



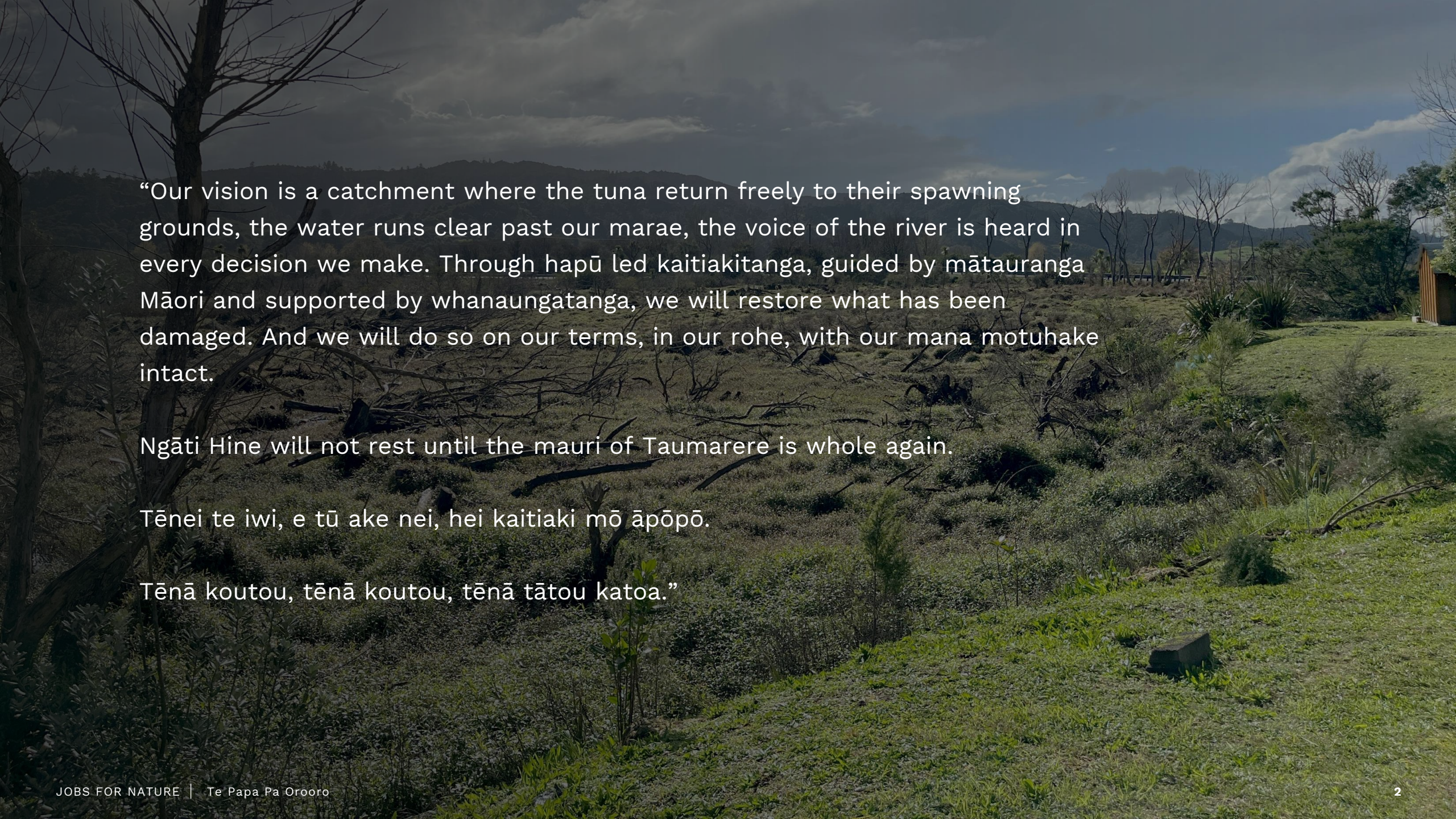
Te Papa Pa Orooro

Ngā Tangariki o Ngāti Hine

A Jobs for Nature case study

July 2025





“Our vision is a catchment where the tuna return freely to their spawning grounds, the water runs clear past our marae, the voice of the river is heard in every decision we make. Through hapū led kaitiakitanga, guided by mātauranga Māori and supported by whanaungatanga, we will restore what has been damaged. And we will do so on our terms, in our rohe, with our mana motuhake intact.

