

TEARAKA



6AM - 10AM WEEKDAYS

TE ATATŪ WITH JAS

Jason Phillips has his ear to the ground and his finger on the pulse. His knowledge of music spans decades, with countless artists and genres, bringing you insights, goss, and interesting facts that'll keep you hooked.



10AM - 3PM WEEKDAYS

TE KOHA WITH HINE

Hinepounamu Rongonui-Porter is a gentle soul. Her strength is to 'whakamana i te tangata.' She scours the motu, bringing you the best interviews from the creative arts. Her wairua and energetic waiata will brighten your day.



3PM - 7PM WEEKDAYS

TE IHI WITH POU

Waipounamu Te Karu is no stranger to Māori Broadcasting, she covers a wide range of topics including mana wahine, hauora, mental health, well-being and she will bring the IHI every weekday!



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93 KAHURU/AUTUMN 2024

- 8 FOR THE GOOD OF OUR OCEAN** TE KARAKA met Hayden Smith in 2017 to talk about Sea Cleaners. Now, seven years on, he chats with ANNA BRANKIN about how his simple dream to clean up our environment is going global.
- 12 ACROSS DECADES, OCEANS AND GENERATIONS** Thousands of kilometres separate Tā Tipene O'Regan and Masashi Yamada, but their decades-long friendship survives even our largest of oceans.
- 16 A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERSHIP** In November 2023, Justin Tipa stepped into the role of Kaiwhakahaere of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, marking the beginning of a new generation of tribal leadership.
- 20 BIG SHOES TO FILL** Celebrating the life of Bubba Thompson, a man with huge passion for the land, sea and his people.



- 24 HELP FROM ABOVE: AIR AMBULANCE SERVICES IN TE WAIPOUNAMU** When Michael Stevens' Poua Tiny Metzger had a "bit of a turn" while on the tītī islands last year, it was thanks to the rapid response of air ambulance services that he lived to tell the tale.
- 30 I USED TO ...** Maxine Jacobs shares her very personal and at times heart-breaking journey of discovery as she learns more about her whakapapa and builds her cultural confidence.
- 34 WEAVING SOLUTIONS: KĀI TAHU COLLABORATION IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE COMPLEXITY** Kera Sherwood-O'Regan is a climate activist and social impact strategist and was named in the BBC's 2023 list of 100 inspiring and influential women from around the world. She talks to ALICE DIMOND about her work and how the connection between systems theory, climate activism and indigenous sovereignty could be a tool for change.



NGĀ HAU
E WHĀ
FROM THE
EDITOR

It's February already with the festive season and summer break a distant memory for most.

The year has begun amidst rising unease with iwi Māori having to assert themselves as they hold this new coalition government to account on its proposed changes to Te Tiriti o Waitangi – the partnership agreement that has underpinned the foundations of Aotearoa for the past 184 years.

In all the discussion and debate, one thing that appears to be largely absent is respect – respect for Te Tiriti, for partnership and for each other. And at the end of the day isn't respect a principle of any genuine partnership – kotahitaka?

The concept of respect goes much deeper than these current political murmurings. It is a universal value that underpins how we behave and the decisions we make, whether it's about te taiao, whenua, tikaka, whānau – those who have gone before us and those who will come after us.

It must be fundamental in the decisions we make to ensure all voices are heard, and everyone who chooses to do so has the opportunity to participate. Without respect we run the risk of leaving our future generations short-changed.

In this issue of TE KARAKA we include feature stories on two wāhine who embody all things respect in their pursuit of making the world a better place. Kera Sherwood-O'Regan (page 34) is an inspirational young wāhine whose passion for social justice, climate change, Indigenous Peoples and the disabled, saw her named in the BBC's 100 women of 2023. And Joanne McEachen, who has dedicated her life to positive education outcomes for all tamariki. Her business, The Learner First, is a global brand focused on delivering a holistic approach to school improvement. You can read more about Joanne's work on page 38.

I also want to acknowledge our He Takata, Grace Manawatu. Our whānau has personally had the privilege of having Grace provide care in our home. The aroha and confidence she exudes in her mahi is exceptional – thank you, Grace.

Nāhaku noa, nā

Nā ADRIENNE ANDERSON WAAKA

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- 38 MAKING A DIFFERENCE** Global changemaker Joanne McEachen is a force to be reckoned with, overhauling education systems and making a difference for tamariki across the world from her home in Seattle.
- 42 CASTING A TORCHLIGHT ON SONIA RAHITI** Sonia Rahiti and her whānau have just returned from their house at Murderers Cove, located on the south-east side of Taukihepa (Big South Cape Island). Many whānau in this rohe spend time out of each year on the islands, but Sonia has been going longer than most ... this is her 56th season.
- 44 SAVING THE KĀKĀPŌ** With only 252 kākāpō in Aotearoa, they are a threatened species that faces immediate risk of extinction. But whānau Kāi Tahu can be the voice of the taoka species, expressing rakatirataka and kaitiakitaka to make an intergenerational difference.
- 47 A RELATIONSHIP OF MANY CHAPTERS** The University of Canterbury recently celebrated its 150th anniversary, which included publishing *A New History: The University of Canterbury 1873–2023*. Professor Te Maire Tau, who penned a chapter in the book, shares his view on the relationship between the university and iwi over the decades.
- 50 MAGICAL MEMORIES** Kaituhi HANNAH KERR sits down with kaumātua Kathy Coombes to learn about her life growing up within Puketeraki Rūnaka.



- 4 WHENUA** Tāpapatanga-o-Pātuki
- 6 KA HAO TE RAKATAHI** Climate Crisis Generation
nā Te Puawai Perenara-O'Connell
- 7 HE WHAKAARO** Ko te kai a te rakatira he kōrero.
Ko te kai a te kotahitaka he whakaroko
- 54 TE AO O TE MĀORI** Libbie Faith
- 58 AUKAHA** For those of us who haven't had the opportunity to visit the stunning tītī islands, this photo competition gives us a glimpse of what life is like during the harvest
- 62 REVIEWS** *Little Doomsdays* and more
- 68 HE TAKATA** Grace Manawatu



**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
TE RŪNANGA O NGĀI TAHU
ARIHIA BENNETT**

A CEO'S FAREWELL BLOG

Twelve years as CEO of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu will come to an end for me this March and therefore I believe timely that I share some reflections. There is a lot to pack in...

Carrying out the duties tagged to this role has been an immense privilege for me with every single day providing a unique experience across the many facets of whānau, rūnaka and iwi development.

Driving a tribal administration that strives to be whānau relevant and distinctively Kāi Tahu while being anchored in the 1998 "Deed of Settlement" was always going to be a dynamic challenge, and I can attest that after 12 years there's never been a dull moment.

Essentially the foundation of the role is about forming, weaving and networking relationships across the many communities (internal and external) be it whānau, rūnaka, kaupapa specific, other iwi, professional groups, many external partners, Crown entities ... the list goes on.

The recent roadshow in Brisbane was a reminder of how important relationships are. I met many "first time" rangatahi attendees who were ecstatic about being asked to give their views on **Mō Kā Uri: Ngāi Tahu 2050**.

There was a tremendous buzz about being future focused. Attending whānau were deeply appreciative of the opportunity to engage in the wide range of activities. Some said the experience enabled their tamariki and mokopuna to gain greater insight into their Kāi Tahu identity, therefore strengthening their sense of belonging.

There was also an acknowledgement of whānau back home at their papakaika, who are the stalwarts of their respective communities. I am delighted to see how far the roadshows have come. These opportunities for engagement are priceless and for this reason they should continue to go far and wide across the globe.

This year we move towards the remarkable milestone of \$1 billion invested into targeted tribal development across our whānau, our Papatipu Rūnaka and our iwi. Note, this is also our own significant tribal contribution into the national economy, so in that respect everyone benefits.

As I come to the last weeks in my role, I have much to be grateful for. As a leader my mantra is that you must always come from a place of hope, not one of deficit as that will only serve to spiral downwards into unhappiness. People want hope and inspiration; they want solutions and results that matter; and they want to have a sense of belonging. Less talk, more listening. Considered thought followed by relevant action is always a winning combination.

As I leave this stage my work here is done, and I will easily mould back into driving community development from another angle that aims to bring happiness outcomes for whānau - and with a bit of fun on the side repurposing sustainable vintage clothing while lending a hand in the whānau business at the Burly Gin Distillery.

My humble thanks to everyone (far and wide) who has been part of my journey thus far - good, bad, and ugly - there has been magnificent learning in all of it!

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FRONT COVER

The late Bubba Thompson addressing manuhiri at Te Rau Aroha Marae, Waitangi Day 2018.

PHOTOGRAPH: SUPPLIED

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WHENUA

TĀPAPATANGA-O-PĀTUKI is the Māori name for the Diadem Range in Te Manahuna (the Mackenzie Basin). During the 1879 Smith-Nairn Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Kāi Tahu land claims, Rāwiri Te Mamaru and other kaumātua Kāi Tahu recorded Tāpapatanga-o-Pātuki as a kāika mahika kai where weka, tuna, kiore, kueo, and papaī (sp. of speargrass) were gathered.

2014-103-008, TE RŪNANGA O NGĀI TAHU COLLECTION, NGĀI TAHU ARCHIVE / PHOTOGRAPH: TONY BRIDGE



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KA HAO TE RAKATAHI

Nā TE PUAWAI PERENARA-O'CONNELL



Climate Crisis Generation

I am a part of the post settlement generation, the ones who have reaped the rewards of the mahi from our pakeke, our kaumātua, and our tipuna. There is much to be grateful for, and while I may never have to face the challenges others did before me, I am part of the climate crisis generation, and this is a new challenge we should all be talking about.

I grew up on the shores of Te Waihora, listening to kaumātua tell me stories about when they could see the shingle bottom of the lake, how taoka species were plentiful. Now I stand at Te Waihora watching my lake, my heart, being used as a sink full of fertilisers and fossil fuels, and the dunes at Taumutu Beach becoming more unstable as large swells break our special ecosystem. I have sat in the wharekai watching the waves from king tides break our coastline and flood the streams surrounding my marae.

When I was a tamaiti, I was shown videos of climate change impact around the world. Phrases like “environmental destruction, climate change, global warming and environmental crisis” were reoccurring topics in science class. The messaging was plain and simple; the climate is changing, and if we don't choose to make change we will be forced to. This is not a path I thought would be presented to me here in Aotearoa, but this our reality.

Now as a rakatahi, I have a seat at the table, I am part of the kōrero about global warming, environmental crisis, climate adaptation and hapū resilience. I am starting to develop my own views and opinions, but the room doesn't seem like the best place to voice my thoughts. When the opportunity came to be a part of the Kāi Tahu Climate Change Symposium and 25-year Settlement celebration, I knew this was the space I had been waiting for. A safe place for rakatahi, by rakatahi.

On day one I spent an afternoon learning about the concerns that sit front of mind, for the current and future generations of

I BELIEVE IF WE FOCUS ON CLIMATE EDUCATION AND RESILIENCE, AND SUPPORT PEOPLE WHO ARE UNAWARE OR IN DENIAL AROUND THE SERIOUSNESS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, WE CAN FULFILL OUR DUTY AS KAITIAKI OF OUR WHENUA, AS WELL AS BEING THE RAKATIRA OUR TIPUNA INTENDED US TO BE.

Kāi Tahu. With the support of Alice Dimond and Sam Wixon, from Tokona te Raki, our rakatahi group participated in a “think tank”, where we discussed how our everyday actions and decisions impact the climate and how, if we combined our efforts and take tactical and deliberate action, we can have a future where the climate impacts aren't scary because we will be ready for them.

Day two provided the opportunity to bring our whakaaro out into the open, inspiring our current leaders, and challenging their own ways of working. I am excited for our tribal future, not only in the climate space but for the future leaders our tupuna have inspired.

It would be bold of me to write a list, telling readers how we can make our kāika, takiwā, motu and ao tūroa a more environmentally conscious place. To put it simply, no matter how much action we take, it will not change our problems overnight; there are generations of lifestyle changes and impacts which have created our current situation. My tipuna used to live at their pā, in their kāika, on the shores of Te Waihora. My kaumātua would use containers to scoop up whitebait from the streams and spear patiki on the lake edge. They were raised on the side of a healthy lake, which supported Kāi Tahu whānui.

That is not my reality due to colonisation and urban drift. I need to drive 50 minutes to my marae, to feel connected to my whānau, hapū and kāika. I shop at the supermarket, fill my basket with fruit,

vegetables, and meat, compromised with hormones and chemicals. I can't depend on Te Waihora as my pantry like generations before me. One day I hope my mokopuna can go to Te Waihora and provide dinner for their whānau. I hope many generations of Kāi Te Ruahikihiki are raised on the marae by our hapū who can teach and support their growth and learning instead of being raised in the malls, addicted to Fortnite.

