into a database and ArcGIS dashboards for responsive mapping
- App development to assist kaimahi in monitoring and auditing in the field
- Policy development to ensure a consistent approach across the application and funds process
- Review of agreement mechanisms to ensure they are robust and consistently applied

The team have taken on the learnings from reviews and audits of our Health, Safety & Wellbeing culture and implemented associated actions. This has been important mahi and has helped us to raise and maintain high standards in our work and the work we do with others.

Hēteri-Ā-Nuku has had two successful years trialling changes to their intake and ensuring more rangatahi have opportunities to be leaders on the whenua and in conservation and te taiao. They have gone from outputs of 20 kaimahi from training to full time employment every two years to 20 every year. While funding into the future remains uncertain, their success continues to be clear and there is not time like the present for rangatahi to lead in this mahi. We have had great support and guidance from the Ngā Whenua Rāhui Komiti in undertaking the mahi and appreciate their strength and leadership as we navigate times of change.

*Ko Rangi kei runga, ko Papa kei raro*

KO TE WHENUA TE WAIŪ MŌ NGĀ URI WHAKATIPU  
KO TE WHENUA TE MANAWA ORA MŌ TE IWI  
KO TE WHENUA TE TŪĀPAPA O TE ORA  
KO TE WHENUA TE PŪTAKE O TE MAURI  
KO TE WHENUA TE TAONGA TUKU IHO  
KO TE WHENUA TE TŪRANGAWAEWAE  
MŌ NGĀ URI WHAKATIPU





# Hēteri-Ā-Nuku

## From Training to Triumph

Launched in 2020 by Ngā Whenua Rāhui (NWR) and Te Papa Atawhai (DOC), Hēteri-Ā-Nuku (HĀN) provides work-based training, education, and personal development for the next generation of conservation leaders, technical specialists, and scientists. Central to the programme is its commitment to supporting iwi, hapū, and whānau to care for their whenua and indigenous biodiversity.

HĀN Pou, Shayla Kora, explains: “We expose our kaitiaki to all aspects of mahi taiao, so they can take that knowledge home to support their whenua and their people.” Initially co-funded by DOC and Kānoa (Provincial Growth Fund), the programme is now supported by Mahi mō te Taiao (Jobs for Nature), with no future funding secured beyond June 2026.

Kaitiaki rangers are primarily drawn from regions with significant Māori populations and whenua Māori, such as Te Tai Tokerau, Te Moana-a-Toi, Te Tai Rāwhiti, and Te Matau-a-Māui. While most are aged 19-23, participants have ranged from 16 to 45, with equal representation of wāhine and tāne.

A strong attitude, work ethic, interest in mahi taiao, and cultural capability are key selection criteria, with all other skills developed through the programme. Core training includes chainsaw and scrub bar safety, first aid, diving, VHF radio operation, and LUV training, delivered to NZQA standards by tertiary providers like the Eastern Institute of Technology. Additional support from HĀN’s Manu Arahi mentors helps kaitiaki establish and achieve their unique career goals. Increasingly, participants are exploring corporate conservation careers, such as project planning, policy development, and management.



Hēteri-Ā-Nuku continues to excel in its mission of empowering rangatahi Māori to become kaitiaki o te taiao, protecting and caring for Papatūānuku through conservation and environmental management. By the end of June, HĀN successfully concluded its second two-year training programme. Of the 51 graduates to date, the majority have secured full-time roles in conservation across the motu. Employers such as government agencies, iwi organizations, and conservation trusts have been eager to employ these kaitiaki rangers, many even before their first year of training was completed. Some graduates have pursued further education, while others have taken up contract work in environmental sectors.

After evaluating the outcomes of the first two cohorts and a six-month pilot phase, HĀN has refined its approach to better meet the needs of its participants and their communities. The programme now focuses on developing skilled, confident kaitiaki with strong foundations in mahi taiao and tailored career pathways. The course length has been reduced to one year, with enhanced content, mentoring, and career options, including pathways into corporate conservation roles.

Shayla, who has been involved with HĀN since its inception, finds the mahi deeply rewarding: “I love the kaupapa and supporting kaitiaki rangers as they begin their careers in the taiao space. Watching them grow and succeed is incredibly fulfilling.” With a clear vision and strengthened framework, HĀN remains committed to nurturing rangatahi Māori as kaitiaki of our whenua and taiao, ensuring the legacy of care for Papatūānuku endures for generations.

“Poipoia te  
kākano kia  
puāwai”



# Rēkohu, Reawakens

## Bringing Back the Manu to Manukau

The karāpuna (ancestors) named the southeastern headland of Rēkohu, Chatham Island, ‘Manukau.’ In their language, rē Moriori, this means ‘many birds.’ Thousands of forest birds and seabirds once flocked around the point that juts into the Pacific Ocean. They nested in the sheltered coastal ngahere and cliffs, feasting from robust indigenous trees and plants, or the bountiful waters and shoreline. Birds, trees, plants and animals at Manukau Point belonged to numerous native species, often unique to the isolated Chatham Islands (CI). But more than a century of close livestock grazing on the henu (land), and other changes wrought by humans, destroyed their natural habitats. The headland’s traditional abundance was devastated; little native vegetation survived and manu numbers seriously declined. Some bird species, like the kauau (CI shag), tōrea (CI oystercatcher) and tchūriwat (shore plover), are now deemed nationally critical.

Enter Hokinga Mai Ka Manu or ‘bring back the birds’, the ambitious eco-restoration project of Manukau Land Trust. The trust has six blocks totalling 752 hectares, long dominated by farming. Now the project is recloaking more than 230 hectares of this weary henu in ngahere, aiming to restore the area’s unique indigenous biodiversity and recreate habitats for rare and threatened species. A colossal 150,000 native trees and bushes are being planted over three years – many skilfully propagated from seeds and cuttings at the on-site nursery. Surviving native bush is being encouraged to regenerate.

The project’s clearing away pest plants, and trapping pest animals like possums, cats and rats. When rākau on the south coast have grown tall enough, it will establish predator proof areas for ground-nesting seabirds. Waterways, wetlands and gullies are being fenced off, and tracks strengthened throughout the sanctuary. “We’re putting the manu back into Manukau,” notes the project manager, Māui Solomon, a prominent indigenous rights lawyer and Moriori leader who has ancestral links to Manukau Point.

After a slow start, the project is leaping ahead with significant funding injections – first from the One Billion Trees fund; then in 2022 from Ngā Whenua Rāhui’s Māori Land Fund/Jobs for Nature pūtea, for the large-scale, three-year restoration project.



Shag (Kauau)  
Image source: Department of Conservation

CI Shoreplover (Kohutapu)  
Image source: Department of Conservation

CI Oystercatcher (Tōrea)  
Image source: Department of Conservation

“So far we’ve got close to 100,000 trees and shrubs in the ground,” Māui reports in winter 2024. “We did about 48,000 in April-May this year, and since May we’ve got another 35,000 plants in production at the nursery. It’s been a huge challenge. Our hero species are hikapiri, the Chatham Island akeake which is a sort of tree daisy, and flax or harapepe. They’re the main ones for coping with the severe weather conditions here, and as they get to a certain height you can plant others amongst them. There’s tarahinau, hoho, rautini, ngaio and many more.”

Hokinga Mai Ka Manu employs several family and community members as nursery workers and planters, and in pest control. Many other locals, including schoolchildren, come in to help when needed. Māui loves to see people’s joy and satisfaction when working on the henu. “We have mihimihi and karakii (prayer), and I reiterate to them that everyone who’s planted a tree, and their children and grandchildren, will always have a connection here. “Professionals have been brought in at times, to plant tens of thousands of trees at once, “and then you need to run it like a military operation”.

Manukau Land Trust administers henu at Manukau on behalf of about 400 shareholders descending from Tame Horomona-Rehe (Tommy Solomon), a significant Moriori leader whose famous gravesite and statue are sited on his homeland. Māui, Tame’s grandson, believes historically Manukau is very important to most Moriori families. “It was one of the largest reserves set aside for Moriori when our land was taken from us by the Native Land Court in 1870 and given to the invading Māori tribes of Ngāti Tama and Ngāti Mutunga.”

Restorative mahi that evolved into the massive Hokianga Mai Ka Manu project had a slow start in 2009. Māui came to live at Manukau Point with his partner (now wife), Susan Thorpe, who plays a significant role in the project. Also, that year, Manukau Lands Trust signed a Ngā Whenua Rāhui kawenata agreement to protect 100 hectares of henu. Māui and Susan replanted the wider project area as they could afford to buy trees, helped by family, friends and professional colleagues. “I thought it would be a 30 or 40-year project,” Māui recalls. “That my mokos and great-mokos might finish the planting.” Then came the welcome injections of pūtea. “Now things are going very, very well. A lot of the landscape is very rugged, but the right tree, the right place, the right karakii – it’s amazing. Pāpātuanuk’ is responding well to a bit of TLC (tender loving care), and that for me is awe-inspiring.”





# Motutāiko

## Rare Species Protected on Island

Motutāiko stands alone in the vast blue waters of Taupō–nui–a–Tia, Lake Taupō: a small volcanic island cloaked with ngahere or native bush and guarded in places with steep cliffs. The motu is a wāhi tapu, a sacred place, of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, and it is also of “incalculable conservation value”. A comprehensive survey of plant and animal species in 2003 (Department of Conservation) identified nationally threatened species, including:

- Ngata or Wainuia clarki, the carnivorous snail
- Mekomoko or the small-scaled skink
- Pikirangi, white mistletoe

This privately-owned refuge of great spiritual, cultural and ecological merit is being left undisturbed, preserved for future generations. Visitors are strictly prohibited from landing.

Motutāiko Island Trust is the kaitiaki of the treasured motu, on behalf of Ngāti Te Rangiita hapū. The trust signed a Ngā Whenua Rāhui kawenata to protect and conserve the 11-hectare island in 2005, and Ngā Whenua Rāhui, along with Te Papa Atawhai, also supports the trust by providing, for example, management advice, ecological surveying, monitoring of threatened species and pest control.