Ngāti Hine will not rest until the mauri of Taumarere is whole again.

Tēnei te iwi, e tū ake nei, hei kaitiaki mō āpōpō.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.”

Te Papa Pa Orooro (Ngāti Hine)



Jobs for nature funding
\$3 million
(2022-2025)



Location
Northland



Employees
12



Partners

Nga Tangariki o Ngāti Hine Charitable Trust

Project description

Project to restore the Te Papa Pa Orooro Wetland (The Echoing Wetlands) through riparian planting, removal of invasive willows and other trees chocking flow paths, as well as predator control.

Project objectives

- Restore wetlands to native cover.
- Remove invasive species.
- Replenish native flora and fauna through eco-system restoration.

Case study purpose

The purpose of this case study is to highlight the broad social and cultural outcomes delivered by the Te Papa Pa Orooro (TPP) kaupapa, funded through the Jobs for Nature programme. The kōrero of TPP has been synthesised in this document to highlight **the widespread impact** of the project within Ngāti Hine.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) and Verian extend their heartfelt gratitude to all Ngā Tangariki o Ngāti Hine and TPP kaimahi who collaborated with us to gather kōrero and prepare this project case study. Your unique insights, thoughts, and experiences are deeply valued and considered a precious taonga.



Case study methodology

Verian conducted qualitative research with Te Papa Paorooro (TPP) to create this case study document.

- 1. Verian-TPP engagement began with an online hui to build whanaungatanga with TPP staff, and consolidate a shared understanding of the research purpose, approach, and outputs.
- 2. Verian conducted fieldwork in June 2025.

TPP hosted Verian for a site visit to TPP offices and area of operation in Kawakawa. TPP staff conducted a presentation detailing TPP’s journey, goals, and mahi to date – followed by a site tour with kaimahi.

Verian facilitated kōrero with TPP kaimahi to explore their experiences of working for the kaupapa. Including a focus on the positive project outcomes.

The final case study was drafted by Verian with support and final approval from TPP staff before being handed over to DOC.



Kōrero within this case study is context-bound to this document, and cannot be summarised independently. This case study is reflective of research participants’ views only, and does not encapsulate the perspectives of all TPP kaimahi. Throughout the case study we refer to TPP kaimahi as a collective for anonymity reasons, however we acknowledge that individual experiences differ across employees.

Te Papa Pa Orooro kaupapa background

The Te Papa Pa Orooro (TPP) kaupapa was established in 2022 under the guidance of Ngā Tangariki o Ngāti Hine – the education arm of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine – and funded via Jobs for Nature investment. Rooted in a philosophy of healing their people to heal their land, TPP prioritises education and training of kaimahi in order to uplift the mauri and mana of Te Papa Pa Orooro wetland in Kawakawa, Northland.

The Te Papa Pa Orooro wetland forms part of the wider Taumarere catchment and plays a significant role in flood water mitigation through its proximity to the Taumarere awa. However, over recent decades the proliferation of foreign weeds (primarily willow) has clogged waterways – ultimately exacerbating flooding and damaging the wider ecosystem.

The TPP kaupapa centres on the restoration of 12 hectares of wetland, involving the reclamation, recovery and replanting of the area. Key conservation efforts are undertaken alongside the upskilling of kaimahi, with a large focus on foreign weed eradication.

Key mahi undertaken to date includes:

- Significant weed eradication utilising an innovative drill and fill technique. This remains the primary focus of operations within the swamp, and involves a large amount of ongoing maintenance.
- Native replanting within the wetland, including of mānuka, kahikatea, and harakeke.
- Access to training for kaimahi – including horticulture training, drivers license learning support, as well as the development and roll-out of the New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industries Operational Skills (Level 3) with optional strands in Specialist Equipment and infrastructure.