In my time of learning I have been told there are two sides to every coin. On one side, there is the opinion of climate change not being a major threat or concern. On the other side, the opinion that there needs to be action taken now to delay the effects of climate change.

I believe if we focus on climate education and resilience, and support people who are unaware or in denial around the seriousness of climate change, we can fulfill our duty as kaitiaki of our whenua, as well as being the rakatira our tipuna intended us to be.

I am a rakatahi asking my cousins, aunties, uncles, nieces, nephews and kaumātua to be courageous. We need to share the importance of climate adaption, educate our whānau, and make conscious efforts to reduce our climate impact. I hope to be a part of the generation to lead climate initiatives for iwi Māori throughout Aotearoa. I need to do right by my tipuna, for my mokopuna. 🌱

Te Puawai Perenara-O'Connell

(Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki) lives in Ōtautahi and works for Tāwhaki, focusing on aerospace R&D and whenua rejuvenation for Kaitorete. Te Puawai is passionate about netball, climate adaptation, historical research, and the health of our waterways.

HE WHAKAARO

Nā AWHINA McGLINCHEY



Ko te kai a te rakatira he kōrero. Ko te kai a te kotahitaka he whakaroko.

In an era dominated by the endless flow of information it's clear that how we move forward collectively is deeply influenced.

In this current environment, discussing any topic seems to either trigger fear or an attack from the polarised perspective held by another. There's more people forming entrenched opinions based on quick, often misleading info bites, who get stuck in echo chambers reinforced by algorithms that see them defending this perspective to the point where they are willing to cut off others who have a different view, often to the point of cutting connections with whānau, friends and communities.

We saw this through the pandemic when positions on vaccination were so polarised that in the most extreme cases people were choosing to end relationships and friendships.

As someone who chose to be vaccinated, and having whānau and friends who chose not to, it was an interesting time to navigate conversations, but something I willingly tried with varying degrees of success in keeping connections intact.

My first confrontation on the issue was in discussion with one of my oldest friends. Before engaging I took a moment to remind myself of all the things we have in common so I could approach this conversation knowing we would end it still disagreeing, but by remaining in the middle space leaving the possibility for further conversations on the topic.

We are still yet to agree on the topic of vaccination but are constantly able to discuss our views in a way that leaves it open.

As I watched the recent General Election and observed tactics employed using Make New Zealand Great Again-style campaigns that actively seek to divide citizens in democracies as a strategy, it's clear there is a negative impact of this approach on social cohesion.

During his Waitangi Day address in 2019, Tā Tipene noted: "Whatever we think of the quality of our media journalism

or politicians, it's only fair to say that New Zealanders would have a very low tolerance for the extremes of informational chicanery now common in other comparable societies." But gauging the impacts of Covid-19 on social cohesion and the use of divisive political tactics that create further polarisation, it appears our tolerance levels have sadly changed.

Not only does this impact our political parties but also erodes trust in institutions. I know there are many, including iwi and hapū organisations, who have felt an uprise in the lack of trust, in some cases to the point where they are choosing to disengage not just from structures, but from our shared practices at the heart of our collective identity.

These, of course, are not issues unique to us in Aotearoa - it's happening the world over. In the United States there are many institutions that have been wrestling with the impacts a little longer than us and are exploring dialogue and storytelling as mechanisms for overcoming polarisation. Some are offering tools and programmes to communities to connect and reconnect.

The idea is to slow ideas down and meet in the middle space through real dialogue, which isn't just about hearing words, but also understanding the why behind those words or the story that has led someone to hold their beliefs. This is about stepping outside comfort zones, setting aside persuasion or judgement, and engaging in truly curious and deep listening to connect.


While it all seems a little simple, social science confirms we actually don't truly hear each other until we care about each other. By bringing all perspectives and ideas into the space in the middle and utilising the power that comes through connection we can begin to address complex challenges. And by doing so, potentially move from zero sum outcomes where there are no winners, to win/win - from distrust to trusting that we have common ground. The word practice is intentionally used as this is something

THE IDEA IS TO SLOW IDEAS DOWN AND MEET IN THE MIDDLE SPACE THROUGH REAL DIALOGUE, WHICH ISN'T JUST ABOUT HEARING WORDS, BUT ALSO UNDERSTANDING THE WHY BEHIND THOSE WORDS OR THE STORY THAT HAS LED SOMEONE TO HOLD THEIR BELIEF.

that needs to be done over and over to "build the muscle" for it to be successful.

So why am I reading and now writing about dialogue as a response to polarisation in other parts of the world? Because as an iwi we do not exist in isolation of our political landscape, and I can't help but wonder how the growing political polarisation and resulting loss of trust and social cohesion will impact our iwi and hapū?

Will it have a negative impact to our collective identity, shared cultural practices and the cohesiveness among our whānau, hapū and iwi? What will happen to the kinship organisations that were built from the aspirations of our tīpuna and created through the social justice movement that was Te Kerēme if we do not pay attention to the signals or tohu around us?

If others in the world are embracing dialogue and storytelling as a solution to polarisation and complex challenges with success, I believe that given we already hold these super powers it's an approach we too should embrace. How do we flex our abilities to wānaka, kōrero and use pūrākau to limit impacts on our whānau, hapū and iwi? And how do we share that with other communities we inhabit. How do we use kōrero as a revolution in a time of polarisation? 

Awhina McGlinchey (Kāti Hateatea) is raising her two tamariki in Ōtautahi while maintaining a strong connection to their pā at Moeraki. She is the Managing Director of Tokona Te Raki where she is co lead of *Mō Kā Uri - Ngāi Tahu 2050*, a project designing the collective iwi vision for the next 25 years informed by our whānau voice.

For the good of our ocean

In 2017, TE KARAKA spent the day on board with Hayden Smith, founder and CEO of Sea Cleaners. In this issue, we catch up with Hayden to see how the Sea Cleaners kaupapa is going, and learn how his simple dream to clean up our environment is turning into a global operation. Nā ANNA BRANKIN.

THE FIRST SEA CLEANERS VESSEL WAS LAUNCHED IN 2002, THE RESULT of Hayden's determination to clean up the huge rubbish convergence he saw in Auckland's Waitematā Harbour while working as a kayak guide.

"I had always felt a strong connection to the natural environment, and living and working in it every day only made the connection stronger," Hayden says. "I couldn't believe the amount of rubbish flowing underneath the Auckland Harbour Bridge and I thought, 'Why is no-one out here cleaning this up? This is something I could do.'"

Hayden (Kāi Tahu – Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki) approached the Auckland City Council to do just that. It was the beginning of a two-year journey to get the first Sea Cleaners boat on the water.

"Everyone thought it was a good idea but no-one knew what to do about it. I was bounced around all the different departments and councils in the region of Auckland," he says. "Every person I met gave me another little piece of advice that I was able to compile into an increasingly comprehensive business plan."

Eventually, Hayden got a business plan in front of the then mayor, Sir Bob Harvey, who immediately saw its potential. He remains a patron of Sea Cleaners to this day, and it was with his support that the first boat was launched in December 2002, donated by Ports of Auckland and named the *Phil Warren* in honour of the late Regional Council Chair.

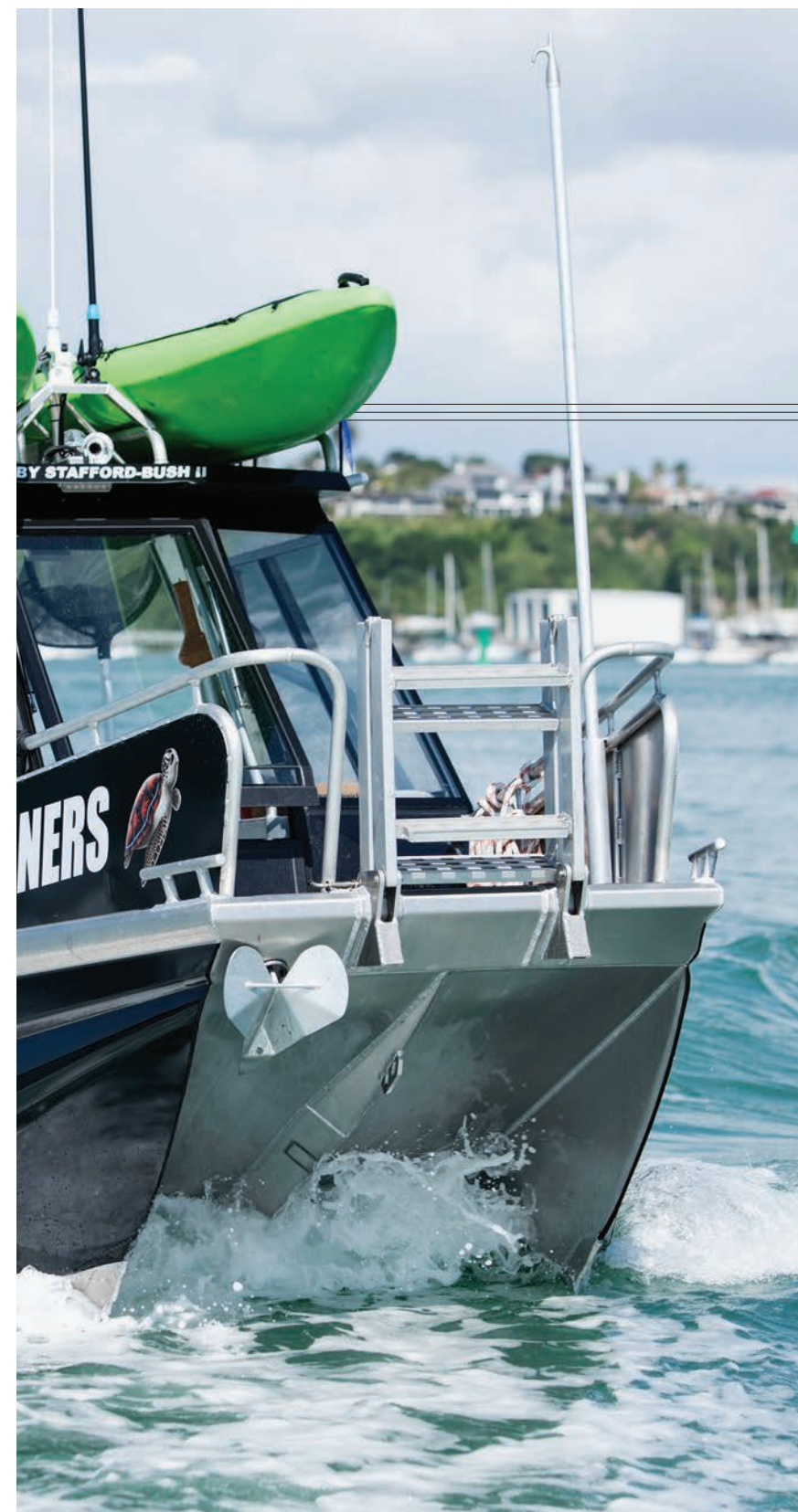
"I was basically given a licence to go out and prove what I said I'd seen and what I could do about it," says Hayden. Twenty-one years later, he has done just that.

"Each crew is collecting on average 2,000 litres of rubbish a day, that's about 40,000 litres a month which is more than a shipping container," Hayden says. This adds up to more than 17.5 million litres of rubbish since Sea Cleaners began, most of which heads to Northland Waste. More recently, however, the crew have been sorting and



Above: Hayden Smith on board one of the Sea Cleaners vessels.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUPPLIED.



redirecting plastic waste to Future Post, a company making fence posts out of recycled plastic.

“We’ve actually been able to make indirect change through those partnerships, as Northland Waste is now diverting plastics from their landfills and sending it off to Future Post as well,” says Hayden. “So through our own desire to find a better solution for the waste we collect, we’ve actually helped landfill operations to find a better solution for the waste they receive as well.”

Besides this, the Sea Cleaners crew return a lot of marine farming equipment that can then be reused, as well as sending any tyres they find off to be repurposed into cement. And, Hayden says, the hope is that simply by being out there and doing what they do, the Sea Cleaners’ message will spread.

“Our boats are pretty well-branded and it’s pretty self-explanatory, so they do get noticed when they’re out and about and there’s some genuine love and appreciation for the work that we’re doing.”