The survey report noted that Motutāiko offers an “invaluable demonstration of a habitat largely unmodified by pests prevalent on the mainland.” In about 2011, trustees who looked thoroughly over the island found no sign of mammal pests, however, rangers visiting in 2018 were perturbed to discover several predatory Norway rats frolicking at their feet – and no rare snails alive. It’s assumed an unwarranted boat landing introduced the rodent. Pest control measures have since eliminated the rats, and the indigenous species of Motutāiko again live free of mammalian pests, as they likely have since long ago, nō mua rānō.

“He kura tangata e  
kore e rokohanga;  
he kura whenua ka  
rokohanga.”



# Protected Areas

The Ngā Whenua Rāhui Fund is a contestable Crown fund. It closed to new applications at the end of June 2024, as we worked through 100 applications. Our East Coast and Central regions received the highest number of new applications during this period.

Between 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years, eleven new agreements were signed bringing the total number of signed agreements to 299, protecting approximately 185,459 hectares of whenua Māori.

Since the first agreement was signed on 17 April 1993, 64 agreements had reached their review dates. Over the six years since this first agreement reached its 25-year review milestone, eleven reviews have been completed. Progress has been challenged by a range of factors, including non-functioning land trusts and limited engagement.

Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993 restricts the alienation of Māori from their whenua. Each agreement ensures land cannot be bound in perpetuity without review. This is built into the agreement before signing along with the option to terminate.

The review provides a valuable opportunity to update or restructure existing agreements. This may include merging multiple agreements under a single land trust into one, or separating one agreement into two to define distinct protected areas. The review also allows for the inclusion of new areas for protection or the removal of existing ones, as appropriate. Seven agreements have now either expired or been formally terminated.

Agreement numbers by protection clause/region

	South Island	South West	South East	Rēkohu / Wharekauri	East Coast	Central	North	TOTAL
KAWENATA								
Section 27A Conservation Act 1987	-	3	-	1	-	3	1	8
Section 77A Reserves Act 1977	5	71	17	3	43	61	31	231
CONSERVATION CONVENANT								
Section 77 Reserves Act 1977	-	3	5	8	2	3	3	24
MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT								
Section 29 Conservation Act	1	6	2		10	8	7	34
LAND PURCHASE								
Section 19 Reserves Act 1977	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Section 22 reserves act 1977	1	-	-	-	-	-		1
TOTAL	7	83	24	12	55	75	43	299

Agreement hectares by protection clause/region

	South Island	South West	South East	Rēkohu / Wharekauri	East Coast	Central	North	TOTAL
KAWENATA								
Section 27A Conservation Act 1987	-	97	-	15	-	11,921	33	12,066
Section 77A Reserves Act 1977	218	78,443	17,850	239	15,690	46,500	9,135	168,074
CONSERVATION CONVENANT								
Section 77 Reserves Act 1977	-	225	124	451	23	33	826	1,682
MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT								
Section 29 Conservation Act	73	94	15	-	868	2,174	267	3,490
LAND PURCHASE								
Section 19 Reserves Act 1977	-	-	-	-	-	-	112	112
Section 22 reserves act 1977	35	-	-	-	-	-		35
TOTAL	325	78,859	17,989	705	16,581	60,628	10,372	185,459



# Threatened Environment Classifications

The Threatened Environments Classification (TEC) is a nationally recognised spatial dataset that assesses the level of protection and vulnerability of land environments across Aotearoa.

For Ngā Whenua Rāhui, the TEC is a critical tool in evaluating the ecological significance of the protected areas we manage. By overlaying our kawenata with the TEC, we gain valuable insights into how our network of protected areas aligns with nationally threatened ecosystems. It helps us prioritise conservation efforts, advocate for additional protections in highly vulnerable landscapes, and track changes over time.

The following table shows the intersection of Threatened Environments Classification with Ngā Whenua Rāhui protected areas, both to date and for the 2022-2024 reporting period.

Threatened Environments Classification

Ranking	Category criteria	Overall		2022-2024	
		Area (hectares)	Percentage	Area (hectares)	Percentage
1	<10% indigenous cover left	2,252	1.21%	10	0.47%
2	10-20% indigenous cover left	2,758	1.49%	77	3.50%
3	20-30% indigenous cover left	17,242	9.30%	44	1.99%
4	>30% left and <10% protected	13,872	7.48%	932	42.35%
5	>30% left and 10-20% protected	10,486	5.65%	45	2.02%
6	>30% left and >20% protected	136,779	73.75%	1,093	49.67%
	Nil Land Cover	2,071	1.12%	-	-
TOTAL		185,459	100%	2,200	100%



# Ngā rohe – Regions

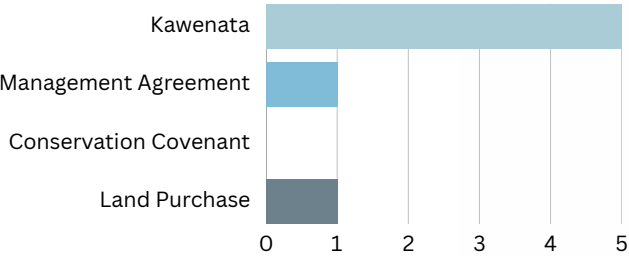
To provide a clearer picture of the Ngā Whenua Rāhui Protected Areas, we have compiled a series of maps that illustrate key environmental and land tenure characteristics across the operational regions in which we work. These maps help visualise the landscape context of our protected areas, supporting decision-making and conservation planning.

### Data sources for maps:

© Landcare Research NZ. For more information visit: <https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/tools-and-resources/mapping/lenz/>  
Ngā Whenua Rāhui Protected Areas © Ngā Whenua Rāhui, 2025  
NZ Terrain Relief (Topo250) © Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand.