“For more than 400 years, Ngāti Hine have lived as kaitiaki on this whenua. Our connection to the Taumarere River is not just environmental – it is ancestral, spiritual, and eternal. The mauri of this catchment is a reflection of our identity. When the river is unwell, our people feel it in our bones, in our breath, and in our spirit. Today, we stand with unshakable determination to restore the mauri of Taumarere. It is a responsibility, handed down from our tūpuna, carried by our mokopuna, and guided by our tikanga. We do this not only for the health of our awa, our ngahere, and our māhinga kai – but for the mana of our hapū, and for the future of every child born to this land.”

From whānau to whenua: elevating te taiao through education and upskilling

TPP's unique approach to taiao revitalisation centres kaimahi education as the catalyst for wider environmental change. Alongside conservation wins, this method positively benefits individuals, whānau, hapū / iwi, and the wider community.

Over the last three years, TPP has invested significant resource into upskilling and empowering over 8 local rangatahi for a career in taiao. For most, involvement in the kaupapa started through TPP engagement with local schools, and exposure to a career pathway previously not considered. These kaimahi note this engagement expanded their idea of what was possible once they left school. The result is a team of kaimahi who have grown in practical conservation skills, confidence, community connections, and who are considered experts in their field.

Tangariki o Ngāti Hine trustees speak of how proud they are of “their boys” in all they have accomplished through TPP.

TPP notes that previous kaimahi take the skill they learned from their kaupapa to enrich their mahi elsewhere. One kaimahi took his knowledge of weed eradication from waterways to his new farming mahi and others take the skills back to their own whānau whenua. This knowledge proliferation into the community ultimately supports TPP efforts through greater weed eradication throughout the wider catchment area. Kaimahi commented on the significance of learning how to use chainsaws and other tools, native seedling propagation, as well as more specialised knowledge around the impact of soil ph levels.

“If I’m honest I don’t think [the rangatahi] would have chosen the taiao to work in without the community engagement... [it gave] them the opportunity to be in an environment where they could figure out those next steps in life.”

“I didn’t even know how to use a chainsaw before.”

“Horticulture training was a big eye opener about what happens below the soil... why the leaves are yellow... the impact of ph levels.”



In the words of kaimahi...

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“It’s about being a part of a whānau... to see the boys out in the community doing what they do best – being leaders, teaching – it’s a succession plan. I’m 110% behind the boys and TPP. We’ve always had the mātauranga, but now we have the resources to educate, and protect our taonga tuku iho.”

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“When I think back through the project and look back at who we’ve had kōrero with, there’s been some big wigs that these guys have been able to have real straight up conversations about our mahi... Prime Ministers, the Governor-General, politicians... They’ve been exposed to people that make decisions about projects like this and able to have those conversations about our project... the kōrero from [kaimahi] has an effect and influences them as well.”

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“In Ngāti Hine if you’re a part of a marae, there are pathways to influence Ngāti Hine. And I’ve seen [kaimahi] all learn that if they really want to influence something, they’d know someone or the pathways to go about it. [They] weren’t that confident at the beginning. Now they’d know an entity or a way to influence Ngāti Hine.”

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“[The biggest impact is] education amongst the whānau – whānau being well aware of what we’ve taught them in terms of drill and fill, they’re more confident in doing it themselves – that for me is a real big positive to be able to educate whānau and then see the results come into fruition.”

Expanding and adapting eradication techniques...

Most significantly, TPP kaimahi are at the forefront of a new drill and fill method for willow eradication. The method grew out of the need for a more effective eradication technique to rapidly clear waterways while using less poison.

TPP kaimahi learned longstanding willow eradication techniques, but were struck by the quantity of poison used, and that some trees appeared unaffected – requiring multiple eradication attempts.

Consequently, the team attempted variations of ‘ringbarking’ and ‘drill and fill’ eradication techniques, adjusting in a trial-and-error manner before settling on the most effective approach. The new technique builds on existing drill and fill methods, but crosses the drill holes to reduce gaps between holes that can enable a tree to recover.

Rather, the new technique ensures every part around the tree receives the poison – cutting off the bark’s nutrients from the inner tree. Results from this improved technique began to show within 2 weeks of adoption, and TPP is currently considering how their methods can be expanded to other foreign weeds such as flame trees and privet.