Three boats cover the wider Auckland region, while their Northland boat operates out of the Bay of Islands. In January 2023, Hayden was proud to launch the first vessel in Te Waipounamu, operating out of Lyttelton and covering the entire Canterbury region. Each vessel covers around 600 kilometres of coastline. They also have a hovercraft in the fleet, used in tidal mudflats.

“EACH CREW IS COLLECTING ON AVERAGE 2,000 LITRES OF RUBBISH A DAY, THAT’S ABOUT 40,000 LITRES A MONTH WHICH IS MORE THAN A SHIPPING CONTAINER.”

HAYDEN SMITH

“We’ve actually got another five boats on standby, subsequent to getting funding in place, and they’ll go to the Bay of Plenty, Wellington, Marlborough, Tasman and Otago,” Hayden says. “That’ll give us pretty good coverage across the country. We just want to get them out there and working.”

Although the *Phil Warren* has to stay on its berth in Westhaven Marina, the rest of the Sea Cleaners fleet are purpose-built trailer boats that can be launched and anchored anywhere, with crew and volunteers able to step off the bow onto the beach. Each boat has a skipper and a deckhand, meaning the entire Sea Cleaners operation consists of 10 kaimahi as well as Hayden and his wife.



BESIDE THE DAILY OPERATIONS OF THE SEA CLEANERS FLEET, HAYDEN IS ALSO DETERMINED TO EDUCATE NEW GENERATIONS OF CONSUMERS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF PLASTIC ON THE ENVIRONMENT. HE TAKES THE TIME TO RESPOND TO REGULAR QUERIES FROM STUDENTS WHO PICK SEA CLEANERS AS THE TOPIC FOR SCHOOL PROJECTS, AND DOES IN-SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF LITTERING ON THE ENVIRONMENT

“We make every dollar count, and every dollar that we do raise goes directly towards making sure our boats are out there doing what they do,” Hayden says. “They’re out there five days a week, cleaning up the coast and engaging the communities to make our places better.”

These days, Hayden doesn’t spend as much time on the water as he used to. His top priority is keeping the fleet on the water – and expanding it – so most of his time is spent networking and fundraising. The biggest supporters for Sea Cleaners are local councils, as well as organisations such as the Rātā Foundation and philanthropic or private family trusts.

“I spend the bulk of my time following up on leads and networking, getting out there and showcasing who we are and what we’ve been doing,” Hayden says. “Twenty-one years on, and our work is far from done.”

The work that Sea Cleaners has done upstream has eliminated a lot of the convergence zones full of rubbish, but there is definitely enough new waste created to keep the team busy.

“Consumerism is still rampant, and the amount of plastics and debris constantly coming at us as a society hasn’t changed,” Hayden says. “There are 101 reasons rubbish ends up in the open environment, and every time it rains everything comes down through the stormwater systems and ends up coming out to sea.”

With so much work to be done, Hayden is grateful to the network of volunteers who support Sea Cleaners.

“It can be disheartening but I’m genuinely inspired by the amount of volunteers who put their hands up wanting to help. We always have at least two or three out with each crew,” Hayden says. “Wherever I am in the country, I make sure to get down to the boat first thing in the morning to see them off, just to be a part of that energy because it’s always a real buzz.”

Besides their contribution to the clean-up effort, volunteers play an important role as advocates for the Sea Cleaners kaupapa.

“Volunteering is a critical component of the Sea Cleaners model, because we see our boats as our classrooms,” Hayden says. “We’re able to educate those volunteers, to show them the effects of littering and show them the impact of the work that we do, so they can spread the word and help us secure the sponsorship and funding that we need to operate.”



Top: A clean up mission on the Tamaki River with students from Kings College.

Above: Hayden (centre) was made a fellow of the Eisenhower Fellowship in 2023. Pictured here with George de Lama, Eisenhower Fellowship President (left); and Dr Robert M. Gates (right), Eisenhower Fellowship Chairman at the ceremony.

Right: At work under the watchful eye of Hauraki Gulf locals.

Below: Around 40,000 litres of rubbish are collected monthly by each crew; more than a shipping containers’ worth.






Beside the daily operations of the Sea Cleaners fleet, Hayden is also determined to educate new generations of consumers about the impact of plastic on the environment. He takes the time to respond to regular queries from students who pick Sea Cleaners as the topic for school projects, and does in-school presentations about the impact of littering on the environment.

More recently, Hayden has also been spearheading a global ambassador programme. Supported by the Hawaiian Tourism Authority and Hawaiian Airlines, a cohort of students from across New Zealand and Australia travels to Hawaii in September each year. They spend three weeks cleaning up local beaches and honing their public speaking skills.

"We get them into local schools and have them speak about their experiences out on the coast of the Hawaiian islands," says Hayden. "It's about creating a tourism story that is not about just going to a tropical destination and using and abusing the environment. We're actually leaving the place better than we found it."

The programme also aims to teach participants about our responsibility as global citizens, as a lot of the rubbish collected on the Hawaiian islands comes out of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, meaning they're being affected by international debris on top of their own waste production.

"There's also a really lovely cultural aspect to it as well. The Hawaiian culture is very similar to Māori culture in terms of how we do things, and sharing those cultures in respect to caring for our environment has been amazing," says Hayden.

Although Sea Cleaners would love to grow its international presence one day, for now Hayden and the team are focusing their efforts at home. "We want to make sure we've got as many boats funded to operate in New Zealand first, and that we're doing the best possible job we can. I just love this place and I want to make sure we leave it as good as we can." 

THE PROGRAMME ALSO AIMS TO TEACH PARTICIPANTS ABOUT OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS GLOBAL CITIZENS, AS A LOT OF THE RUBBISH COLLECTED ON THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS COMES OUT OF THE GREAT PACIFIC GARBAGE PATCH, MEANING THEY'RE BEING AFFECTED BY INTERNATIONAL DEBRIS ON TOP OF THEIR OWN WASTE PRODUCTION.

"THERE'S ALSO A REALLY LOVELY CULTURAL ASPECT TO IT AS WELL. THE HAWAIIAN CULTURE IS VERY SIMILAR TO MĀORI CULTURE IN TERMS OF HOW WE DO THINGS, AND SHARING THOSE CULTURES IN RESPECT TO CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT HAS BEEN AMAZING."

Across decades, oceans and generations

The Pacific Ocean that divides Aotearoa from Japan breaks just metres from where Tā Tipene O'Regan sits telling the story of a more than 30-year friendship between two men from two nations. As Kaituhi JODY O'CALLAGHAN reports, Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa has always played a part in that bond.

IN 1989, TĀ TIPENE WAS IN THE MIDST OF NGĀI TAHU'S LEGAL BATTLE

FOR settlement when Japanese businessman and philanthropist Masashi Yamada showed an interest in supporting the iwi. The primary motivation, he says, must have been commercial. Mr Yamada saw an opportunity to expand deepwater fishing opportunities out of the sea of Alaska into fishing for Hoki in Aotearoa, but it flourished into a friendship – or rather a brothership – that is now three generations deep.

The men's whānau gathered in Tokyo in November as a sort of final farewell between the two, given Mr Yamada is now 101 years old. The 10-day trip was poignant – complete with tears, joy, haka, generosity, and friendship solidified between the two younger generations.

Mr Yamada's right-hand man, Yoshikazu Narimoto, was convinced by Mrs Yoshie Yamaguchi, of the Yamada Corporation, to send a delegation to New Zealand in 1989 to look at possible property investment.

Graham Kitson (Ngāi Tahu), a Christchurch-based businessman with a long-held interest in Japan, including attending university there, was asked to assist with showing the Yamada delegation potential investments in Te Waipounamu.

It was during this visit that Dr Kitson suggested if he was interested in fishing, Mr Yamada should meet Tā Tipene. It was a serendipitous meeting. Unbeknown to many at the time, the iwi was broke and about to abandon its legal fight for settlement.

"I was on the point of packing up our claim and locking it down because there was a good chance, we were not going to succeed in achieving a settlement," Tā Tipene says.

He was going through the process of building the archival business so it could be stored for another generation to take on – the whole basis for establishing what is now an invaluable and enduring iwi resource.

A series of loans – multi-million dollars – from Mr Yamada during the

1990s gave the iwi the financial breath of life it needed to get through years of Waitangi Tribunal hearings and Crown negotiations. As the legal battle played out in Pōneke, where Tā Tipene lived, Mrs Yamaguchi gave him free rent in her Fendalton home as their Ōtautahi base.

"It was a great boon to us when Ngāi Tahu had no capacity to remunerate me. I was largely living and operating on a negative income for 11 years."

Tā Tipene left his leadership roles at Wellington Teachers' College to dedicate his time as chief negotiator of Te Kerēme (the Kāi Tahu claim), while his wife Sandra supported them financially by working as a nurse. He long suspected Mr Yamada "had a respect for what I was involved in doing for Kāi Tahu. I think it was a sense of an indigenous group finding its feet and its identity."

Despite the need for translators in most conversations, their transactions are always at a personal level, with Mr Yamada referring to Tā Tipene as his "dear younger brother."

The Yamada's house Tā Tipene first visited in Yokohama had a tree growing among it.

"He explained to me the significance of not cutting that tree, as long as it grew up through it. All you could see was a big trunk growing up on the next two floors."

Tā Tipene distinctly remembers all those years ago sitting and watching Mr Yamada's young daughter putting on a ballet performance for them around the tree trunk. Yamada senior never talked much about himself, but they learned snippets over time.

He never questioned Tā Tipene too much about his Kāi Tahu ancestry, which surprised him. But "it's been an extraordinary relationship and at a personal level we started to really join that day, that first meeting in his office."



Mr Yamada told Te KARAKA in 2014 about his first encounter with Tā Tipene.

“I was very taken by his passion and the way he talked about his culture and about Kāi Tahu, and I thought he was a fantastic human being. He touched me very much. That was the trigger of my interest for the Kāi Tahu, that very strong, passionate personality of his.

“And then I also remembered my mother’s words about how it was important to have friends all over the world, and I thought I should make this man my friend and support him. That was also part of the relationship, the human encounter.”

Tā Tipene’s relationship with the Yamada family not only allowed for the settlement, but it was the beginning of Ngāi Tahu Fisheries, which then capitalised Ngāi Tahu Property. While it was “the fight [for settlement] that gave me the passion for fisheries, it was Mr Yamada’s financial backing that gave the iwi the capacity to participate”, Tā Tipene says.

“We had quota, but no boats. All we were able to do was lease our quota to other people.” The Yamada Corporation helped the iwi buy its first boat, a big trawler shipped from the Sea of Alaska and renamed *Takaroa*, and its first fishing company hired its first crew.

“We went to work, and she failed. It came to nothing, because the boat was accustomed to the Sea of Alaska, didn’t have enough trawling power, and couldn’t perform in the same way in our waters.”

Boats for New Zealand deepwater are more like a tug, with two thirds of its body under water, Tā Tipene says. “But it meant the beginning of our fisheries opportunities.”

It wasn’t the last joint venture with the Yamada Corporation to fail either.

The two parties invested \$500,000 each in a hotel at Lake Gunn on the Te Anau side of Hollyford Forks, powered by a hydro station on the hill above. Its managers were current Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu chief executive officer Arihia Bennett and her husband Richard.

It was a successful business in a beautiful location, until flooding caused a slip to push it over the road.

“It was one of those Fiordland weather events, where I first learned about the term ‘a yard of rain’,” Tā Tipene says. He travelled to Tokyo to deliver the Yamada share of the insurance payout during a luncheon in the early 2000s.

“The cheque went down on the table, and he pushed it across to me and said, ‘That’s the founding capital of the Yamada O’Regan scholarship fund’.”

During their recent trip in November, they had been discussing another donation from the Yamada group of \$10,000 a year, which the iwi would match to fund an alumni group.

“On the last morning of our stay, he came to say goodbye to us at the hotel. He passed a blue folder to me with documents inside giving us a contribution to the fund of \$1 million. Ben (Bateman) now has the challenge of how to match it. We may have to do it over time,” Tā Tipene grins at what a good problem it is to have, all going towards rangatahi futures.

Of the many financial contributions by the corporation, education is important to Mr Yamada, so whānau have the chance to overcome their “postcode lottery” to enrol tamariki and rangatahi in boarding schools. Ben Bateman, chief operating officer, says he never expected such a large donation “at this point in time.”