# Te Waipounamu

### AGREEMENT TYPE



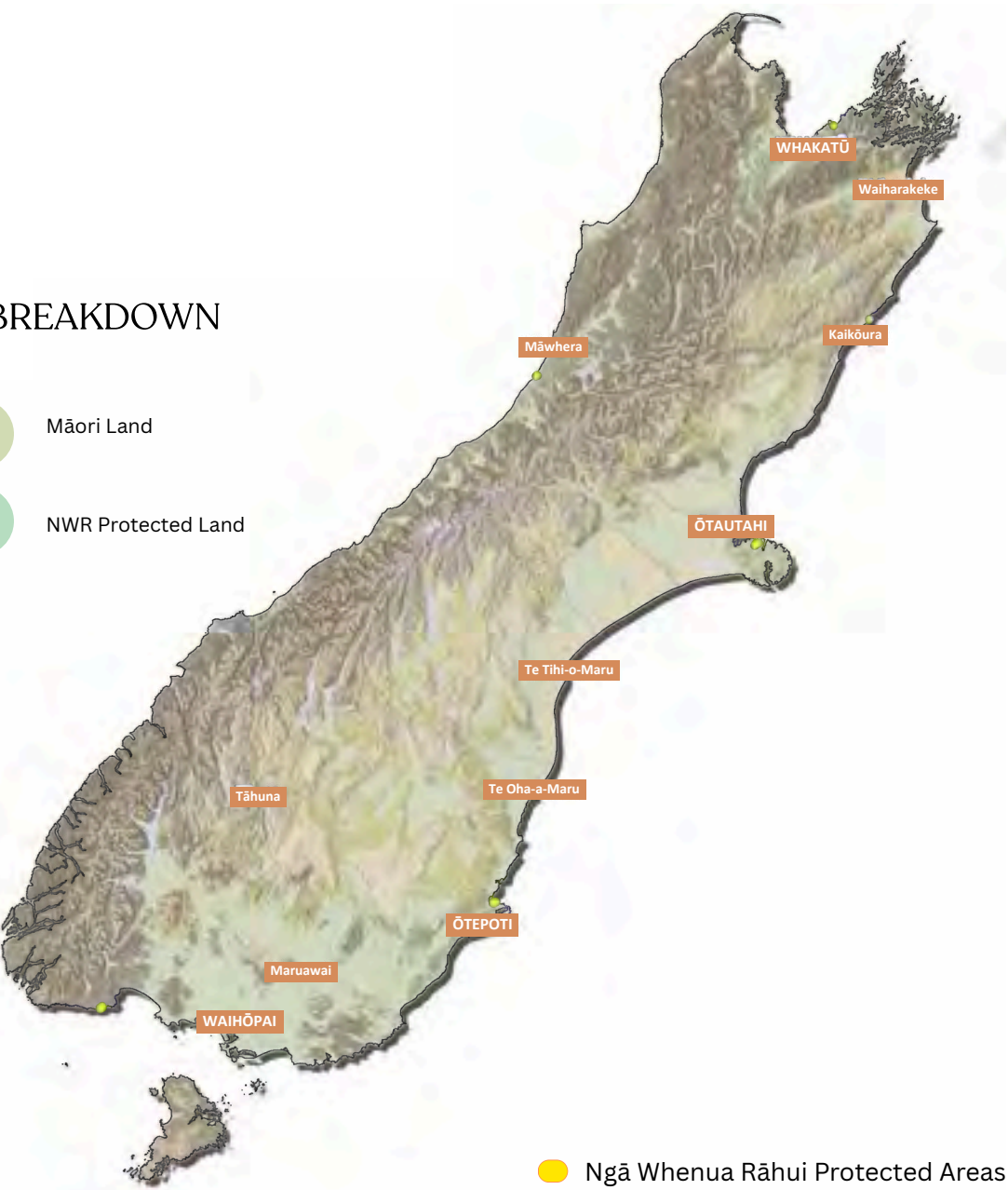
### LAND BREAKDOWN

By hectares



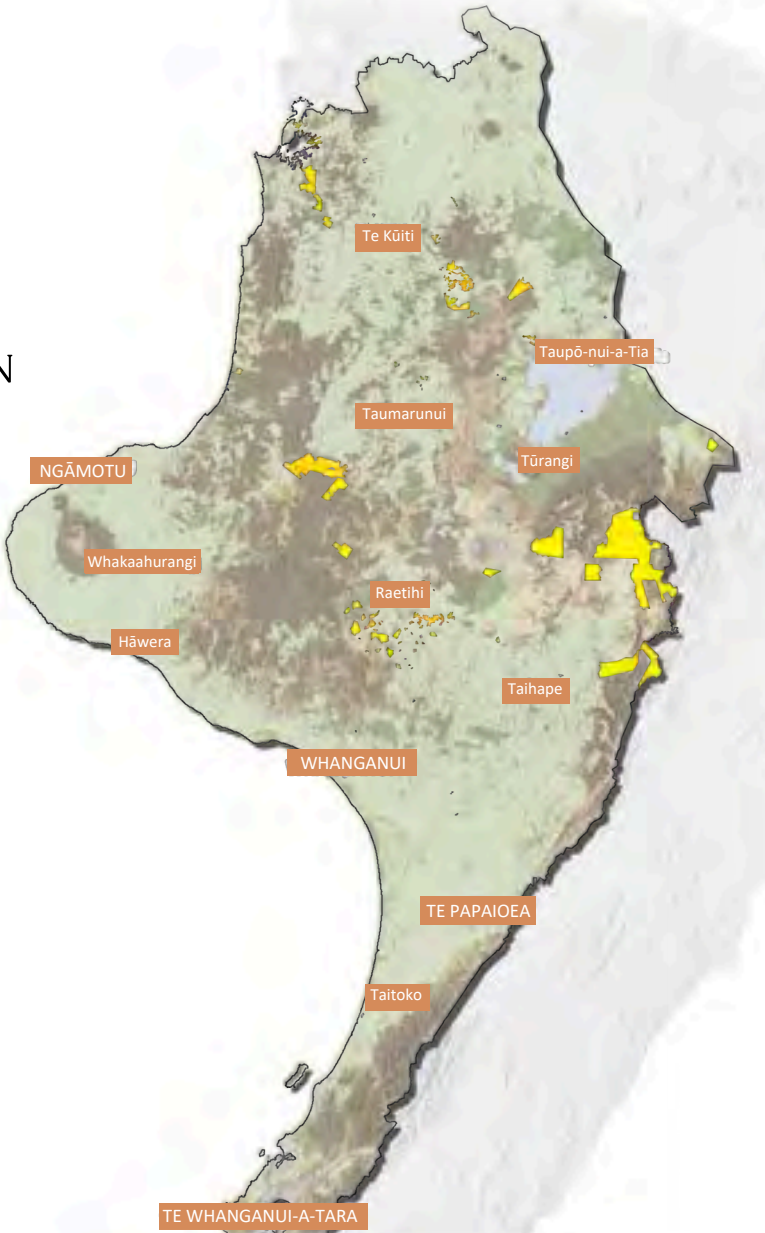
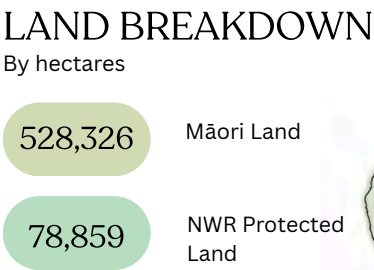
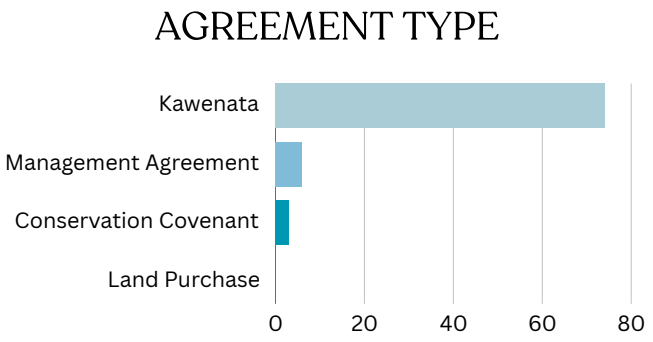
### LANDCOVER BREAKDOWN

Indigenous Forest	25%
High Producing Exotic Grassland	22%
Exotic Forest	4%
Tall Tussock Grassland	15%
Low Producing Grassland	10%
Gravel or Rock	2%
Mānuka and/or Kānuka	3%
Lake or Pond	2%
Other	14%



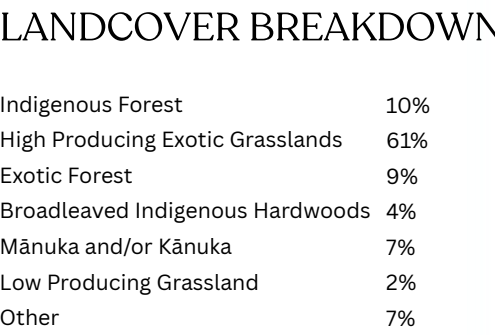
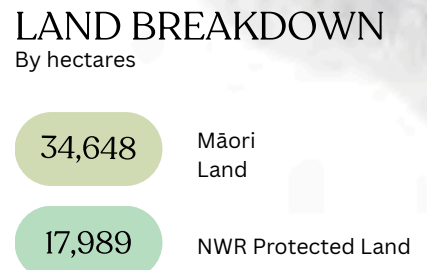
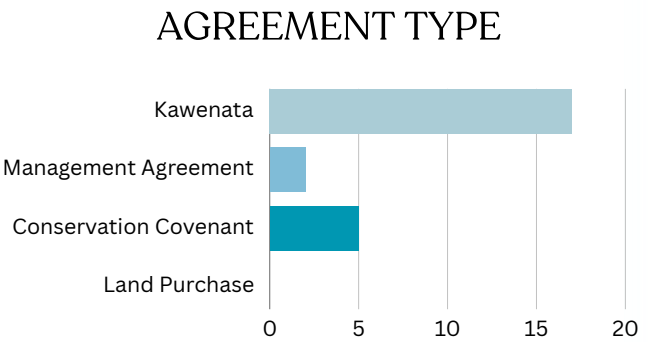


# South West



● Ngā Whenua Rāhui Protected Areas

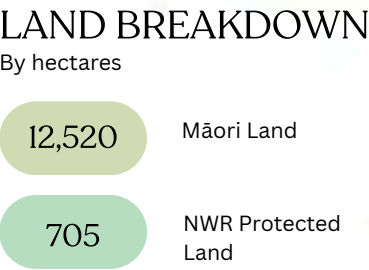
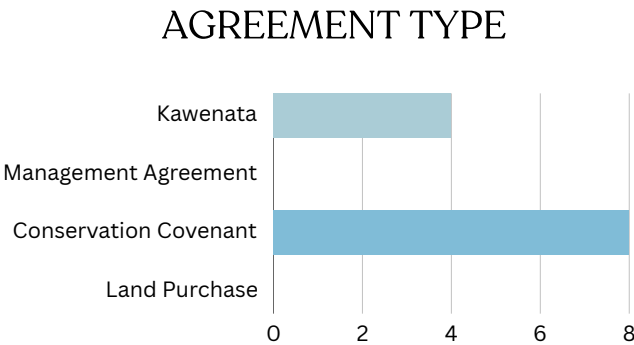
# South East



● Ngā Whenua Rāhui Protected Areas



# Rēkohu

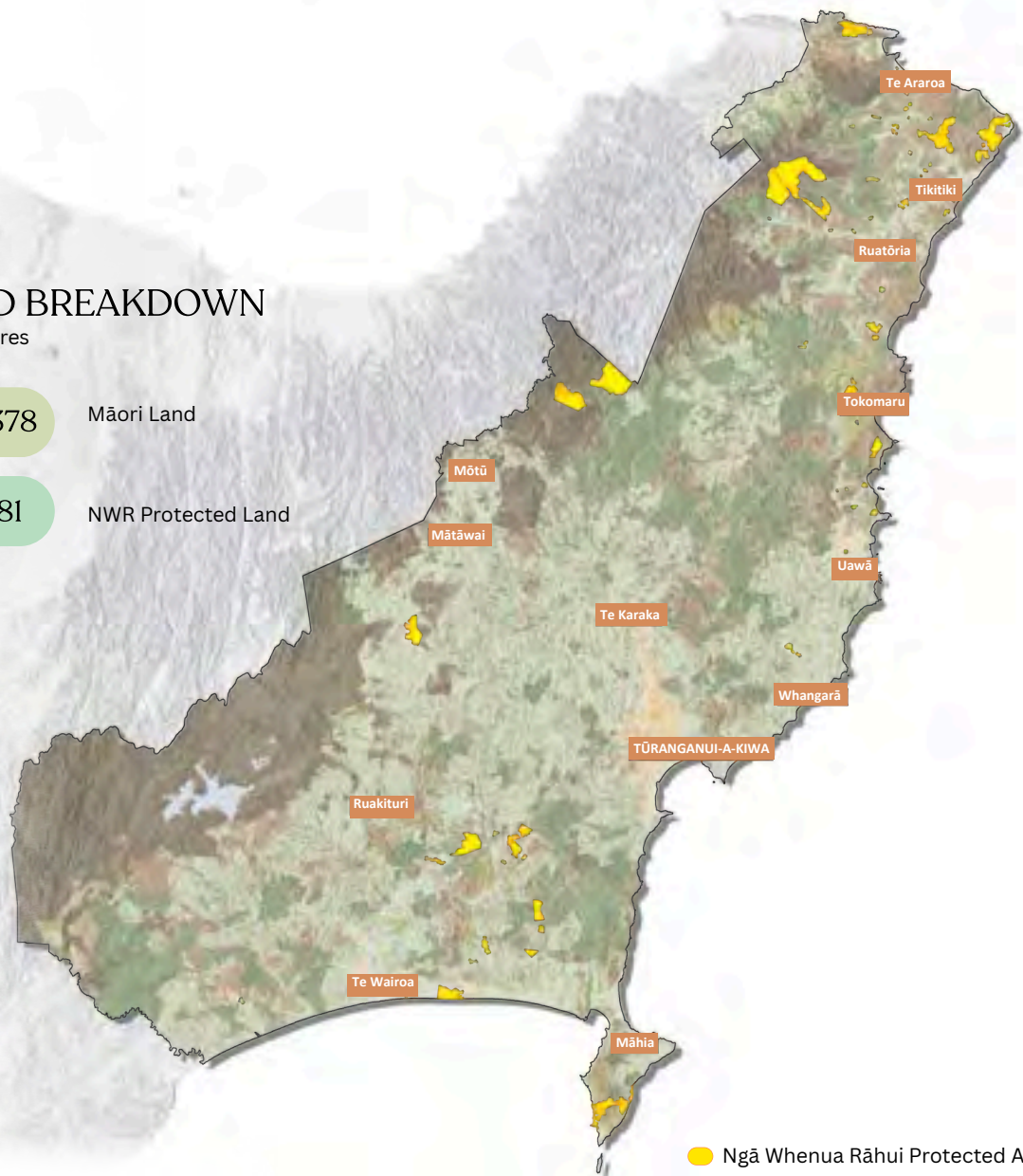
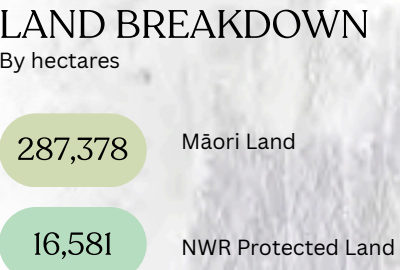
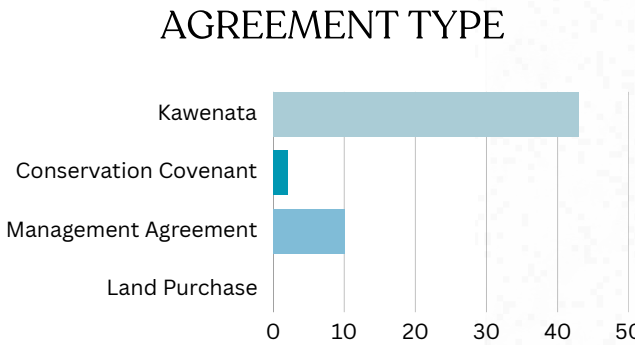