TPP kaimahi remain central to this technique development, highlighting the strong connection between positive conservation outcomes and investment in upskilling. Their efforts have been recognised by both DOC and the Northland Regional Council, with kaimahi being invited to share their learnings with various community groups.

“We realised [the drill and fill technique] was groundbreaking when people came to talk to us about it, then DOC wanted us to do a presentation... It opened up people’s eyes that you can combine techniques... then we realised that [willows] were dying and dying fast. The team were the building blocks, [they] mastered the technique.”



TPP kaimahi build trust and influence through hands-on support, knowledge sharing, and visible contributions to community well-being.

Building connections across community groups, including across other Ngāti Hine entities, represents another area of personal development for TPP kaimahi. One kaimahi noted she is confident that if the rangatahi identify a problem that needs solving, they'll know who to go speak with to start finding a solution. Investing in networking provides kaimahi with future career opportunities, solidifies their connection to their local community, and expands their sphere of influence. They speak of invaluable past opportunities to share their kaupapa with councilors, politicians, and even the Governor-General.

Significantly, TPP mahi impacts wider community quality of life. Kaimahi have numerous accounts of the impact of flooding on whānau within the community. However, as TPP mahi has progressed and waterways cleared, many community members have noted the impact on flooding reduction. For kaimahi, seeing the tangible difference their mahi is making for their community is especially heartening, and strengthens their community mandate as a rōpū.

The team is also committed to using their expertise wherever they can within the community – alongside their standard operations. Kaimahi partner with various community organisations to facilitate planting days, engage with local kura to teach about growing kai and hand out seeds / seedlings, as well as stepping up to help clear debris in emergency situations. Community engagement is considered a key pou of TPP mahi, with events helping to disseminate skills and knowledge to help whānau care for te taiao on their own whenua.

Recently the team helped fell a tree at a local kura damaged by Cyclone Gabrielle. Cleared trees from the community and Te Papa Pa Orooro are utilised for firewood to distribute amongst kaumātua and kuia in need – helping to keep the community warm during the winter months. Future plans involve the development of a māra kai for the community on reclaimed land next to Te Papa Pa Orooro to upskill whānau in growing their own kai, and directly alleviate kai poverty.

“When we’ve had storm events we’ve sort of chipped in with a lot of the farming community and helping clear things out of the way and providing firewood for kaumātua and kuia, which has been a big part of our project as well. [It’s] something we’ve just adopted along the way where we’ve done the mahi chopping out and eradicating pest species and then being able to provide that wood to kaumātua and kuia. It’s been a real positive for us.”

In the words of kaimahi...

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“It’s the flood mitigation... people are able to get to work now that the floodwaters are receding a lot faster as a result of the mahi that we’ve done out there with whānau.”