Yamada / Ngāi Tahu Haka

English composition by Narimoto San

Translation by Hana O’Regan

Kaea	I mamao, i mamao!	Far, far, far away
Katoa	I te motu i te toka! He tipua, he takata!	great men from the island south
Kaea	I mamao, i mamao!	Far, far, far away
Katoa	I te motu i te raki! He tipua, he takata!	great men from the island north
	Ā...Tuia te muka takata o te tokorua Rakitāmirotia kia tānekaha I a ha ha!	These two spirits united as one Bound together to be strong – oh how great!
Kaea	Ka puta ko te aha?	What emerged from this union?
Katoa	Ko te whakawhirinaki	It was trust
Kaea	Ka puta ko te aha?	What emerged from this union?
Katoa	Ko te kākau pono Tauheretia kia mau, kia ita! I a ha ha!	It was brotherhood and love and hold fast
Kaea	Hei aha rā – Hei aha rā?	And for what purpose?
Katoa	Hei taoka tuku iho! Tū mai kā tākerekere o te hautoa Te mana e!	As a treasure to be passed on Stand forth the direct descendants of that courage What power!
Kaea	Paiheretia taku rahi!	Unite my people!
Katoa	Kōkiri! Ki te tihī!	Forward! To the summit
Kaea	Paiheretia taku rahi!	Unite my people!
Katoa	Kōkiri! Kia eke! Ki te pae awhero o te hono e... hi!	Forward! Achieve it! To the horizon of our combined dreams!

Far, far, far away great men from the island south
Far, far, far away great men from the island north
These two spirits united as one
These two spirits bonds so strong
Trust, brotherhood and love born from these proud spirits
Passing on brotherhood, courage and pride to posterity
Everyone we are the proud offspring
Forward, forward with brotherhood and courage
Forward, forward
Toward our dreams,
onwards we go!

“THE CHEQUE WENT DOWN ON THE TABLE, AND HE PUSHED IT ACROSS TO ME AND SAID, ‘THAT’S THE FOUNDING CAPITAL OF THE YAMADA O’REGAN SCHOLARSHIP FUND’.”

TĀ TIPENE O’REGAN



Above, left to right – back: Ben Bateman, Miria O'Regan, Hana O'Regan, Te Rautawhiri Mamaru-O'Regan, Manuhaea Mamaru-O'Regan, Sara Yamada, Yoshikazu Narimoto, Masanobu Yamada; left to right - front: Lady Sandra O'Regan, Tā Tipene O'Regan, Masashi Yamada, Shinji Yamada Yoko Yamada. Previous page: Tā Tipene O'Regan with his good friend Masashi Yamada.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUPPLIED.

The iwi is reviewing its mātauraka strategy, and the latest Yamada fund will be part of that.

Ben, who travelled to Tokyo for the reunion between the two families, says the friendship between the two men is the core of any business they've had.

"It was a privilege to witness it," he says. "They want to take this into the next generation, which is pretty humbling because of the relationship that Tā has built up."

The elderly Yamada "was highly emotional at every meeting." One hui turned into three because everyone enjoyed each other's company so much. The gravity of it being the final meeting between the kaumātua likely had something to do with it too. The event meant so much to the O'Regan whānau, who paid for Tā Tipene's grandchildren, his daughter Hana's children to join him on the 10-day trip along with Hana and Miria.

The Yamada-O'Regan friendship will continue through these younger generations, and through Tā Tipene's close friendship with Mr Narimoto, who is credited with facilitating their introduction.

Takerei Norton, manager of the Ngāi Tahu Archive and a proud former rugby player, got the chance to go to the Tokyo World Cup in 2019, along with Hana, where they met Yamada junior, Shinji-san.


Narimoto was fascinated by haka and asked Hana how one was composed. Hana suggested that he could provide some thoughts

about what he might like to say in a haka, and she would be happy to translate them into te reo Māori. On the last evening of the trip, Narimoto stood up to read out what he called his 'homework' and proceeded to recite the most beautiful poem he had composed on the Yamada O'Regan relationship. Hana translated his words into te reo Māori, and upon her return to Te Waipounamu, asked Charisma Rangipunga's son, Taiki Pou to put a raki and actions to it which he skilfully did. Hana and her children then learnt Narimoto's haka to perform to Yamada.

"He's the first Japanese author of a haka Māori that we know of," Tā Tipene says.

The words of Narimoto's haka were handwritten on parchment scrolls in te reo, Kanji script and English as a koha to Yamada and family on the recent trip.

Shinji-san has shown himself to be the successor of the Yamada group, Tā Tipene says. It was during this latest trip where three generations of each whānau met.

Shinji-san has played an important role in maintaining the relationship between his father and Tā Tipene and remains connected with this island where he hopes to spend more time, Tā Tipene says. It would be one more way in which the two whānau and iwi can continue their lasting bond, in the whenua Yamada senior fell in love with on that first visit in 1989. 





A New Generation of Leadership

Throughout the latter half of 2023, candidates for the new Kaiwhakahaere of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu travelled throughout the motu, introducing themselves to whānau and seeking support for their nomination.

In November, Te Rūnanga representatives came together to vote on behalf of each of the 18 Papatipu Rūnaka; Moeraki Representative, Justin Tipa, was the successful candidate. Kaituhi **ANNA BRANKIN** sits down with Justin to discuss what motivated him to put his name forward for the role, and the aspirations he has for Kāi Tahu whānui.

WHEN OUR FORMER KAIWHAKAHAERE, LISA TUMAHAI, ANNOUNCED THAT she would not be standing for re-election, Justin Tipa was only two years into his first term at the table as the representative for Te Rūnanga o Moeraki. He said early on he had no intention of putting his hand up to take her place.

"I didn't come to the table seeking the role, and it certainly wasn't part of my thinking at that early stage," he says. "However, when Lisa made it known that she was standing down there were a few people who approached me to consider standing, and a couple of taua at home who made it very clear they expected me to contest the role."

The support of his colleagues and Papatipu Rūnaka gave Justin the confidence to accept the nomination. "I realised that while I might be new to the table, I'm not new to the tribe. I've been heavily involved with the iwi for nearly two decades, including five years as a staff member at Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, and five years as chair of Te Rūnanga o Moeraki," he explains.



However, before committing to the decision Justin knew that he needed to get the ‘okay’ from the people who matter most – his partner Ana and their tamariki Tyson (27), Kauri (19), Hoani (18) and Joseph (10). “I’m very lucky to have Ana, who is my rock, and the boys who keep things locked down for me at home, and who are themselves so heavily involved with the marae and all that goes on at the pā,” he says. “Their first response was to challenge my thinking and make sure that I was doing it for the right reasons. Once they were confident in that, they were absolutely supportive.”

Once the decision had been made, Justin hit the road to introduce himself to whānau Kāi Tahu as a candidate. “I loved the campaign,” he said. “I’m really proud that we were able to conduct it largely upon our marae, where whānau could ask us questions and hear directly from those contesting the roles. It was intense at times but it was something I thoroughly enjoyed.”

This focus on meaningful engagement and upholding tikanga underpins Justin’s leadership style, and is something he hopes to embed at the table during his time as Kaiwhakahaere. “As we grow as an iwi and reclaim our culture, our language, our identity, each generation becomes more empowered and it becomes an expected way of doing things,” he says. “Incorporating that whakapapa and tikanga worldview as a fundamental part of our decision making can only enhance how we do things.”

Furthermore, a focus on whakapapa and tikaka (as Justin says, “we’re all relations at the end of the day”) will help the 18 members

“AS WE GROW AS AN IWI AND RECLAIM OUR CULTURE, OUR LANGUAGE, OUR IDENTITY, EACH GENERATION BECOMES MORE EMPOWERED AND IT BECOMES AN EXPECTED WAY OF DOING THINGS. INCORPORATING THAT WHAKAPAPA AND TIKAKA WORLDVIEW AS A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF OUR DECISION MAKING CAN ONLY ENHANCE HOW WE DO THINGS.”

JUSTIN TIPA Kaiwhakahaere, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu work cohesively and productively to effect positive change for whānau.

Unity at the table will be crucial over the next few months as Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu continues to progress important tribal kaupapa and looks to build a constructive relationship with the new government. “We want to continue advancing our statement of claim in relation to fresh water, and progressing a number of important internal work programmes like Mō Kā Uri and Au ahi Au ora.”

On the subject of the new government, Justin says, “We will work with whoever holds the office of the day, regardless of their political affiliations. My first approach will always be positive relationships and mutually beneficial outcomes, but as an iwi, there are some non-negotiables.”

He is very aware that there is a lot of work that comes with the Kaiwhakahaere role, but he thinks he is up for it. “I take this role very seriously and I’ve always been prepared to work hard to get outcomes

for our whānau,” he explains. “What I’m not motivated by is the public profile that comes with the role, and that has taken me a while to get my head around. It’s a funny one, I’ve got no problem getting up on the marae and speaking, but I feel more reluctant when I think about other public engagements.”

Justin says a huge part of his ability to overcome that reluctance is the fact that he and his whānau moved home to Moeraki a few years ago. The connection to his tūrakawaewae grounds him and gives him the confidence to handle the more challenging aspects of his new role. “I can have a big week away for mahi, and then I come home and go for a walk around the pā or head down to the beach and that’s enough to recharge me,” he says. “Whether it’s spending time with whānau or getting out in the water and getting a feed of kaimoana, it’s always good to be home.”

And if he’s not at home in Moeraki, you can probably find Justin in his “happy place” in the Waitaki Valley. “I grew up there, and a big part of my heart will always be there,” he says. He describes himself as immensely privileged to grow up with both his parents and grandparents close at hand. They originally owned the Four Square in Ōmārama and later the hotel in Te Kohurau. “Our family was always in the hospitality industry where manaaki is really fundamental to everything,” he says. “Spending so much time with my grandparents also gave me that deeper understanding and connection. My grandfather was one of 17 and I spent a lot of time with aunts and uncles from his generation, and I think that gave me really good grounding.”

Growing up in a rural setting gave Justin a strong connection to his whenua and awa that has remained with him. “I just lived on the river; weekends, before and after school I was out there fishing or eeling,” he says. “Otherwise we had to make our own fun on the land, hanging out on farms, hunting and fishing. As a youngster I probably lamented the isolation but now I realise how rich my childhood was.”

Justin’s passion for te reo Māori also began in childhood, when his mum used to drive him up to Twizel to attend kōhaka reo. As a teenager, he then had the opportunity to spend time living with a family of native speakers. “I spent just over a year travelling around the country with them, immersed in Māoritaka,” he says. “It instilled in me a deep passion for haka, for reo, for tikanga and for pūrākau.” These experiences solidified Justin’s ambition to raise his own children surrounded by kaupapa Māori. “Fortunately Ana was on board and actually gave up her career to go to kōhanga with the children. Having my partner jump on the waka and dedicate her life to te reo, tikaka and to Kāi Tahu has been a huge privilege.”

Part of Justin’s motivation to go for the Kaiwhakahaere role has come from his experience with Te Rūnanga o Moeraki. “We need that strong centre to deliver outcomes and returns for our whānau, and the next stage of our growth and development needs to be focused on our regions,” he says. “Our taurahere whānau living outside of the takiwā are a huge part of our iwi, and I believe a good way to support them is by ensuring our marae and our rūnaka are thriving, so we’re in a better position to receive our whānau when they reach out to reconnect.”

“I AM REALLY PROUD AND HAPPY THAT MY TAMARIKI HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK ON THEIR MARAE, ON THEIR PĀ, IMMERSSED IN THEIR LANGUAGE AND CULTURE.”



Top: David Higgins and Justin Tipa with Moeraki whānau for the dawn blessing of the reopening of Kātiki Point.

Above: Breakfast in the wharekai at Moeraki after the dawn blessing of the Kātiki Point restoration.

Left: Waitangi Day 2024 at Te Rau Aroha Marae.

PHOTOGRAPHS: RICHIE MILLS.

His aspiration is to see future generations of Kāi Tahu growing up connected to their whakapapa and their culture, who know where they come from and, like his children, have the opportunity to live and work on their whenua. “I am really proud and happy that my tamariki have the opportunity to work on their marae, on their pā, immersed in their language and culture,” Justin says. “That’s something I could have only dreamed of. While the world is their oyster and there are distant horizons to pursue, the fact that there are opportunities at home means an awful lot to me.”

Big Shoes to Fill

Here at TE KARAKA, we pride ourselves on sharing the stories of unsung heroes: the people who advocate for our whānau, who uphold the tikaka of our marae, and who pass on mātauraka to future generations. Our aspiration is to celebrate their efforts while they're still with us, but sometimes it doesn't work out that way.

Last year, we were devastated to hear of the sudden death of Bubba Thompson, stalwart of Te Rau Aroha Marae. In the wake of his passing, kaituhi **ANNA BRANKIN** sat down with his whānau and friends to put together the story of this incredible man.