● Ngā Whenua Rāhui Protected Areas

### LANDCOVER BREAKDOWN

Fernland	26%
Estuarine Open Water	18%
High Producing Grassland	16%
Indigenous Forest	10%
Low Producing Grassland	8%
Peat Shrubland	7%
Herbaceous Freshwater Vegetation	6%
Other	9%

# East Coast



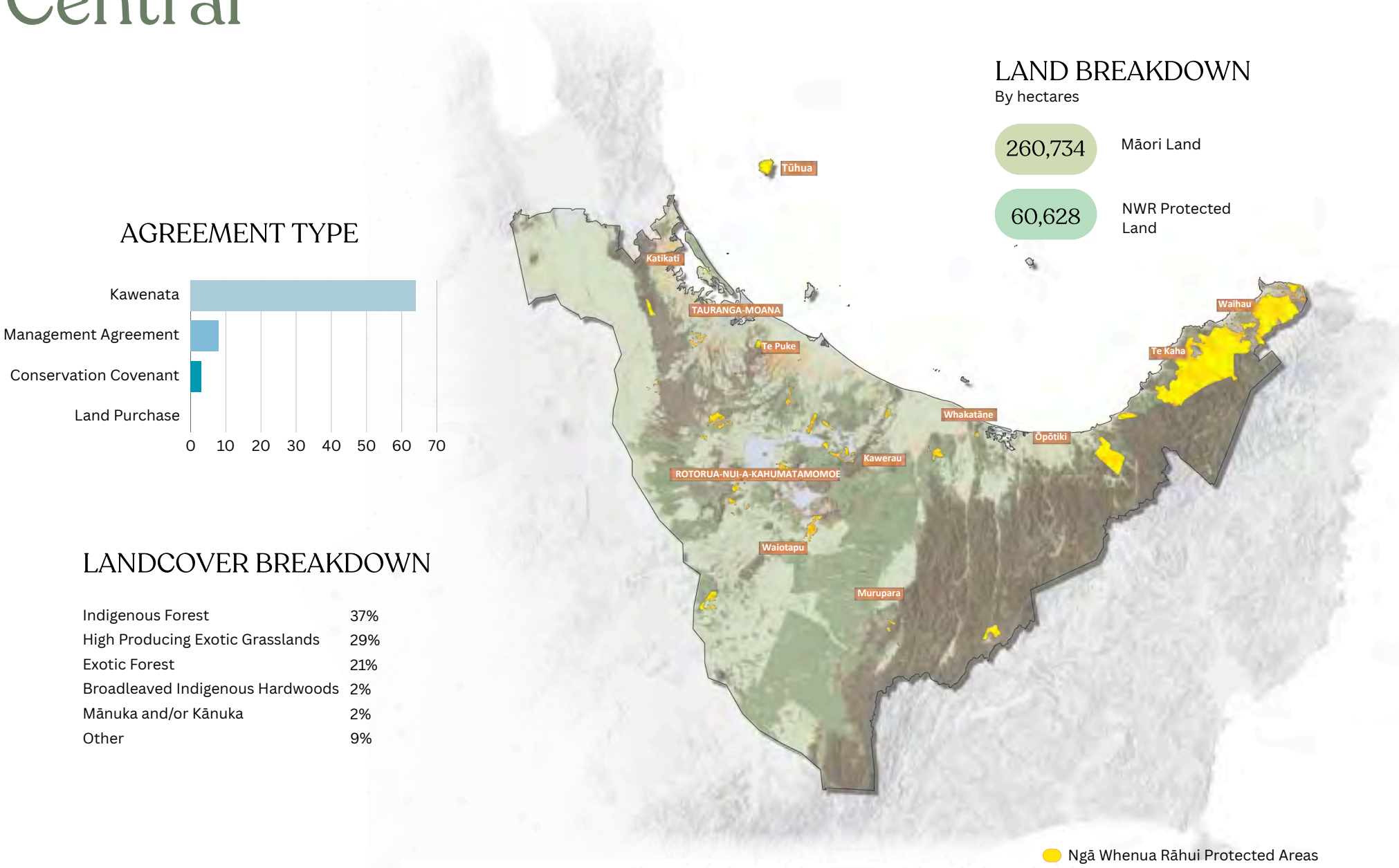
● Ngā Whenua Rāhui Protected Areas

### LANDCOVER BREAKDOWN

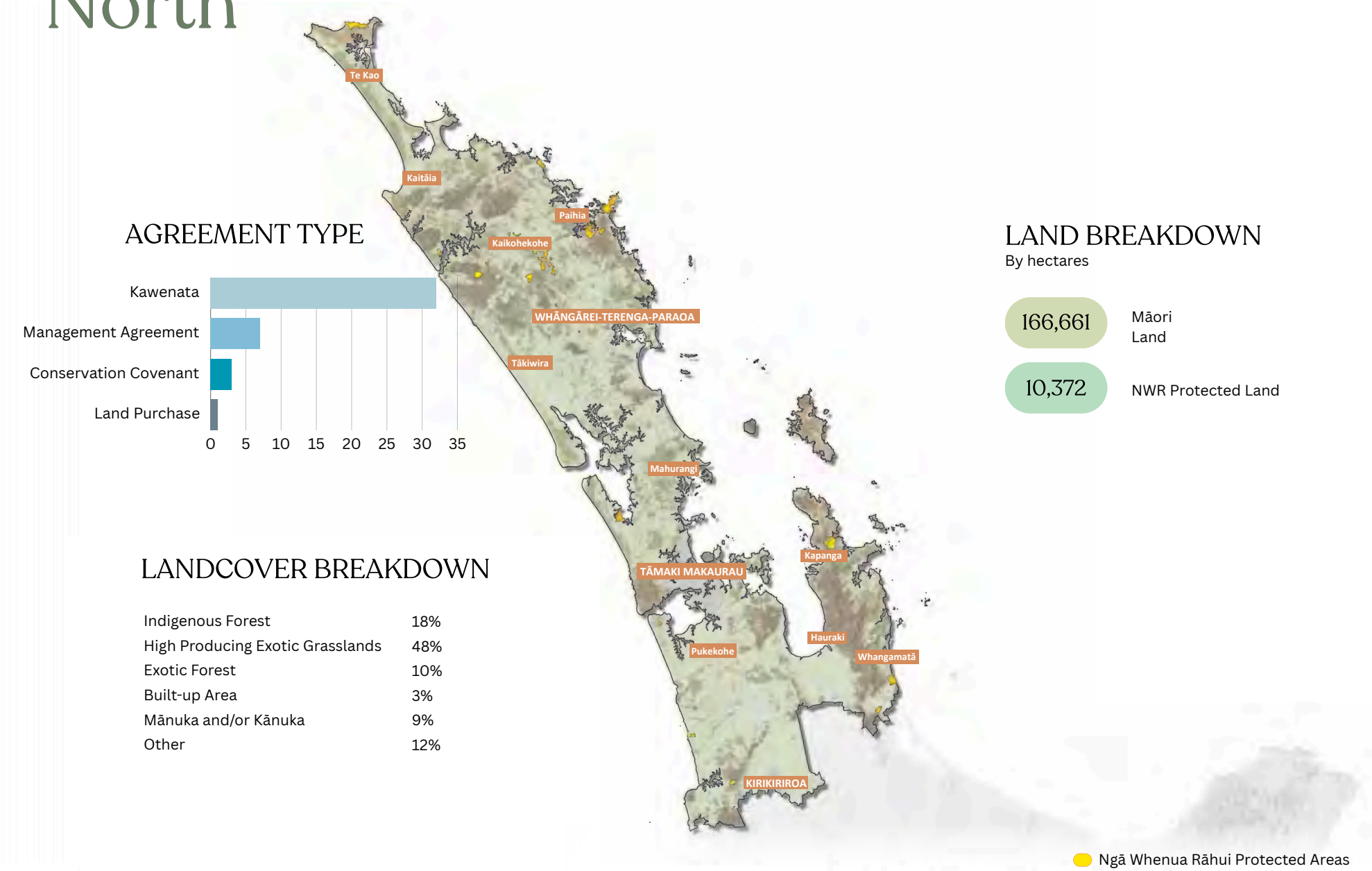
Indigenous Forest	19%
High Producing Exotic Grasslands	38%
Exotic Forest	17%
Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwoods	6%
Mānuka and/or Kānuka	9%
Low Producing Grasslands	3%
Other	8%



# Central



# North





# Haumāuiui

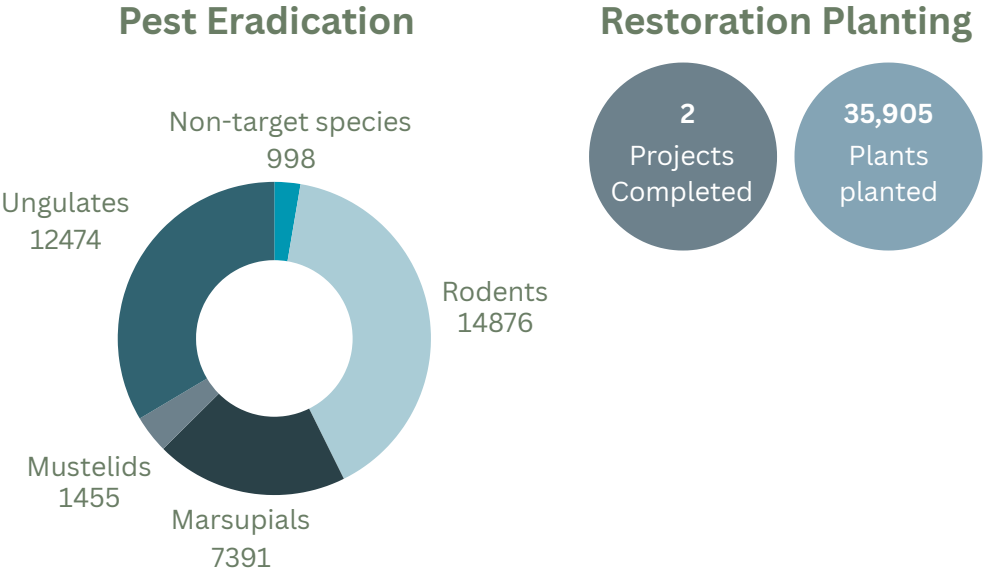
## National Operations Data

National operations cover a range of mahi on the ground like fencing, planting, wetland restoration, pest control and validation of assets and infrastructure. The various types of activities are important to restore and enhance biodiversity and the overall hauora of ecological habitats.

