



**AN INDIGENOUS LED APPROACH TO
A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MOANA
IWI WĀNANGA - 24 HERE-TURI-KŌKĀ 2023**



ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE WĀNANGA

In 2022, at the 30-year celebration of the Māori Fisheries Settlement and at the March 2023 iwi wānanga – we explored the theme ‘Rukutohorā’ – leading us to dive deeper into our obligations and responsibilities of being tangata whenua, tangata moana.

In relation to this, we were reminded at our Special General Meeting held in June, that unless we lead the way – the government will continue to create legislation that impedes on our ability to exercise rangatiratanga and mana motuhake as iwi, hapū and whānau. Instead there was a call for the co-development by iwi of an indigenous led approach to a relationship with the moana.

WĀNANGA DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

In developing an approach to the wānanga with iwi, Te Ohu Kaimoana had considered the following elements important to the discussion on the day:

- This is not a direct response to the Rangitāhua issue. If we are to take an indigenous approach, it must be foundational to inform all of the mahi for Te Ohu Kaimoana (with iwi), not just one aspect. Otherwise, we open ourselves to criticism over the authenticity of what we are trying to do as a collective.
- The challenge we face is to connect our practice of how we interact and utilise the moana to our kawa and tikanga
- Having the appetite to do things from a place of mana Māori motuhake will create excitement and enthusiasm for what the future may hold for not only Te Ohu Kaimoana but iwi, hapū and whānau.
- Iwi want the opportunity to lead the conversation.
- The settlements we have create lines in the sand about how we interact with each other and how we engage on issues, but it is what can we learn from applying kawa and tikanga that creates the opportunity to inform the nature of these relationships.
- The settlement has also created a uniqueness that brings 58 iwi together

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES & OBSERVATIONS

WHAKAPAPA

Our attendees all agreed that our ātua and whakapapa was the place to start – our shared origin and deep connection to the moana, its many lifeforms and the sustenance it provides us as a people.



SETTING THE DIRECTION

This is a unique and visionary kaupapa that requires all iwi to come together, and that the direction of our approach needs to be set by our tikanga. We need to decolonise our thinking from the start and re-frame our definitions of success and wellbeing.

OUR RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP AND INTERGENERATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Our mana is directly linked to our reciprocal responsibility and obligation to care for our taiao, including our moana.

What also sets us apart as tangata whenua is that we take an intergenerational approach to our relationship with our taiao and tāngata – looking 100, 500 and 1,000 years from now – ‘we need to plant trees that we will never feel the shade of, for our children to benefit from’.

IT MUST BE MĀORI-LED

A western and Crown approach is to manage elements of our taiao individually which does not fit our world view or acknowledge that each element of our taiao is interdependent on the others being healthy also.

Treaty settlements are an example of this: fisheries settlements, river settlements, land settlements are not treated with the interdependent ‘whole’ in mind. There was commonality in that the approach doesn’t need to be Māori only and that the Crown couldn’t partake – but that Māori must lead the approach.

This is an opportunity to lead a conversation instead of responding which we have been doing for too long. We need to lead that space if we want the badge of kaitiaki. We owe that to ourselves and to our mokopuna.

A HEALTHY MOANA AND FISHERY RELIES UPON THE REST OF THE TAIAO BEING HEALTHY TOO

The health of the moana interdepends on the health of our taiao as a whole – our entire ecosystem. Our moana and ability to have a relationship is impacted by run-off, sedimentation, slash, pollution, plastics, sewage, global warming, ocean acidification, destructive fishing practices and restricted access.

This is not just about fisheries alone, but a bigger movement in our journey for the reclamation of our culture.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY AND KAITIAKITANGA

We must acknowledge and work through the tensions between our reliance on commercial returns and that of being kaitiaki.

We have discussed that some of commercial fishing practices are in direct conflict with looking after our environment – so how are we going to navigate and balance that conflict.



WHAKAARO TO EXPLORE IN MARCH 2024

As we look to gather in March 2024, we have identified four key whakaaro from our August wānanga to dive deeper into:

1. The moana needs to come first, people later – tikanga and kawa led.
2. We need to align our indigenous approach - not through legislation but potentially through a treaty mechanism and fundamentals of being kaitiaki.
3. Indigeneity is unique to us, this is our waka and we must move from reactive thinking.
4. Commitment - what might it require for iwi to be able to unilaterally commit and uphold a principled agreement / framework for our moana.



Te Ohu
Kaimoana