KNOWN TO ALL AS BUBBA, WILLIAM THOMPSON (NGĀI TAHU,

Ngāti Kahungunu) was the son of Valmai Peka (née Sherborne) and Henare Thompson. He was born in Invercargill, although he spent much of his early life at Arowhenua with his mother's whānau.

Although many would go on to describe Bubba as a lifelong learner, he was not a particularly dedicated student and in fact was known to say that he only went to school to eat his lunch.

When he left school he had a handful of jobs, including carpet manufacturing and the freezing works, before he joined the Southland Acclimatisation Society (predecessor to the Department of Conservation) in Fiordland National Park. He was living and working out of Te Ānau when he met his wife, Gail, in the late 1970s.

"I think I was only 18 at the time, and Bubba had come down to Invercargill for the weekend," Gail recalls. "He was friends with a girlfriend of mine and when I met him I said to her, 'I don't like that bloke.' He must have won me over because we were together for forty-something years in the end."

The pair didn't officially tie the knot until 1990, and when they did it was for a very specific reason – access to Gail's family's muttonbird island. After her father died, Gail and her brother were struggling to carry out the annual trips and Bubba offered to help. "I went to see Peter Topi and told him the plan, and he said 'If you're not married, he won't get on the rocks,'" Gail remembers. "Never mind that we had been together for twelve years and had two kids, he wouldn't be allowed to set foot on the island unless we were married."

They went down to the State Insurance building in Invercargill and were married the next week so Bubba could join the whānau on that year's birding trip. "And it was the worst year ever, so of course he

joked he wanted a divorce on the grounds that he married me for these muttonbird islands that had no muttonbirds," Gail laughs.

In saying that, Bubba never missed a season from then on, travelling down to the island for 30 years until the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the early years of their relationship, Bubba was always drawn to work that took him away for large chunks of time. "When I met him he would go into the bush for up to six weeks at a time up in Fiordland. After that he started working as a crewman on fishing boats and he'd be out at sea for a week or ten days," Gail says. "He liked to be off out adventuring for long periods – he wanted to be out there doing it, not sitting around in an office."

Given that he would go on to become an integral part of the daily running of Te Rau Aroha Marae, it's strange to reflect that there was a time when he wasn't around and Gail would attend rūnaka meetings and events on her own.

"It's not that he wasn't interested. You can't grow up in Arowhenua without having a connection to te ao Māori, but it was laying underneath for all those years," says Gail. "He just didn't have the arena to bring it out until he became involved in our marae project in 1999."

This was when renowned Māori artist Cliff Whiting moved to Awarua to decorate the wharekai and design and carve the new whareniui, Tahu Pōtiki. The opportunity appealed to Bubba's creative side, and he joined the group of whānau volunteers who spent their days trying their hand at painting, tukutuku or carving, and researching the stories that would underpin the design of the new whareniui. It was during this

Right: Waitangi Day 2012 at Te Rau Aroha Marae.



Left to right: Dean Whaanga, Louise Fowler, Bubba Thompson and Gail Thompson.



three-year period that Bubba's friendship with Dean Whaanga first began to flourish.

"I had always known Bubba as Gail's husband, of course, but it wasn't until we got involved with the building of the meeting house that we became a lot closer," Dean says. "It was a really exciting time for us, and it definitely created a special bond between us. We thought of it as a university education, the opportunity to learn from someone of Cliff's stature for three years."

At the time Bubba was oystering, which meant he could work in the mornings and head up to the marae most afternoons. It was a collaborative environment and his skills and experience were valued by the group. Dean describes Bubba as a problem solver, who brought with him a deep knowledge of the environment and an eagerness to learn.

"He was a good thinker, a solution finder. I learned to pay attention to Bubba when he said 'let's do it this way,' because it generally was the easier way of doing things," Dean says. "And his work with DOC and muttonbirding with Gail meant he had a lot of knowledge of the places that were important to us, which helped in planning the stories we wanted to tell."

Bubba showed an enthusiasm and natural aptitude for carving, and went on to complete several elements of the whareniui. "One of the main things he did was the carving of the pare and the amo, so his legacy

"ONE OF THE MAIN THINGS HE DID WAS THE CARVING OF THE PARE AND THE AMO, SO HIS LEGACY REALLY LIVES ON IN THOSE PHYSICAL ELEMENTS. BUT IT'S MORE THAN THAT, BECAUSE HE WAS THE FACE OF OUR MARAE FOR MANY YEARS. THEY SAY THAT THE WORDS YOU SPEAK ON THE PAEPAE CREATE MANA AND MAURI. THEY GO INTO THE HOUSE AND MAKE IT STRONGER. THAT IS HIS LEGACY."

DEAN WHAANGA

really lives on in those physical elements," says Dean. "But it's more than that, because he was the face of our marae for many years. They say that the words you speak on the paepae create mana and mauri. They go into the house and make it stronger. That is his legacy."

The story goes that Bubba delivered his first whaikōrero when the late Hana Morgan, then rūnaka chair, rang him and said he had 20 minutes to get down to the marae and greet a group of manuhiri. Although he was reluctant, he saw it as his responsibility and he took it seriously, going on to deliver whaikōrero at almost every pōwhiri held at Te Rau Aroha for the next 25 years.

“HE COULD CAUSE TROUBLE IN THE CONSERVATION ARENA, THAT’S FOR SURE. ONCE HE SET HIS MIND ON SOMETHING, HE WAS LIKE A DOG WITH A BONE. HE KNEW THE AREAS THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT INTIMATELY. HE’D WALKED THROUGH PRETTY MUCH THE ENTIRETY OF FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARK; HE’D BEEN ALL OVER WHENUA HOU DURING THE ORIGINAL ERADICATION OF WEKA OVER THERE.”

GAIL THOMPSON



“It was always a pleasure to be handling a bunch of visitors with Bubba,” says Tā Tipene O’Regan, the Upoko of Awarua Rūnaka. “Like many of us, he wasn’t a native speaker. But he applied himself wonderfully, vigorously to the task of growing his capacity. He sought knowledge, studied hard, prepared himself carefully and became known for his generosity with that same knowledge.”

This passion for learning and sharing knowledge became the theme for the rest of Bubba’s life, and he dedicated himself to finding new ways to ensure that Kāi Tahu stories were preserved for future generations.

As well as greeting groups of manuhiri during pōwhiri at Te Rau Aroha, he would spend time with them on their visit, regaling them with the stories represented in artworks throughout the marae complex. He also penned a series of children’s books retelling local pūrākau, giving tamariki a way to learn and understand the history of Murihiku.

As Dean reflects, Bubba must have been good at what he did because the same groups kept coming back, year after year.

“He would have greeted thousands and thousands of people over the years, usually handling three or four pōwhiri a week. And the same groups kept coming back,” Dean says. “School students of all ages, university groups, businesses and government departments – Bubba engaged with them all and he adapted his style to fit the audience.”

“Bubba did a whole lot of other things beyond caring for the mana of the marae,” says Tā Tipene. “For many years he led a work programme lifting young eels out of the Meridian dams, so they could get downstream to spawn. To say nothing of his contribution as an artist, with a number of his works placed around different parts of Fiordland.”

Gail says that his interest in conservation never waned, and his experience made him a valuable member of the many committees and boards he sat on over the years.

“He could cause trouble in the conservation arena, that’s for sure. Once he set his mind on something, he was like a dog with a bone,” she says. “He knew the areas they were talking about intimately. He’d walked through pretty much the entirety of Fiordland National Park; he’d been all over Whenua Hou during the original eradication of weka over there.”

For many years, Bubba’s work at the marae was voluntary, and even when he took on the role of Kaitoko Mātauraka, he still went above and

beyond. “It wasn’t your standard employment contract. He was paid for 20 hours a week but it wasn’t uncommon for him to get home at half past nine at night when groups were staying at the marae,” says Gail. “I always remember that he just never seemed to get tired of it, even though it must have been the same conversations over and over again.”


When Bubba died suddenly on June 1 2023 due to a medical complication, his loss reverberated throughout the iwi. However, it is at home with his whānau that his absence is felt most strongly.

“There’s that old saying that every good man is backed up by a good woman, or the other way around,” says Dean. “And that was the case for Gail and Bubba. They were always at the marae together and their family’s contribution has been huge.”

For someone who gave so much of himself to the iwi, Gail says that Bubba always managed to keep something back for his whānau. “He used to say that people didn’t really know him, that there was his public persona and then the private one that only his family knew,” she says. “He was stubborn, and he liked a good argument but he was loyal and kind. We knew how to banter and to wind each other up but he was my biggest supporter. He always, always had my back.”

Bubba was incredibly proud of his three children, Leah, Skye and Saird, and everyone who knew him in later years knows the great joy he took in his mokopuna. “He was always the good guy when our kids were young, and I was the bad guy,” Gail recalls. “When he was away fishing I’d threaten the kids with the usual ‘wait till your father gets home’ but they knew it was an empty threat. He was a good dad and an amazing pōua. He just absolutely loved our grandkids.”

Although Bubba’s passing has left a huge hole in the fabric of Te Rau Aroha Marae, the whānau are choosing to focus on their gratitude to have had Bubba around for as long as they did.

“The past twenty-five years were the gift he gave us. A lot of marae struggle to maintain that ahi kā presence, so having someone like Bubba was very special,” Dean says. “People always talk about filling someone’s shoes after they’re gone, but the truth is no-one ever will. You can’t fill the shoes of a person like Bubba.” 



Above: Dean Whaanga (left) and Bubba Thompson holding up an albatross that is about to be plucked.

Top: Bubba with tamariki at Te Rau Aroha Marae.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUPPLIED.

“Help from above”

Air Ambulance services in Te Waipounamu

Nā DR MICHAEL STEVENS

IN LATE APRIL 2011 MY POUA, TINY

Metzger, had a “bit of a turn” on our tītī island. He’d been out in the sun most of the day swinging an axe and a slasher as if he was 28 years old ... but he was 78.

And he hadn’t kept properly hydrated. Later that night, once he’d finished plucking tītī, he collapsed. His pulse was weak, very weak. He genuinely thought his number was up. “If they come for my passport,” he told my mother, “you need to get a feed of tītī to Rānui Ngārimu, and another feed to ...”

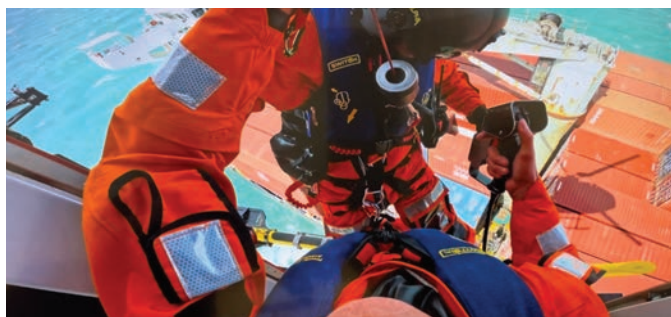
Fortunately, the people who came for Tiny that night were not our tīpuna, but paramedics in a helicopter. He was taken to Southland Hospital and stabilised. And although his ticker has given him quite a bit of gyp since, he went on to teach my three children to weave kete and prepare rimurapa for our pōhā-tītī, catch and gut pātiki, and much else besides.

As I write this article, we have just celebrated his 91st birthday. We owe that celebration to the air ambulance service operating across Te Waipounamu. Other local whānau Kāi Tahu have similar stories. Five years earlier, for example, another of those helicopters retrieved survivors from the ill-fated *Kotuku* who made landfall on our tītī island. That helicopter then joined others in aerial searches, in very challenging Foveaux Strait conditions, for missing whānau members.

These two examples demonstrate the benefit that mutton-birders specifically derive from air ambulances, but Kāi Tahu reliance on this service goes much further than that. These amazing machines and the highly-skilled people who operate them provide a lifeline for sick and injured fishers, hunters, and those living in isolated settings such as Rakiura and Arahura: professions, past-times, and places at the heart of flaxroots Kāi Tahu life.

Despite that, what do any of us really know about the air ambulance service working across Te Waipounamu?

For nearly three decades, HeliOtago (based in Dunedin), GCH Aviation (Christchurch), and Southern Lakes Helicopters (Te Anau) each provided air ambulance services in their respective areas. However, in October 2016, faced with the threat of an international competitor, existing



providers banded together and established a joint venture company: Helicopter Emergency Medical Services New Zealand Ltd. HEMS for short. This initiative worked, and HEMS now holds the South Island-wide contract for helicopter air ambulance services with Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand) and the Accident Compensation Corporation.

This contract is arranged and monitored by a commissioning

agent within Te Whatu Ora, the Ambulance Team (formerly known as the National Ambulance Sector Office or NASO).