The following information reflects mahi carried out across 113 kawenata, equating to 68,000 hectares receiving mahi.

PEST ANIMAL CONTROL OPERATIONS	
Intensively Managed Sites	12
Multi pest operations	17
Hectares treated	7,299

FENCING	
Agreements surveyed	43
Fencing assessed (m)	172,915
Proposed fencing assessed (m)	37,482
Existing assessed (m)	135,432
New fencing (m)	2,248
Repair fencing (m)	3,180
Agreements with FAMs survey	17



AGREEMENTS WITH OPERATIONS	TE WAI- POUNAMU	SOUTH WEST	SOUTH EAST	RĒKOHU / WHAREKAURI	EAST COAST	CENTRAL	NORTH	TOTAL
Multi-Pest Operations	1	6	1	-	4	3	3	18
Ungulate Control	-	35	1	-	22	3	-	61
FAMS	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Legal survey	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3
Intensively Managed Sites	-	8	-	-	2	5	3	18
FAMS (FENCING ASSET MANAGEMENT)								
Number of Projects	-	6	-	-	18	12	7	43
Total Length of Fencing Assessed (m)	-	30,395	-	-	68,947	56,938	16,635	172,915
Length of New Fencing Assessed (m)	-	10,422	-	-	14,391	5,038	7,631	37,482
Length of Existing Fencing Assessed (m)	-	19,974	-	-	54,555	51,900	9,003	135,432
Metres of New Fencing	-	2,248	-	-	-	-	-	2,248
Metres Fencing Repaired	-	3,180	-	-	-	-	-	3,180
Number of Agreements with FAMs Survey	-	2	-	-	3	9	3	17
UNGULATE CONTROL								
Total Ungulates Culled	-	9,406	1,492	-	1,384	192	-	12,474
SMALL MAMMAL PEST CONTROL								
Mustelids	-	325	-	-	902	221	7	1,455
Marsupials	-	920	-	-	5,689	686	96	7,391
Rodents	-	3,345	-	-	8,958	2,362	211	14,876
Non-target species (cats, hedgehogs etc.)	-	159	-	-	746	92	1	998



# Ngā Uara

## Our values

### HE AHA RAWA

NGĀ WHENUA RĀHUI IS A CONTESTABLE MINISTERIAL FUND

### WHAKATŪRANGA

ESTABLISHED TO FACILITATE THE VOLUNTARY PROTECTION OF INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY ON MĀORI-OWNED LAND

### TE PŪTAKE

PRINCIPLES OF THE FUND ARE GEARED TOWARDS THE OWNERS RETAINING TINO RANGATIRATANGA (OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL)

### TE TINO WHĀINGA

IN ITS KAUPAPA AND ROLE, THE NGĀ WHENUA RĀHUI FUND IS REAFFIRMING THE BOND BETWEEN TANGATA WHENUA AND THEIR LAND

## TIKANGA / KAWA



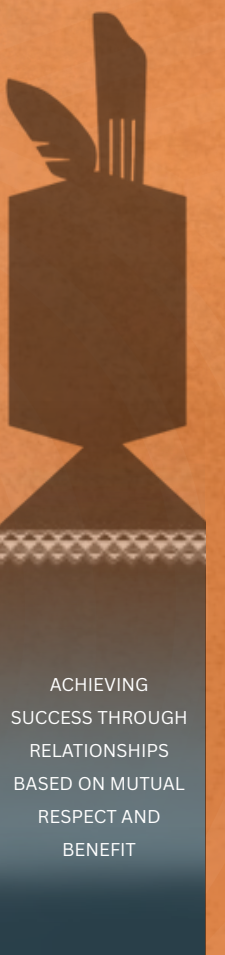
WORKING IN A MĀORI WAY, ENCOMPASSING TIKANGA MĀORI GUIDED BY CUSTOMARY MĀORI KNOWLEDGE, PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

## KAITIAKI



ASSISTING MĀORI LANDOWNERS TO CREATE CUSTOMARY USE OPPORTUNITIES AND TAKING CARE OF OUR NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR THE WELLBEING AND PROSPERITY OF ALL NEW ZEALANDERS

## WHAKAWHIRINAKI



ACHIEVING SUCCESS THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON MUTUAL RESPECT AND BENEFIT

## WHAKAKOTAHI



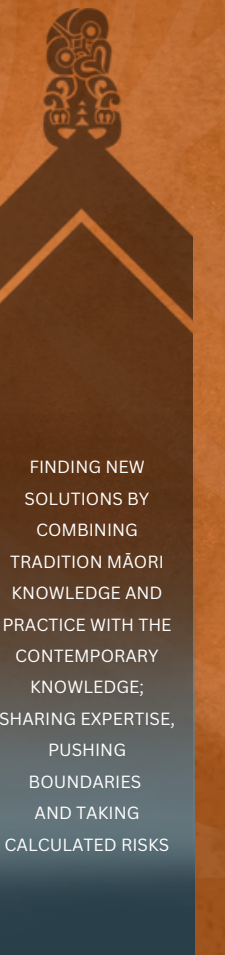
WORKING AS A RELIABLE AND RELEVANT INTEGRATED TEAM

## WHAKAMANAWA



INSPIRING CONFIDENCE BY DELIVERING INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY AND CULTURAL OUTCOMES THAT BENEFITS THE WHENUA. MĀORI LANDOWNERS AND TANGATA WHENUA

## AUAHA



FINDING NEW SOLUTIONS BY COMBINING TRADITION MĀORI KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE WITH THE CONTEMPORARY KNOWLEDGE; SHARING EXPERTISE, PUSHING BOUNDARIES AND TAKING CALCULATED RISKS



# Mangaotāne

## Cyclone Gabrielle Couldn't Stop Conservation Project

When Cyclone Gabrielle unleashed havoc on isolated Mangaotāne in Te Tairāwhiti last year, Pete Swann and his biodiversity restoration team didn't sit around despairing at the chaos. They dived back into pest control mahi on the ravaged land block as fast as possible. Mangaotāne is beautiful, but it's a challenging place to work at the best of times. Gabrielle aside, it is prone to extreme changeable weather because it lies south-west of the Raukūmara range. Its 5,500 hectares of native ngahere and pine forest are hilly and steep, with limited roads and tracks. Pete's team already employed helicopters, flying foxes, horses and motorbikes in their hardy work. They were used to cutting tracks to walk into inaccessible areas. After Gabrielle struck, they needed all these tactics, plus a four-wheel drive tractor and a digger. They also needed keen determination, and what Pete, the biodiversity manager for Mangaotāne Farm Trust, calls "Māori ingenuity." Devastation greeted the team when they could finally re-enter Mangaotāne several days after Gabrielle's rampage.

They were the first to survey the damage – nobody lives permanently on the remote block, almost two hours' drive from the nearest urban centre of Gisborne. Sections of the access road had dropped out or simply disappeared, along with essential river-crossings and many culverts. Numerous trees, mainly pines rather than native species, lay sprawled in the forests and blocking the tracks. Large slips tumbled down gorges and hillsides. Traplines, vital to the pest control mahi, had washed out or blown away. "Our commitment was to open up as best we could, and keep the work going," recalls Pete. At the time his River of Man Adventures initiative was not long into a large-scale, multi-species, pest control project across Mangaotāne. Pūtea had been granted for three years by Ngā Whenua Rāhui's Māori Land Fund/Jobs for Nature scheme.

"The easy approach would have been to close the block and come back next summer when everything had dried out. But we had jobs and families to think about, and we didn't want to lose our skilled workforce. And we had funding deadlines to meet. We worked out a temporary road in and got back to the traplines."

Mangaotāne Farms Trust signed a Ngā Whenua Rāhui kawenata agreement in 1996. The recently renewed covenant protects 3,139 hectares of ngahere in two blocks, including several hundred mature mataī, rimu and tōtara. Pest control mahi in the kawenata areas started slowly, but over time ngahere was regenerating and manu populations rose. Then Pete, out hunting deer, recognised a whio (native blue duck) on the awa outside a protected space. He started trapping pests in the whio habitat, with trustee support, helpful volunteers and local business sponsorship. Meanwhile other valued species like kiwi, and the high presence of pest animals, were identified on the whenua. "We realized we had to expand what we were doing, and we needed funding," says Pete. "We ended up with Jobs for Nature." This welcome pūtea has enabled skilled kaimahi to be employed to control deer and goats, trap other pests, and maintain tracks and huts throughout Mangaotāne - in both kawenata areas and pine forests.

Cyclone Gabrielle's destruction interrupted the mahi, but not for long. "We had to get access for the workers, to keep the project going," Pete recalls. "Initially the guys could only get around on foot, and they'd work with saws to open the tracks up. We lost every culvert from our driveway in, and all our river crossings were blown out. We airlifted in new culverts, which didn't cater for utes and trucks but could take 'side by sides'. This would only get the guys as far as the river, then they'd have to get themselves and their gear across on the flying fox. We had another bike helicoptered into the other side and they'd use that to go to work. We purchased a four-wheel drive tractor and big trailer, so we could start clearing our tracks from the inside out. The neighbours allowed us to use a road through their forest and loaned us a bulldozer."