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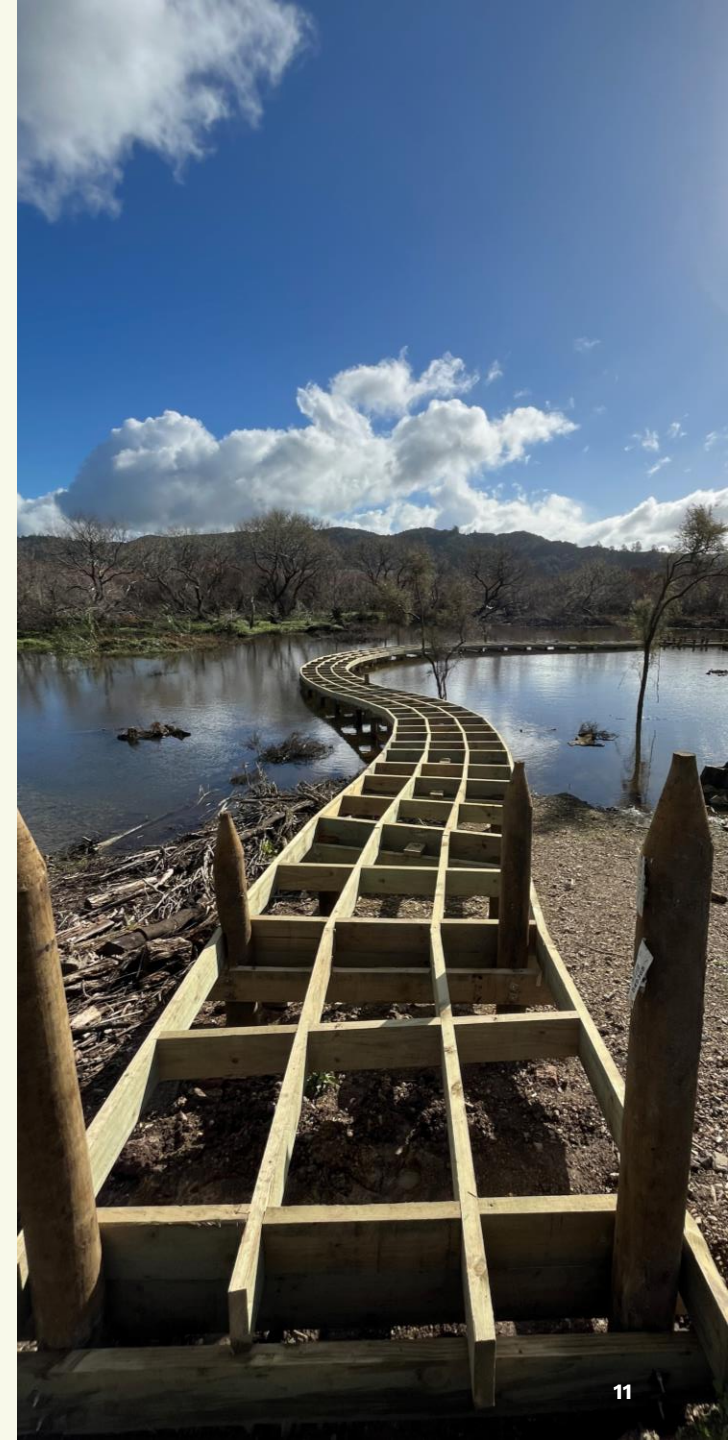
“For the engagement with the community we’ve had a lot of engagement with the planting days, but also the Cancer society relay for life – we’ve helped support them... Working with kura, we’ve provided [seeds] they can plant at home with their families and learn about it themselves – how to live off their own gardens rather than going to the shop.”

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“TPP was an aspiration of our hapū and it took a really long time to realise it. It’s come from our people and through history what’s happened to our history – realising that and trying to put something in place to combat the negative things, but still keeping the positive things that have come like farming. TPP wasn’t thought up overnight – it comes from a long line of kōrero about restoring the mauri of our repo. We all know flooding, we all know our water is paru. So I think that’s why we’re well supported – we all know what the priority should be.”

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“As TPP when we go to community days it opens the lens to those people there, and opens their minds to a whole new view of looking after te taiao and their own whenua. We’re not always going to be with them, but being able to support and educate them on what we’ve learned they can take it back to their own whenua, practice it, and manage pest eradication themselves. It gives them confidence to do it well.”



Kaimahi draw on kaumātua kōrero to guide their mahi, grounding restoration in lived memory and whakapapa.

Alongside upskilling, kaimahi note the mahi brings Ngāti Hine history to life. Working within their ancestral rohe fosters an inherent commitment to taiao well-being, as well as their Ngāti Hine whakapapa. Through their engagement with various marae, the kōrero of kaumātua and kuia around local history and their memories of the swamp have been widely shared – playing an important role in knowledge transmission and preservation. Many kaimahi consider these memories of the swamp before the proliferation of willow a key motivator behind their mahi – kōrero directly from kaumātua and kuia.

“The history and the stories... it helps us connect to those stories from our own whakapapa. It makes it more real for us to know that that’s what connects us to these areas, marae, hapū, and iwi.”

“For us as a team it’s about meeting the people that live in those areas because without knowing them who go through the flooding, actually listening to their stories and the history around that has been a big insight for us. The kaumātua and kuia have been a huge influence in terms of the stories, where it used to flood, where the rivers used to run, why they don’t run like that anymore... We’ve taken on a lot of mātauranga from the areas we’ve worked in and been invited to, to hear and listen to their thoughts on the Taumarere catchment.”

Ngā mihi



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