HEMS then subcontracts its operational responsibilities to HeliOtago, GCH Aviation, and Southern Lakes Helicopters. By such means, the organisation has bases in Dunedin, Queenstown, Te Anau, Christchurch, Greymouth and Nelson. This geographical sweep is crucial because HEMS is responsible for the whole of the Te Waipounamu, Rakiura, the Sub-Antarctic Islands, and the associated marine and coastal regions. In other words, the entire Kāi Tahu takiwā as well as Te Taihu.

Despite these subcontracting arrangements, it’s not been a case of simply business as usual. The HEMS model is driving even greater consistency and enhancement of service delivery. This includes developing a network of operational Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) routes for helicopters. These are “highways in the sky,” as HeliOtago’s CEO, Graeme Gale, puts it. “IFR is for when you’ve got a dirty, horrible night and you can’t see much of anything. You rely solely on your instruments.”

That one investment has enabled HeliOtago to reach somewhere between 15 and 20 per cent more patients a year. That said, IFR’s potential varies across the HEMS catchment. On Te Tai Poutini, for example, the Southern Alps imposes very real limits on its usage. Its rollout there will nonetheless prove valuable in some contexts.

However, it will be used in concert with fixed-wing air ambulances, which GCH Aviation’s CEO Daniel Currie and his whānau have been providing to the region for decades.

HEMS has also coordinated a growing network of community-funded heli-pads, established senior clinician-supported paramedic helplines, simulation-based learning tools for difficult clinical procedures, and advanced remote satellite-based communication



systems. The company has also acquired sophisticated diagnostic equipment for its aircraft. This culture of excellence and ongoing improvement gives real meaning to HEMS' four foundational principles: Trust, Respect, Integrity, and Compassion. It also responds to the ambulance team's expectation that providers like HEMS help "improve services, and find system efficiencies."

Another of the strategic priorities is that emergency ambulance services contribute to better and more equitable health outcomes for Māori.

For all of those reasons, HEMS has established a People, Communities and Culture Adviser. I was delighted to accept that position in May. This role provides the HEMS board with governance advice to:

- improve equity of access to health services for remote, rural, and disadvantaged South Island communities
- create culturally-safe HEMS workplace; and
- develop Māori and Pasifika career opportunities within the South Island's air ambulance service.

In other words, this role can help advance some Kāi Tahu health targets and health workforce aspirations. Even so, the role has a much wider brief. For example, one of NZ's fastest growing Pasifika populations is centred in Oamaru which, in per capita terms, is now more Polynesian than Auckland. Fold in tourism hotspots such as Queenstown and Kaikōura, and Te Waipounamu is more culturally diverse than many people realise.



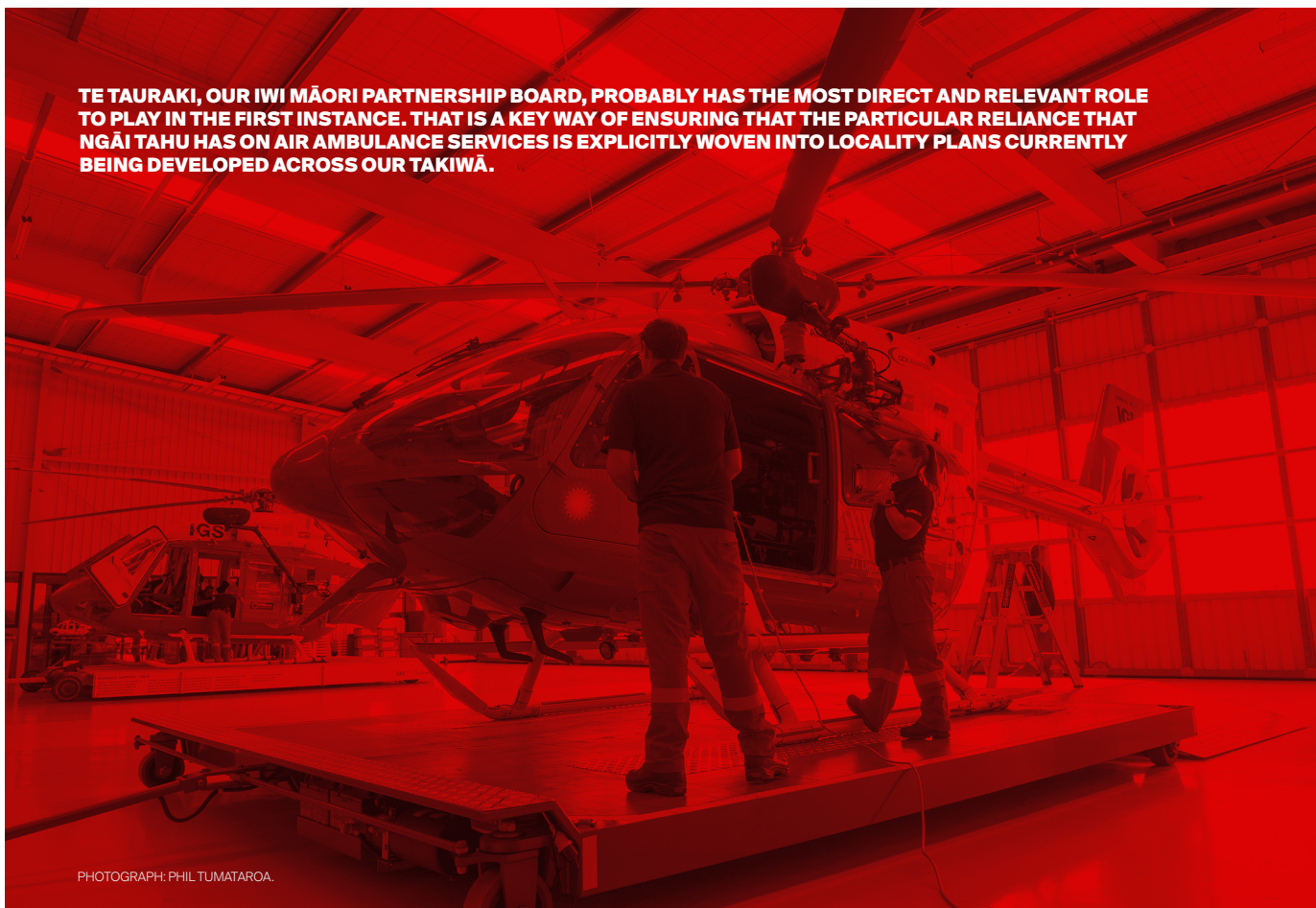
Above: Nelson based Paramedic, Kodee Pori-Makea-Simpson.

Top: Heli Otago Rescue Helicopter in flight.

Left: Paramedic Steve Pudney during a rescue mission at sea.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUPPLIED.

TE TAURAKI, OUR IWI MĀORI PARTNERSHIP BOARD, PROBABLY HAS THE MOST DIRECT AND RELEVANT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE FIRST INSTANCE. THAT IS A KEY WAY OF ENSURING THAT THE PARTICULAR RELIANCE THAT NGĀI TAHU HAS ON AIR AMBULANCE SERVICES IS EXPLICITLY WOVEN INTO LOCALITY PLANS CURRENTLY BEING DEVELOPED ACROSS OUR TAKIWĀ.



PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL TUMATAROA.

However, the supreme challenge for HEMS relates to land size and population base. The South Island is 30 per cent larger than the North Island, but has a much smaller population: roughly 1.1 million versus 3.6 million. Simply put, our air ambulance service has, on average, much longer mission times, and therefore places higher demands on paramedics for patients in need of acute care. Long story short, HEMS has to be particularly smart with where and how it invests its limited resources.

As a result of my work with the HEMS board, the company recently developed "Project Equity". This has one overarching goal: to enhance patient clinical outcomes through improved service delivery. Through this initiative, we are seeking to understand whether or not current services contain barriers preventing optimum medical outcomes. If such barriers exist, we will implement and monitor solutions aimed at removing them. While this focus is built around individual patient care, individuals belong to whānau, and whānau to communities; Project Equity represents HEMS deepening its commitment to society.

As well as the demographic context to all of this, which includes the challenges of an ageing population, HEMS is also grappling with big health sector reforms, opportunities and constraints of emerging technology, and an increasingly difficult climate. Extreme weather events, for example, could drive higher demand for HEMS services but also make it harder to operate aircraft in.

How might Kāi Tahu communities, Papatipu Rūnaka, and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu position themselves to enrich and protect

vital air ambulance services? Part of the answer, I hope, is by working with HEMS to develop pipelines for Kāi Tahu paramedics and pilots.

I think there is also potential for Te Tāhū o te Whāriki and Te Kounga Paparangi, the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Climate Change Strategy and accompanying objectives, to consider the strategic importance of air ambulances.

However, Te Tauraki, our Iwi Māori Partnership Board (IMPB), probably has the most direct and relevant role to play in the first instance. That is a key way of ensuring that the particular reliance that Kāi Tahu has on air ambulance services is explicitly woven into locality plans currently being developed across our takiwā.

As HEMS looks to expand its Māori workforce, it's worth highlighting some of the talented crew already on its books. This includes pilot Clayton Girven (nō Ngāti Maniapoto) at HeliOtago, and paramedics Steve Pudney (nō Ngāi Tahu) and Libbie Faith (nō Ngāi Tahu rāua ko Ngāti Kahungunu) at GCH Aviation's Christchurch base, and Kodee Pori-Makea-Simpson (nō Te Ātiawa, rātou ko Ngāti Mutunga ko Waikato-Tainui) at its Nelson base.

Clayton Girven hails from Te Kuiti, but was raised in Warkworth and across Northland. After schooling at Whāngarei Boys' High and Palmerston North Boys' High, he joined the army in 1994, aged 18. As an armoured vehicle crewman, Clayton served for six years, including tours in Bosnia and East Timor. And it was his time in East Timor, witnessing Black Hawk helicopters in action, that instilled a hunger



**Above: Steve Pudney (right) with Critical Care Paramedic, Justin Adshade.
Top: Rescue mission at sea.
Top left: Ōtautahi based paramedic Libby Faith and colleague inspect their machine at the GCH Aviation base.**

to become a pilot. Clayton left the army and completed his flight training with Massey University, which led to charter and commercial work. He flew helicopters from tuna boats across the South Pacific and with a specialist power line company in Australia.

Returning to NZ, Clayton worked in air ambulances across the North Island, but in 2011 joined HeliOtago, attracted by the company's good reputation and the challenging environment.

"My wife and I both absolutely love this part of New Zealand," he says. "Most of all though, I really enjoy my job. Working alongside talented and compassionate people and providing medical assistance to those in need is very satisfying."

Steve Pudney's whakapapa comes out of Arowhenua and he was raised in a big outdoorsy whānau at nearby Fairlie. Deeply passionate about horses, he rode them all around Te Waipounamu, Australia and the United States. After he returned home for good, Steve worked as a carpenter, but a chance encounter with an old friend, and encouragement from his mother, led to a change in direction and training as a paramedic: first as a volunteer, then, from 2012, in a full-time paid role with Hato Hone St John.

Along the way, he's completed several qualifications including a Diploma in Ambulance Practices, Bachelor of Health Science (Paramedic), and a Postgraduate Certificate in Critical Care Paramedicine. In November, 2017 Steve qualified as an Intensive Care Paramedic (ICP). This is all no mean feat for someone who describes himself as practical more so than academic.

Earlier this year Steve sought to once again stretch himself and grow his skillset by joining HEMS and working in the air ambulance sector.

“WHEN THINGS GO WRONG IN RURAL SETTINGS, THEY CAN GO REALLY WRONG. WHETHER A MEDICAL EVENT ON THE FARM OR AN ACCIDENT IN THE BUSH, CITY HOSPITALS CAN FEEL EVEN FURTHER AWAY THAN USUAL.”

STEVE PUDNEY

He and his wife and daughters live inland at Sheffield. This country backdrop helps to explain Steve's passion for HEMS, as he says: “When things go wrong in rural settings, they can go really wrong. Whether a medical event on the farm or an accident in the bush, city hospitals can feel even further away than usual.”

Air ambulances provide the crucial link. “We are literally a lifesaving service. I feel incredibly privileged to serve our community through HEMS and GCH Aviation which are such professional organisations.”

Libbie Faith grew up in North Otago and South Canterbury as with previous generations of her whānau. Her Tāua was raised at Moeraki; her parents in Temuka. After a childhood in the Waitaki Valley and primary school at Te Kohurau, Libbie headed to Craighead Diocesan School in Timaru. She has spent most of the past two decades living and working in Taupō: as a bungy-jump master and, with consequent working at height qualifications, in the oil and gas industry doing the “FIFO” thing, mainly to Perth.