Climate change influenced the gigantic tropical cyclone of Gabrielle, according to many Western climate scientists. It's ironic, perhaps, that the cyclone hammered Mangaotāne so hard. Mangaotāne holds ancient rocks that some research considers internationally important to help understand "what future global warming could have in store for the planet". These rock layers in Mangaotāne Stream, once deep beneath the sea, contain fossils that superbly record a global environmental crisis about 94 million years ago. "We're looking back in time to figure out what might happen in the future," says paleontologist and geologist James Crampton, in Sheridan Gundry's 2019 history written for Mangaotāne Farm Trust.

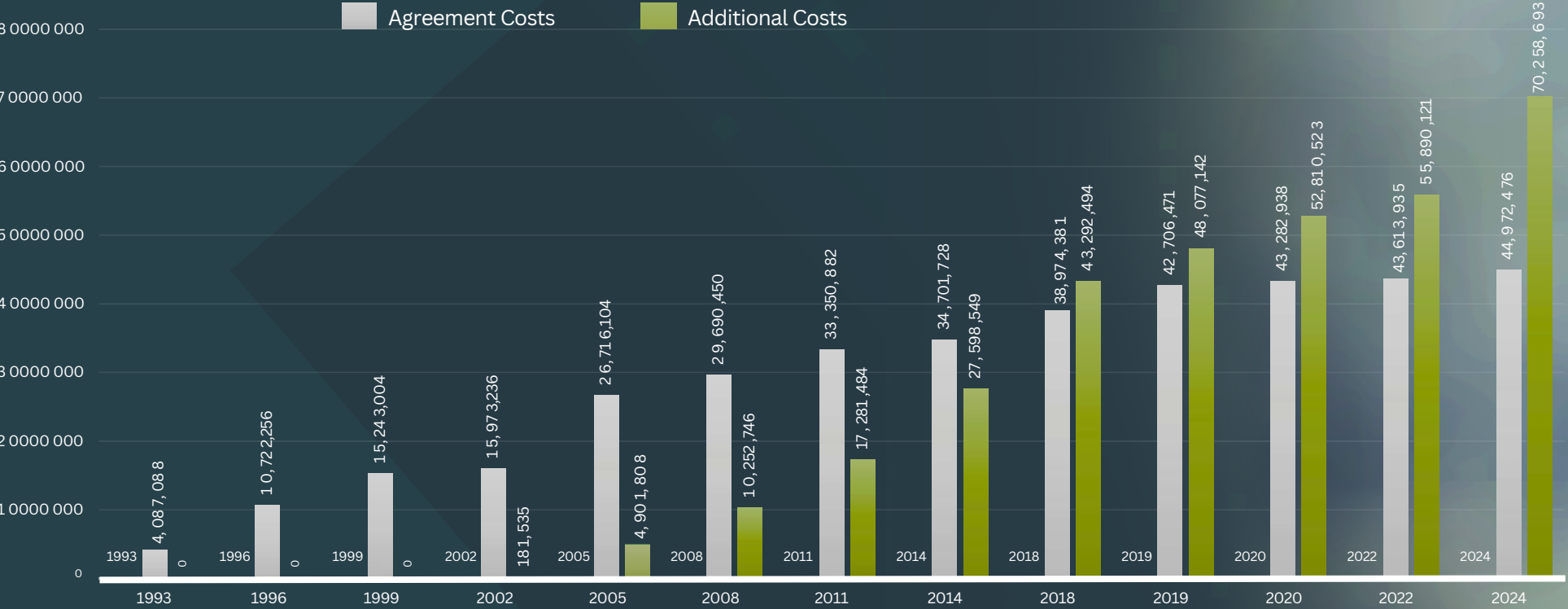




# Financial Data

The Ngā Whenua Rāhui Fund started the 2022/23 financial year with a substantial underspend, largely caused by the ongoing knock on effect of the COVID-19 pandemic delaying operational work. We started the financial year with a total spend of \$10,822,525; the total of our \$6,914,000 allocation and the previous year’s underspend.

Our financial allocation for the 2023/24 financial year was \$9,959,000, a portion of which is transferred into 2024/25. This reduced the total spend for 2023/24 to \$6,959,000. Since 2018, our overheads have consistently been higher than our operational expenses. This reflects the need to increase staffing levels to manage the work associated with signing of new agreements and the review of existing ones at the 25-year anniversary following their initiation.







**Nicola Taylor** looks at her ancestral whenua at Pūrākaunui in at least three far-reaching ways. First, at a simple physical level, she enjoys magnificent large views over the land and its surroundings from her hillside home at Pūrākaunui settlement. Native bush replanted wild gullies and farm paddocks tumble down the slopes of Māpounui, towards a tidal estuary fringed with saltmarsh and pine forest. Through trees to the right, the ancient Māpoutahi pā site juts into the ocean, framed by distant hills. Second, and more significantly, Nicola takes a vast view of Pūrākaunui as her tūrangawaewae, that which connects her to countless generations - past, present and future.

# Pūrākaunui

## Big-Picture Views of Ancestral Whenua

As chairperson of the Pūrākaunui Block Incorporated management komiti, Nicola works hard to honour both.

“I’ve grown up here, visiting my nana as a child and listening to stories,” Nicola recalls. “I’ve been immersed in the history.” Tīpuna dwelt around Pūrākaunui for several centuries before colonisation. Today’s 90 shareholders of the land block descend from Kāi Tahu, Kāti Mamoe and Waitaha ancestors who lived there in 1848, when a government census was conducted. Nicola is strongly interested in her own local whakapapa since the time of her inspirational tīpuna wahine, Motoitoi. She and the late John McLachlan played key roles in making two DVD documentaries about such history, with support from the Mātauranga Kura Taiao Fund. Meanwhile, Nicola is concerned with ensuring that present and future generations of shareholders engage better with their whenua and can work together to fulfil a shared vision for it. Connecting shareholders with the land is an ongoing challenge, when most live scattered far away. But those who visit her usually have “a huge hunger to learn, especially the young ones”.



Nicola’s big-picture views of Pūrākaunui have a third aspect: she’s very aware her whenua sits within a wider web of human networks and ecosystems. A key focus of her mahi is collaborating with other local organizations and people who work to conserve te taiao, and to actively support mana whenua.

Nicola, a long-time social services leader in the Ōtepoti area, notes modestly, “I’m a social worker and I don’t know terribly much about plants and ecology and all of that. But I hold a collective vision and collective approach to the stewardship of the land.” Through building friendly collaboration, she and the management komiti engage significant expertise and voluntary support to care for Pūrākaunui.

For several years, conservation organizations in the local region have helped to restore Pūrākaunui whenua, with planting, fencing, weeding and the like. Two main initiatives of the Halo Project have proved beneficial. Halo’s Source to Sea Project works to restore forest habitats, wetlands and waterways. Its Predator Free Project removes predators with traplines in a ‘halo’ of whenua surrounding Te Korowai o Mihiwaka, Ōrokonui Ecosanctuary – the ecological island wildlife reserve that borders Pūrākaunui. “The Halo people are absolutely marvellous, and we have a very strong relationship with them,” says Nicola. “Ōrokonui Ecosanctuary just across the hill is making tremendous progress. The Department of Conservation also have quite a presence out here. And Otago University have a student club called AAPES, which is Animal, Aquatic, Plant, Ecological Society. They’ve kind of adopted our wetlands over the last five years.”

Since 2022, biodiversity restoration achieved to date has been greatly enhanced by a kawenata agreement that Pūrākaunui Block Incorporation signed with Ngā Whenua Rāhui. The kawenata protects nearly 77 hectares in three areas of valuable saltmarsh, wetlands, gullies and native forest. Halo Project field workers have spent thousands of hours on the newly covenanted whenua. The project has planted and maintained more than 28,000 native seedlings, mainly in valleys and estuary areas. It eco-sourced seedlings of dozens of different plant species from nearby coastal regions, including threatened and at-risk local species such as mikimiki (coprosma) and wīwī (rush). Weeds like hawthorn, willow, gorse and broom have been cleared and fencing erected to keep out grazing livestock. Ngā Whenua Rāhui has funded much of this mahi, with assistance also from the Ministry for Primary Industries and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. Meanwhile, the AAPES volunteers continue mainly to weed and plant in the estuary edge and saltmarsh areas. Pūrākaunui collaborates at a management level too, notably with Ahikā Consulting (now Whirika Consulting).

“Ahikā worked with us to develop a business development plan,” says Nicola, “and we kept coming back to succession as the most important issue we were grappling with. It’s absolutely critical.” Ahikā later initiated a research project about how to engage a new generation of kaitiaki to protect historically and culturally significant sites and involved Pūrākaunui whānau. Nicola is delighted that some younger uri have now joined Pūrākaunui’s management komiti.





# Mātauranga Kura Taiao Fund

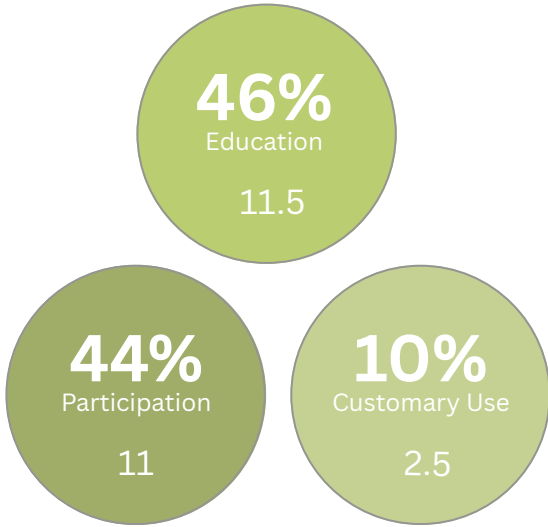
The Mātauranga Kura Taiao Fund is proud to celebrate its 24th year of operation, continuing to support tangata whenua across the country in achieving their biodiversity-related mātauranga Māori aspirations. Interest in the fund remains high, resulting in oversubscription and the decision to close the fund to new applications from May 2023 to March 2024. Despite the fund being closed for just over a year, we supported 14 whānau and hapū groups across Te Ika a Māui (North Island), distributing \$1,074,625.18. We currently have 23 active projects, each reflecting a diverse range of kaupapa. Key themes across these projects include reintroducing or strengthening cultural practices, wānanga, and hīkoi whenua. In addition, 21 projects were closed during the same period, with 18 successfully completed as planned.

Disruptions to the fund and our projects have been minimal, despite Ngā Whenua Rāhui having undergone several internal changes, including the implementation of a new financial system. A major focus for the next two years is to improve our understanding of the new system to minimise disruption to active projects. We’re already seeing improvements in our planning, particularly around forecasting, and we look forward to building on this progress as we move into the next year.

## Primary Outputs - All Years

APPLICATIONS	NORTH	CENTRAL	EAST COAST	SOUTH EAST	SOUTH WEST	TE WAI- POUNAMU	TOTAL
Applications Received	6	1	0	0	6	0	13
Applications Funded	6	1	0	1	6	0	14
Active Projects	7	6	0	2	9	1	25
Projects Completed	3	8	0	3	4	0	18
Closed - Did Not Complete	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Money Distributed by Rohe	\$421,269	\$8,695	\$0	\$191,961	\$452,701	\$0	\$1,074,626
TOTAL GRANTS APPROVED							
2022 - 2023	\$191,233	\$116,247	-	\$191,961	\$104,564	-	\$604,003.00
2023 - 2024	\$61,800	\$8,695	\$51,990	-	\$348,138	-	\$470,623.00

All financial figures have been rounded up to the nearest whole dollar amount.



## Successful Applicants

We support whānau, hapū, iwi to preserve traditional Māori knowledge and practice so that the tikanga, stories and history associated with Papatūānuku and te taiao, are not forgotten.

		South West	South East	East Coast	Central	North				
Applicant	Project Overview	Grant Amount	Project Length				Year			
Ūtapu Limited	Reconnection of shareholders of Taumatamahoe 2B 2B 19A and 19B (specifically Tamahaki) to their whenua and wai. Revival of mātauranga Māori of these places.	\$40,580.00	1 year				2022/23			
16 Bundles (Weston Whānau)	Tūrangawaewae reconnection wānanga at Tieke Marae for wider whānau and revival of traditional practises including bone carving, raranga and tukutuku.	\$63,983.48	6 days				2022/23			
Proprietors of Pipiriki Township No 1 and Other Blocks Incorporated	Developing a specific Māori monitoring tool for use across the Pipiriki Papakāinga, inclusive of the Tūtei Matapopore (baseline monitoring) and Te Aro Turiki (outcome monitoring) model. Four main activities – monitoring ōwai, ōtāne, ōrawaho and ōkai.	\$173,641.01	3 years				2023/24			
Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Inc	Ngāti Toa re-establish their mana toi including traditional practises, knowledge, whakapapa, and connection to their natural resources. The applicants will be running wānanga for waka, muka and traditional dye, and pelting.	\$57,808.66	1 year				2023/24			
Kawau Bertrand Whanau Trust	Reconnection of uri of Poutama to their whenua, narratives and tūpuna and creation of a restoration plan for Mangahutiwai. Three components: research, wānanga, and development of a whenua restoration plan.	\$56,600.87	1 year				2023/24			
Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Inc	Ngāti Toa Rangatira taonga puoro practice and mātauranga puoro revitalization. Gain foundational knowledge of puoro, such as origins, variations, creation, technique, understanding the connection between puoro and the taiao, and practicing sustainable methods through tiaki taiao.	\$60,086.96	1 year				2023/24			
Waimārama Māori Committee	Collaborative project with hapū of Waimārama and Cape Sanctuary, including cultural monitoring, wānanga, and training of tangata whenua, to engage with taonga species at the Cape Sanctuary Project.	\$191,960.89	2 years				2023/24			
K H Dream Designs Ltd	The Harrison whānau reconnecting with their whenua, revive their traditional narratives, and restore practices such as rongoā and mahinga kai.	\$51,990.00	1 year				2023/24			
Te Kooraha Marae	Reconnecting whānau of Ngāti Māhuta ki te Hauāuru with their taiao, through intergenerational transfer of mātauranga Māori, pūrākau and pakiwaitara revitalization and engaging with sites of significance.	\$60,010.36	1 year				2022/23			
Ngātea Primary School	Kaumātua and pukenga, tamariki from the ages of 9-13 years connect to the whenua within the Hauraki rohe. The kaupapa explores the local ngahere, moana, manu and marae, using pūrākau, waiata wānanga and hīkoi.	\$56,236.00	1 year				2022/23			
Omataroa Rangitaiki No2 Charitable Trust	Supporting tangata whenua participation in management of indigenous biodiversity on their whenua, consistent with their traditional knowledge and practice.	\$8,694.78	4 days				2023/24			
Ngāti Manu Rangatira Trust	Te Rau Karaka waka restoration and Ngāti Manu revival and retention of whakairo, toi, raranga and storytelling through research and oral interviews, toi wānanga and workshops.	\$89,497.39	1 year				2022/23			
Ngāti Manu Rangatira Trust	Ngāti Manu preservation of mātauranga moana and traditional practices to enact kaitiakitanga of indigenous biodiversity, drawing on knowledge of whānau, hapū and tohunga from Kāretu, Rawhiti, Hokianga and Whangaroa.	\$101,734.78	1 year				2022/23			
Kaiewe Māori Womens Welfare League	Reconnection of tangata whenua through hīkoi whenua, wānanga and oral interviews. Restoration of kaitiakitanga through connection to the rohe, ngahere, maunga, moana and awa.	\$61,800.00	3 years				2023/24			
		TOTAL \$1,074,625.18								





## Hao Ngaore

### Tamariki Learn to Fish the Tūpuna Way

When silvery shoals of ngaore swim up the Whanganui River past Rānana marae, some young uri of Ngāti Ruaka hapū are well prepared to care for and harvest the treasured little fish, just as their ancestors did. Like their tūpuna, these tamariki and rangatahi know ngaore or smelt are most plentiful in spring, migrating up the awa from the ocean. They know their tūpuna and mātua caught ngaore in only one mahinga kai in their hapū rohe: alongside the tapu island, Moutoa. They're helping to restore native vegetation around this habitat, to sustain ngaore and other indigenous species there for future generations. They have been taught old ways to preserve and cook the scaly fish.

The mokopuna have particularly enjoyed learning to capture the ngaore in tūpuna style. That's by building a long, large rock structure called a pā ngaore – a water race on the shingly edge of a river rapid, parallel to the riverbank – and channelling the little fish around inside it into a kaka (net). Manaaki Hogg, a clued-up eleven-year-old, describes the pā ngaore as shaped a bit like a triangle at one end, which is open, then narrowing to form a channel that is closed at the other. “The ngaore come up the river and rush through the open end – they love going through tunnels.

When they've all gone in, you put the net down across the open bit, and start splashing in the other side, so the ngaore are scared back to where they came in, and into the net.” Manaaki belongs to Te Morehu Whenua, a tamariki and rangatahi-led environmental rōpū at Rānana that is helping to revive traditional hapū knowledge and practices for many aspects of te taiao. He's been active in the inspirational group since its monthly wānanga began in 2019.

Te Morehu Whenua currently has a committed core of about 20 uri, aged six to 22 years, with up to 50 young people participating at times. Some live locally at Rānana – a small settlement upriver from Whanganui – and some travel home to participate. Ngāti Ruaka and related hapū, Ngāti Hine and Ngāti Rangī, set up the environmental group for their uri through the Rānana Māori Committee. The committee's chairperson, Rāwiri Tinirau, wanted the next generation to experience traditional practices he cherished as a child. And he was keen for “people who have gone away, and don't come home often, to fall in love with home again”. Rāwiri enlisted some supportive parents, in particular his cousin, Joey Marshall, who joined him as a mātua and facilitator for Te Morehu Whenua.

“If we don't pass this kōrero down the generations and everybody forgets about it. We won't feel our tūpuna spirits around us anymore, we can't carry on in their footsteps.”

Tuna traditions and monitoring the wellbeing of kākahi were among the early topics for rōpū wānanga. Then Rāwiri and Joey realised they should teach the uri about ngaore – as children, they'd greatly enjoyed catching the fish themselves. Joey had spent countless hours on the awa with his grandparents, learning how to build and operate 15-metre-long pā ngaore. With Mātauranga Kura Taiao funding, nine Te Morehu Whenua wānanga over three years are focusing on ngaore. The mokopuna have learnt from hapū and other experts about ngaore habits and preferred habitats. They have learnt to count and measure ngaore, to understand how the little fish are affected by ecological damage to their environments. They've built rocky pā ngaore and learnt to weave and set traditional kaka. Unfortunately, bad weather and flooding have thwarted their plans so far to capture and monitor seasonal shoals of ngaore.

Through analysing cultural research interviews with a previous generation of kuia and koroheke of their hapū, Te Morehu Whenua has identified how important ngaore were to them. Mature investigation like this is not unfamiliar to the young rōpū members. In their wider wānanga, they've studied land court records and their related whakapapa. They have visited museums, libraries, archives and galleries to collect hapū information and identify artifacts. They've taken part in environmental and climate change hui around the motu and made online and conference-type presentations about their mahi. Their activities contribute to Whakarauora, a project to revive customary fishing knowledge of Whanganui tūpuna, conducted by the independent Māori research institute, Te Atawhai o Te Ao.

Western scientific technology, like drones and water analysis, is employed by Te Morehu Whenua as appropriate. But reviving and continuing hapū traditions is the rōpū's clear focus. “If we don't pass this kōrero down the generations and everybody forgets about it,” warns Manaaki Hogg, “we won't feel our tūpuna spirits around us anymore, we can't carry on in their footsteps.” Pani Marshall, aged nine, enjoys being active in nature with the group because “when I'm home, I'm glued to the TV and the iPad.” Her younger brother, Haare Taiwhati, observes, “It's like special, to keep our ngaore safe, and our tuna and everything that is from the awa safe.”





# Mana Whenua Way to Monitor Indigenous Biodiversity

It is in the relationships between kaitiaki and the world all around us. The Tūtei Matapopore Pūtaiao project is a bespoke monitoring programme that utilizes this understanding. It applies traditional Māori concepts and principles and is designed to respect mana whenua, using hapū and iwi mātauranga alongside western practices.