But as her daughter hit her “tween” years, Libbie was less keen on the travel involved. She had also been volunteering with Hato Hone St John and trained as an Emergency Medical Technician. This led to employment with the organisation lasting nearly four years.

Libbie then joined the Taupō Rescue Helicopter, where she completed just over four years. In September this year Libbie moved back home to Te Waipounamu, picking up a flight medic role with HEMS at GCH.

“I am really loving being back home,” says Libbie. “Taupō is amazing but home is home.”

She also highlights the commitment that HEMS and GCH have to clinical training as one of things having made her move south so worthwhile. Looking ahead, Libbie is keen to see how HEMS can further help meet health needs in remote and rural communities, especially whānau Māori. As she says, “This an area where improving Māori outcomes is good for the whole country.”

Kodee Pori-Makea-Simpson is a proverbial “Mozzie”: born and raised in Sydney to a Māori mum and an Australian dad. Completing her degree in paramedicine, Kodee subsequently practised in rural Victoria, including Phillip Island south-east of Melbourne. With a strong ethic of duty and deep love of problem-solving, paramedicine was a natural career choice.


In 2018, her mother shifted home to Waitara and Kodee was visiting every two or three months. However, COVID-19 put paid to those trips. Her mother and wider whānau felt very far away, so Kodee made a permanent shift to New Zealand 18 months ago.

After an initial stint with Hato Hone St John in Whanganui, she secured a position at GCH's Nelson base. She loves the Te Taihū



region. As Kodee says, “The natural environment here is incredible.” However, she finds Nelson is also surprisingly isolated: “It’s sort of like a city in the middle of nowhere. And you really see that from the air.”

That observation helps to explain the critical role of paramedics and air ambulances in northern Te Waipounamu. “We run lots of flights between health centres,” she says. As in Australia, Kodee takes a huge sense of pride in her work with HEMS. “I really value the opportunity to work with and advocate for people, especially those in rural settings, as they navigate complex health system processes, usually at very vulnerable times.”

I titled this article “Help from Above” in recognition of the lifesaving role played by air ambulance services across Te Waipounamu, its surrounding islands and waters. The title is clearly a pun. This is not a “hand-of-God” service. No deity is reaching down from the heavens bringing material aid to acutely unwell patients; it’s HEMS, a service developed by South Island people for SI communities. It is, therefore, “Help from Within.” I hope we have it within us all to ensure this service continues. 

Above: GCH helicopter during a rescue mission deep in a mountainous valley in Te Waipounamu.

MŌ KĀ URI: NGĀI TAHU 2050

Mō Kā Uri - Ngāi Tahu 2050 is about creating the vision we want for the future of our iwi. It's an opportunity for all whānau to share their whakaaro and contribute to our inter-generational legacy.

"I feel like I'm always proud to be Ngāi Tahu, it's my life. I've been raised on the pā with all the aunties and uncles. Everyday I'm proud to be Ngāi Tahu and I'm proud to say it no matter where I am."



I used to ...

Nā **MAXINE JACOBS**, he uri o Ngāi Tahu



I USED TO THINK BEING MĀORI WAS LIKE BEING CHRISTIAN.

I didn't know a hell of a lot about the Bible or God – I still don't – but in my mind being Christian meant following all the rules. Going to church every Sunday, reading the Bible, knowing the ins and outs of everything that I should or shouldn't do to make sure I was doing "God's work".

Only by being the perfect Christian would I truly be a Christian. To know everything, believe fully, and stand up for all ideology – even if I found it to be against my own views. I thought I would only be able to call myself a Christian if I was fully versed and confident; anything less would be a costume.

It's sad to think about that now. All the time I wasted thinking I would never stack up to this picture of what I had to be to be authentic. It was all in my head. No-one told me what to do or not to do. I created a set of rules no-one had written down, and told myself I would never be that because I didn't fit x, y, or z.

Speak te reo, grow up on the pā, know haka, know waiata, know tikaka – I grew up knowing none of that. It's actually unreal to think that I was literally eight kilometres away from Tuahiwi Marae and I was that disconnected.

It took me a long time to realise I was the person holding myself back. And back from what? The people who have been waiting for me to come and be a part of my community for years? The fear inside me that I wouldn't stack up to expectations has been one I've carried around for a lifetime.



Above left: top L-R: Uncle Clifford Jacobs, Todd Jacobs, Jenny Hart (Maxine's parents); bottom L-R: Maxine Jacobs (5 years), pōua Henry Jacobs, brother Isaac Jacobs (8 years). Left: Hukatai of Te Tohu Paetahi 2023 in front of Maungatapu Marae. PHOTOGRAPHS: SUPPLIED

Opposite: Waitangi Day weekend celebrations. Stuff Pou Tiaki journalist Maxine Jacobs outside Te Tii Marae.

PHOTOGRAPH: ABIGAIL DOUGHERTY/STUFF



I USED TO SAY I WAS MĀORI IN MY LEFT HAND.

I'd wave it when people asked, "What percent are you?" The skin on it is pink, just like the rest of me – it goes red if I stay out in the sun too long. This has been my biggest barrier. How could I be Māori if this is what I look like? It's that stereotypical mindset again – this is what a Māori is, if you don't fit that, you can't claim it.

I'm not too many shades away from my father, and all my cousins have the same skin. Well, the boys seem to tan better than the girls, but we could all pass as Pākehā if we wanted to.

I think this was a particularly important decision for me to make; do I pass as Pākehā only, or stand beside my whānau. Out at Ngāi Tūāhuriri I don't know too many people yet, just the ones that live down Church Bush Road. For generations they've lived there, with more generations popping up as the years go on.

The question really came down to who am I going to be? Will I walk away from what my pōua helped to build up and preserve for our hapū because the pigment in my skin doesn't speak for itself, or will I carve out a path to walk down that will empower me to feel comfortable in the skin that I was given?

I chose the latter. I spent this past year at a full immersion te reo course at Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato, walking down the first steps of that path. Every person in that class was a mix of different shades, different experiences, and different whakapapa, but they were just as Māori as the person sitting beside them, and just as Māori as me.

"WHAT PERCENT ARE YOU?"

When I look at my hands now, they still look pink, but they don't persuade me that I'm not enough. The idea of percentage doesn't register with me anymore. People still ask me that question, "How Māori are you?" – with the inflection on the ā that I know we're all too familiar with. Now I just give them my whakapapa. This is how I'm Māori; it's an identity and a belonging, not a blood quantum.

THE IDEA OF PERCENTAGE DOESN'T REGISTER WITH ME ANYMORE. PEOPLE STILL ASK ME THAT QUESTION, "HOW MĀORI ARE YOU?" – WITH THE INFLECTION ON THE Ā THAT I KNOW WE'RE ALL TOO FAMILIAR WITH. NOW I JUST GIVE THEM MY WHAKAPAPA.

I USED TO BE AFRAID TO SAY I WAS MĀORI.

In my mind that would invite a whole raft of questions I wasn't ready to answer. "What's your marae called? Which hapū are you from? What's your whakapapa? Can you speak Māori?"

I wasn't ready to answer those questions because I didn't have the answers. To some of those questions, I still don't. I was scared that if I didn't have the knowledge, but shared my heritage, I would be questioned. And to be fair, I have been questioned over the years by Māori and non-Māori.

Because I can blend into the colonial side of Aotearoa, sometimes it was easier to not mention it at all. I was worried I'd be seen as someone taking advantage of the turning tide, claiming my whakapapa when it became popular. A plastic Māori, if you will.

It wasn't until a wise wahine looked me in the face and told me to grow up that I realised I was the problem. That was in 2018, and in the past five years I've taken steps – even if they were small to start with – to actually work towards breaking down my fears by learning what I can, where I can.

I've written stories and joined campaigns about te ao Māori as a reporter for *Stuff*, became its first Pou Tiaki reporter, visited Waitangi, started my learning journey of te reo Māori, gained a diploma in the language from the University of Waikato, and moved back home to Ōtautahi after spending six years away looking for something to bring home with me so I can feel like I deserve to return.

I can't help but think of the quote, "knowledge is power". It was probably meant in some kind of political schema type of way, but knowledge has given me the sword and the shield I've needed to keep walking forward.

But even now that I can rattle off the answers confidently, some people still find my whakapapa hard to believe. But it's not my job to convince anyone who I am or where I'm from, as long as I know. That can't be taken away from me, or anyone else.

KNOWLEDGE HAS GIVEN ME THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD I'VE NEEDED TO KEEP WALKING FORWARD.





NOW I BELIEVE I'M ENOUGH.


It's been a long road for me to arrive at this belief. Looking back now, everyone who had already opened that door to their taha Māori didn't view me as less. They were watching me through the window, waiting for me to open that door on my own terms.

Now that I've stepped through, I'm starting to see how much pain I was in on the other side. How much of myself I was holding back. In the class when we would do speeches every second week in te reo Māori, all that pain would come flowing out. To my embarrassment, largely through my eyes while I stood in front of 50 people, but they all knew what I was feeling.

I didn't realise how being afraid to step into this world that's been waiting for all of us was keeping me from being free. It's a strange feeling, like I'm looking at the same world, but it's lit differently. It's more vibrant and deeper than I understood, and there's still so much more to learn.

I also didn't understand that the values I had been raised in were Māori, but weren't identified as such. The values of helping each other out just because we can, checking on our loved ones, being respectful to our elders and the environment. This is all manaakitaka, but I didn't have the language back then.

What's surprised me is how many people I've met along the way who feel the same as me. We're held back by different things, have different fears, and struggle to know where to start. I thought there would be a perfect moment to start, a "right time", but there isn't. The time to start is when we've finally had enough, and begin walking through the door.

I don't have to agree with everything my iwi does, or my hapū. My hand is not a scale of how Māori I am. My fear doesn't hold me back. My knowledge does not define my birthright. Ko au te whenua, ko te whenua ko au. 

Left: Maxine on Waitangi's one-way bridge.

PHOTOGRAPH: ABIGAIL DOUGHERTY/STUFF

Weaving Solutions

Kāi Tahu Collaboration in the Face of Climate Complexity

There is no doubt climate change is the biggest challenge of this generation. As a young and growing population, our whānau Kāi Tahu of the future are going to face the consequences of our climate action or lack of it today.

Kera Sherwood-O'Regan is a climate activist and social impact strategist and has just been named in the BBC's 2023 list of 100 inspiring and influential women from around the world. She talks to social innovator and futures practitioner **ALICE DIMOND** about her work and how the connection between systems theory, climate activism and indigenous sovereignty could be a tool for change.

Alice Dimond (AD): Let's start off by talking about COP. I know you have attended a few times and have been part of the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus. How did you get involved and what's it like working with other indigenous people to address climate change?

Kera Sherwood-O'Regan (KSOR): I've been involved in climate action since I was really young. I was really into it in school and was in environmental clubs, youth groups, that sort of thing. That was back in the early 2000s before things like School Strike for Climate, so it was still a little bit nerdy and niche.

In my seventh form I was part of the Youth Delegation for the COP15 climate negotiations in Copenhagen in 2009. For that delegation

I was the one who stayed home and coordinated the engagements with rakatahi here in Aotearoa, but that's when I first got exposed to how the UN system works. I was in and out, and on the fringes of the movement for quite a while and then, in 2017, I joined a delegation attending COP23 in Bonn, Germany.

The Indigenous Peoples' Caucus is the group of all different Indigenous Peoples' organisations and groups who are in attendance at the COPs. Because the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is all driven by state (government) parties, and our sovereignty is not recognised, we're essentially there trying to lobby parties and their negotiators to do the right thing on our behalf. I've built lots of great relationships and have learnt a tonne about how the legal process there works – but also how as Indigenous Peoples we can collectively build power and influence change. Even if we don't directly have a seat at the table within that system, and our sovereignty as Indigenous Peoples and nations is not recognised, there are still ways we can influence that system especially when we are able to collaborate. Our experiences day-to-day might be different, but we're all sort of facing the same thing, or just combating a different face of the same system of oppression.

AD: That's really cool, and I bet there are things you will have noticed in that setting about the unique relationship we, as indigenous people, have with the environment. What have you learned about how Māori and other iwi taketake relate and connect to environment, compared to non-indigenous?

KSOR: I personally think the mainstream conceptualisation and framing of climate change overall is really problematic, which makes it challenging for people and communities to act in a way that will get the outcomes we actually want. This isn't to generalise or romanticise



Above: An interview in the Indigenous Peoples' Pavilion at COP27, Egypt. right: Kera at Takapō, Matariki 2022.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JASON BOBERG.



indigeneity in any way, but I often find that when engaging with other iwi taketake and Māori there is a fundamental focus on relationship; so recognising that climate change is a symptom of the fact that we (as a society) are not in a good relationship with Papatūānuku right now.