Located at Ōpango within the lands managed by the Pipiriki Incorporation – the two-year trial is already showing great value for its landowners. Pipiriki Incorporation trustee Paora “Baldy” Haitana said they feel “privileged” their whenua was chosen for the project. “Matapopore enables us to see the intelligence of our old people, how they understood the whole environment, how it played a special place in our lives.” He speaks of tipuna utilizing knowledge of the seasons, the stars, the weather patterns, the birds, the insects. And that Matapopore “has enlightened us” and that there is a partnership where western science can sit alongside traditional mātauranga Māori. The incorporation and its beneficiaries are active partners in the process, developing their own kawa to guide all mahi, based on their mātauranga, tikanga and kawa. And together the trustees, with their Ngāti Kurawhatia shareholders, and their community are refining the processes for Matapopore with the support of Ngā Whenua Rāhui.

Pipiriki Incorporation Secretary Robert Spicer says the monitoring is showing how much pest control is needed to protect taonga species at Ōpango. “Pests are the most worrying and difficult aspect of the project. We’ve instigated a programme to eradicate wild cats, and we’re looking at ways to get rid of other pests.” Information is systematically gathered on species of plants and animals, native and introduced. The data notes what condition they’re in and ongoing monitoring will track changes including how conservation practices are working, what else needs to be done, and how to use resources wisely. Trustees choose their kaimahi to carry out much of the monitoring work, and taonga species and natural sources of kai are given priority in the monitoring. Wāhi tapu are respected, and traditional names for species on the whenua are used and researched if they’re not readily recalled.

Furthermore, the knowledge and support of their kaumātua and pūkenga is vital to the Matapopore process. Specific local data collected during monitoring remains the intellectual property of the landowners, and monitoring results are presented and discussed with tangata whenua at hui and wānanga. Manu Ahurea Māui Te Pou, who guides the pilot project for Ngā Whenua Rāhui, says the benefit of Matapopore is it uses a Māori view and kaupapa Māori methodology to monitor te taiao. “You’re supporting te mana o te tangata whenua and strengthening the landowners’ role as kaitiaki of their natural resources.”

## Whispers of the Whenua

“MATAPOPORE SHOWS US THE  
INTELLIGENCE OF OUR OLD PEOPLE  
AND HOW THEY UNDERSTOOD HOW WE  
ARE PART OF EVERYTHING AND  
EVERYTHING IS PART OF US.”



In 2021, the foundations for Matapopore were built when Māui and Summah Te Kahika-Heemi, a Manu Pūtaiao for Ngā Whenua Rāhui, explored practical ways to implement Te Tūāpapa Ahurea, the Māori cultural framework underpinning Ngā Whenua Rāhui services. Māui recalls: “We started looking at how maramataka affects the water, and the idea grew from there.” To begin, they needed a suitable block of covenanted land for their trial, and the Pipiriki people volunteered. Ōpango, about two kilometres above Pipiriki village, had been included in the Wharekino kawenata agreement signed in 2019. It features restored wetlands, streams, and a small forest of mature kahikatea, rimu, and other native trees.

The following year, Māui began wānanga and planning sessions with trustees, local pūkenga, and key community members to tailor Matapopore to Ngāti Kurawhatia kawa and tikanga. Maui said: “Engagement with the tangata whenua is really key in a Māori monitoring project.” To support this, the incorporation selected two Ngā Whenua Rāhui contractors with strong local connections, Myles Gembitsky and Jason Taiaroa, who then took on keen rangatahi volunteers, Jakob Edmond and Kāhui Hodgson, to implement and manage the trial project.

In bitter midwinter, Māui, Summah, and local team members explored the Ōpango whenua for 10 consecutive days, gaining a general overview through Tūtei Matapopore (baseline monitoring). They observed, identified, and recorded what native and introduced flora and fauna were present, and in what condition.

The monitoring and reporting focused on four environmental realms, defined in Te Tūāpapa Ahurea as cultural imperatives:

- Ō-wai: Freshwater systems on the land were checked for water source, quality, flow, and life forms.
- Ō-kai: Identifying natural food resources on land, in fresh water, and in the forest.
- Ō-Tane: Trees, smaller plants, manu, and other native species in the forest were noted.
- Ō-rāwaho: All introduced features that adversely affect indigenous biodiversity, such as “pest” species of flora and fauna, and other western influences like forestry, farming, and roading.

And in March 2023, the project began with funding secured from the Mātauranga Kura Taiao Fund. Since then, five rounds of outcome monitoring, named Te Aro Turuki, have been completed with 10x10 metre plots stationed in the native forest. For the first yearly cycle, the monitoring team worked for five days around the new moon, Whiro, making observations. Now they’re surveying for five days around Rākaunui, the full moon, to observe differences in te taiao activity. Maui says: “Ideally you want to do the monitoring every month, or even better 24/7, to see any changes. If you’re using the maramataka, ideally, you’d do it every night.”

And the benefits don’t stop there. Pipiriki Incorporation Chairperson Adrian Pucher says people are becoming enthusiastic about the whenua because of the project. “We put a clip of a kiwi up on Facebook,” Adrian says, “and it was played 2,000 times in three days. People are getting really excited.” The response is a positive example of the impact of this project, and inspiring our younger generations, or a wider audience, will benefit future kaitiakitanga efforts. This Tūtei Matapopore Pūtaiao project exemplifies how indigenous knowledge can bridge the past and future, offering sustainable solutions for te taiao, and it’s hunga, to thrive.

“You’re supporting te mana o te tangata whenua and strengthening the landowners’ role as kaitiaki of their natural resources.”





# Whenua Whakatō

## Dual Hats to Care for Te Taiao

Whakarae Henare keenly wears two pōtae when it comes to restoring and protecting indigenous biodiversity on whenua Māori. His primary conservation hat represents Pariwhero A6, a land block near Te Araroa on the east coast of Te Tairāwhiti. It's the place of his tīpuna and his heart. Most of the flat to rolling-hill whenua hosts sheep and beef farming and pine forestry. It also includes Tangikākā, 28 hectares of remnant and regenerating native ngahere, a sanctuary for the cherished vision of the whānau of returning the manu kākā, protected through a Ngā Whenua Rāhui kawenata agreement. The Pariwhero A4B committee of management oversees the covenanted area, along with the rest of the block – and Whakarae is its chairperson.

In line with their commitment to conservation, the committee have continued to expand their efforts on Pariwhero A6, focussing on enhancing riparian fencing and planting, supported by funding from the Provincial Growth Fund. This initiative employed local tangata whenua and provided essential training, fostering community relationships and whānau capability. These efforts built on the groundwork laid by previous initiatives, such as the pest trapping programme initiated in July 2021, which involved students from Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Kawakawa Mai Tawhiti and aimed to provide practical skills and NZQA accreditation through hands-on pest control mahi. Additionally, funding from the Te Puni Kokiri Whenua Māori Fund in 2021 has been instrumental in investigating options to optimize the use of the whenua, improving land use practices and productivity, preparing for commercial ventures, and conducting cultural impact assessments. While these initiatives have significantly advanced conservation efforts on Pariwhero A6, Whakarae Henare's dedication to protecting indigenous biodiversity extends beyond this single land block.

His second taiao pōtae carries wider responsibilities. As the Pou Tūora Mahi (Operations) for Ngā Whenua Rāhui, he oversees operational activities that arise from kawenata agreements with other Māori landowners around the motu, managing kaimahi and contractors who work out on the whenua in most weathers and often in rugged and isolated terrain. Whakarae also supports landowners themselves to manage the conservation mahi arising from their kawenata.

### “Ko Pariwhero te ūkaipō”

Ideally, he says, the whenua rangatira engage their own people to become kaimahi and kaituao, returning to their own whenua to care for it and its taonga, through conservation work.

Pariwhero A4B signed its kawenata agreement with Ngā Whenua Rāhui in 2017, before Whakarae moved into senior management roles in either organization. In time, this dual perspective would allow him to bridge the gap between national conservation strategies and local, community-based initiatives, all imbued in cultural values.

From the wider-landscape view of his NWR role he has gained lessons for managing his whānau land, like supporting its connections with surrounding ecosystems. “We picked up some funding from the Provincial Growth Fund to fence off all our waterways and revegetate the riparians on the farm. If we're doing everything we can along the riverway and within our kawenata, that interconnects with the water catchments up in the mountains and the Raukūmara Pae Maunga restoration project, ultimately it affects our kāpata kai in Tangaroa, our moana.” The well-grounded path is easier to understand when you consider Whakarae's upbringing on the land, and his koro Hōri Winiata Henare of Ngāpuhi, who brought his agricultural expertise to the East Coast and married Kūratu Ngatai Mahue of Ngāti Porou.

Over the years he learnt all sorts of mahinga whenua skills, and recalls, “when you're not out on the farm working or at school, you're doing mahi at the marae.” Farm management was the future Whakarae envisaged during high school. But he was soon directed into a pilot cadetship programme to train young Māori in taiao-based mahi: two years of cutting bush tracks and marae-based learning. Then Ngā Whenua Rāhui opened its employment doors to him, and here he has gained diverse experience that's led to his present role. First as a Pūtaiao Ranger, spending 10-day stints in remote and majestic kawenata blocks, monitoring indigenous biodiversity. Then he supervised a team doing this vital mahi. Next came a Kaitakawaenga role, managing relationships and kawenata agreements with land trusts, incorporation boards and the like. Later he happily “dived back into the operational space” as the Team Lead for staff and contractor work on kawenata areas in the East Coast region. And inevitably, it seems, this led to managing Ngā Whenua Rāhui's operations nationally.





**Te Kāhu**  
Image captured by  
Ngā Whenua Rāhui  
Manutaki Rob Whitbourne

WE ARE DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH  
AND RESTORATION OF INDIGENOUS  
BIODIVERSITY IN AOTEAROA.  
THOUGH WE HAVE MADE GREAT  
STRIDES, OUR JOURNEY IS FAR FROM  
OVER. BY OFFERING A STRONG  
FRAMEWORK AND ESSENTIAL  
RESOURCES, WE SUPPORT WHĀNAU,  
HAPŪ, AND IWI IN THE VITAL MAHI  
OF CARING FOR OUR TAIAO.

Ngā Whenua Rāhui

*the protected lands*