And I think as Indigenous Peoples there is an inherent recognition that we have a responsibility to remedy that relationship because we've learnt what happens when we live out of step. This thinking comes from our ways of being, mātauraka, traditions, and histories – we have generations of knowledge and stories to draw on to understand the need to restore balance.

AD: That's a good point and to me that lack of balance speaks to how other social systems and mindsets, power structures and values are all woven together to create this pattern of imbalance. So, to create a new system where we live in balance with the taiao we need to re-weave the whole pattern, rather than view climate change in isolation. What are your thoughts?

KSOR: I think about climate change as being like a tabletop, and that all these other systems of oppression are the table legs propping climate change up – so that is colonialism, extractivism, capitalism, ableism, racism, sexism – they all support each other. Colonialism is informed by and receives support from capitalism, and vice versa. What makes people go from one side of the world and makes them want to travel to the other side to colonise an indigenous people, right? It's driven out of what is happening in that society, an inequitable distribution of resources there, or a drive for power.

The process of colonisation itself produces climate change – it's extremely carbon intensive to colonise a people and whenua, and to maintain that colonial structure in an ecosystem where it's completely unfit for purpose. So, I think about climate change in that way, that these systems are all producing and upholding climate change. I think what's important is that rather than only focusing on that tabletop, being climate change, that we target the legs to destabilise the tabletop.



Above: Kera presenting at COP27 in Egypt where she was part of a team advocating for disability rights.

PHOTOGRAPH: JASON BOBERG.

WHEN YOU FOCUS ON THE MĀORI VALUE OF INTERCONNECTEDNESS, YOU START TO NOTICE THINGS DIFFERENTLY AND THEN YOU START TO ACT ACCORDINGLY BECAUSE YOU'RE ACTING THROUGH THAT LENS OF BEING IN RELATION WITH THE WHENUA THAT YOU'RE ON, RATHER THAN BEING THE CONSUMER OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES OR THE CONSUMER THAT'S EXTRACTING FROM THE ENVIRONMENT.

TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, HOW WE AS MĀORI MIHI TO OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WHEN INTRODUCING OURSELVES. BY ACKNOWLEDGING THE MAUKA, AWA AND MOANA THAT SURROUND US WE ARE ACKNOWLEDGING THE CONNECTION AND NEED FOR BALANCE BETWEEN US AND THE TAIAO.

AD: Totally agree. There is a saying that knowledge doesn't create change, what people do with that knowledge does, which makes me think about how we all have this knowledge about the pressing challenge of climate change, but it is harder to turn that knowledge into action. Why do you think it's so hard to turn aspiration into action?

KSOR: Personally, I think one of the big problems is that there isn't actually agreement on what the knowledge is that needs to be known. I think a lot of people talk about needing to understand climate change in scientific terms, but to be honest despite having spent a lot of my life being very invested in that idea, I don't think understanding the science is actually the problem. I think there's a base level that's required but we've got enough information now to say that these human activities are causing climate change, and this is the mechanism by which it happens.

What I think is missing is that understanding of the connection between different systemic issues, of which climate change is one, and that failure to see that connection prevents real climate action playing out. So, we think, 'Oh well we have introduced this policy and carbon taxes and electric vehicles, but why isn't it making a dent?' And that's because we're not tackling the underlying systems.

I think it's the Western mainstream who have been failing to see that connection for so long and it stops us from embracing community-driven approaches and indigenous ways of knowing. The mainstream still sees climate change in this reductive scientific framing that looks at it like a mathematical equation rather than a whole system of systems, and a human issue that unfairly impacts indigenous people. They don't see that when Indigenous Peoples are saying "Land Back", that's a climate issue and climate action.

So, we need the mainstream to start listening to us and learning, instead of constantly forcing us to use all our energy trying to rationalise, or prove, or quantify scientifically, that our knowledge or our ways of knowing have any value.

AD: There is a huge opportunity there because as our world becomes increasingly volatile and unpredictable, we will no longer be working within well-defined parameters. We will need to be values and vision-driven, rather than focused on pre-determined outcomes. We can show that collaboration based on shared values can create climate justice; our history and stories prove that we can work together to solve challenges by trusting in our own values and knowledge systems.

KSOR: Yeah, we do need to act differently and do things that are new compared to what the mainstream is doing. But I think what might be relatively new now is actually returning to older practices and retooling them for the new environment we're in. Like when you focus on the Māori value of interconnectedness, you start to notice things differently and then you start to act accordingly because you're acting through that lens of being in relation with the whenua that you're on, rather than being the consumer of the natural resources or the consumer that's extracting from the environment. Take, for example, how we as Māori mihi to our natural environment when introducing ourselves. By acknowledging the mauka, awa and moana that surround us we are acknowledging the connection and need for balance between us and the taiao.

I think if there is an over-reliance on newness it actually reinforces the same system that got us here in the first place. Newness is the driving force of consumerism and unsustainable growth. Instead, we need to look backwards and think what has happened previously and how can I understand and retool that – even if it is challenging, even if it is time consuming, even if it's harder to measure and harder to package into a fundable project.

AD: Would you say that the grand challenge for us is therefore our ability to deal with this level of complexity and to connect the multiplicity of changes to create a new pattern of positive climate action? No single entity will be able to do the work, so we need to embrace sharing lessons and knowledge between ourselves.

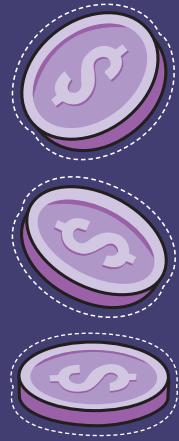
KSOR: Yep, absolutely there is a need for cross movement solidarity and a focus on the intangibles, like the quality of our relationships. That's our strength as Indigenous Peoples – strong relationships. Because relationships are the foundation of strong movements and collective action. We can solve this issue because we've solved or had experience with similar intersecting problems in the past. I think as Indigenous Peoples there is an inherent knowing that we have the solutions, and again, that's not about romanticising it, but recognising we can draw on generations of knowledge for solving problems. 🌱



13 and over?

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Making a difference

Global changemaker Joanne McEachen is a force to be reckoned with, overhauling education systems and making a difference for tamariki across the world from her home in Seattle. She is the founder of The Learner First™ and a celebrated author and speaker. Her work has earned her numerous accolades, including at home in Aotearoa where she is an Edmund Hillary Fellow and winner of a New Zealand 2023 Kea World Class Citizen Award. Joanne sits down with kaituhi **ANNA BRANKIN** to share how her whakapapa has guided her every step of the way.



WHEN JOANNE MCEACHEN (NGĀI TAHU, NGĀTI MĀMOE, WAITAHA) TALKS about education, she isn't talking about curriculums and classrooms, test results and qualifications. Those issues are what most people spend their time debating, and she would rather get to the heart of what matters in education – the relationship between teacher and student and the spark generated when the two truly connect. It's something she first noticed when she was 16 years old, as an exchange student in the United States.

"I had to do a lot of public speaking, particularly to tamariki in schools. I came to recognise that there was an ignition that was going on between people, or an energy transfer," Joanne says. "And I realised, that's education! It's that shift between two people, when we can activate one another to create something better for the world, or to add to the world. That's the purpose of education."

The idea of this connection between teacher and student is at the heart of The Learner First, the first company Joanne established in 2012. The Learner First works with schools and teachers in countries across the world, helping them move away from an exclusive focus on academic outcomes and standardisation.

"Academics is a critical outcome of education – yes, but we're interested in a much broader set of outcomes, and in also measuring what matters," Joanne says. "Our approach combines global evidence, measurable results and research-driven strategies. We ask: Do teachers know how to create that relationship with the students

they teach, and simultaneously do they have the technical skills to tailor their approach to the specific needs of the students right in front of them today?"

The benefits of this approach to teaching seem obvious to Joanne, whose experience as a teacher, principal and public servant in Aotearoa showed her that a one-size-fits-all education system was failing our children – especially tamariki and rakatahi Māori.

"We now know that the achievement gap really only exists in English medium schools. Our kids need to be taught with the understanding of who they are plus the academic rigour that we expect from the best of our kaiako anywhere," says Joanne. "We've got data now across the whole of our country for the past 10-plus years that shows tamariki who go to Māori medium, leave with a higher attainment rate than those tamariki who attend English medium schools."

This data supports what Joanne saw firsthand during her time as a teacher and principal at schools in Auckland and Hamilton. Joanne's passion for equitable outcomes in education was sparked, and she began the work that would eventually inform Contributive Learning™, the framework that The Learner First espouses. It's focused on four key components: self-understanding, connection, knowledge and competencies.

"It's critical for our mental health, our success for our future lives that we know who we are, where we come from and how we can contribute our unique set of skills to humanity, Papatūānuku and prosperity – if any



Left: Joanne at the Salzburg Global Summit of which she has been a fellow since 2018.

Overleaf: Joanne with her Mum Beverley who passed away in 2021.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUPPLIED

part of this is missing we can be 'pushed over'. I have watched tamariki and teachers almost unfold in front of me as they tū rakatira – stand tall when they know WHO they are and that their set of skills holds huge value. It's just beautiful."

A few of Joanne's strategies included taking her staff to stay with families in Samoa to gain a better understanding of Pasifika culture, as well as encouraging parent teacher interviews in family homes rather than in an intimidating school environment.

When a student told her he didn't think he was "brainy enough" for university, she found ways to prove him and his peers wrong. "We did a sleepover at the university marae, and we had lecturers come to the school each school term. One of the most exciting things we did was identify Māori and Pasifika university students who were studying to be doctors, technicians, scientists and lawyers, and we paid them to spend time with the tamariki, to play sports with them at lunchtime and talk to them about going to university, about how successful they could be. That gave them some funding for their studies and normalised university for our tamariki."

Very quickly, Joanne's efforts brought her to the attention of the

Ministry of Education and she was offered roles she hoped would allow her to effect nationwide change. In her six years at the ministry, Joanne was able to achieve some things she is still proud of, including supporting an increase in funding for Māori schools and Māori professional development.

But she was also restricted by bureaucracy and policies, and found herself having to enact difficult decisions that she didn't always agree with, a challenge she recognises is present for all public servants.

Joanne was feeling increasingly demoralised within the ministry when she met her soon-to-be husband Andrew in the United States on her way

to a conference in Sweden. "We met, fell in love and had to decide which country we would live in. I was feeling absolutely unhappy in my role at the ministry so it was a no-brainer for me to come over here," Joanne says.

As a "recovering public servant", Joanne says it took her about two years to heal and truly reclaim her voice. During that time, and with the support of her entrepreneur husband, she began working on building The Learner First.



"We can't simply look for exceptional educators who can engage and ignite learners despite an unhealthy system; we have to go straight after the system itself."

- Joanne McEachen



JOANNE'S DEEP CONNECTION TO HER MĀORITAKA BEGAN IN CHILDHOOD, ALTHOUGH SHE DIDN'T KNOW IT AT THE TIME – IT WAS JUST THE WAY THAT HER WHĀNAU LIVED.

“MY MOTHER WAS VERY TUNED INTO OUR TĪPUNA, AND SHE TAUGHT ME HOW TO LISTEN TO THEM AND TO CONNECT TO THE NATURAL WORLD. SHE LIVED BY THE MOON PHASES. SHE WAS INCREDIBLY SPIRITUALLY STRONG, AND SHE USED TO TALK ABOUT DOING THE ‘INNER WORK’. BUT I DIDN'T NECESSARILY KNOW THAT WAS A MĀORI WAY OF LIVING – IT WAS JUST OUR LIFE.”

“I was talking about totally new ideas to the American educator population like authentic mixed method assessment and designing learning differently or creating your own curriculum, and how important it was to know the children you were teaching before you started teaching any curriculum to them,” Joanne says. “I had to work really hard to get a foot in the door to get the company going. It was then I also began working with a few other international leaders and started up a global project together involving multiple countries.”

Today, The Learner First operates in Aotearoa, Australia, Dubai, Hong Kong and the US, partnering directly with schools or districts to deliver a holistic approach to school improvement.

Joanne's method revolves around a strengths-based approach, measuring not only academic but also social outcomes. She talks a lot about ako: learning in the spirit of reciprocity – you can't do one without the other. She supports schools and at times whole systems to be a genuine part of a community.

Although Joanne lives in Seattle and works across the globe, she is still as determined as ever to see equitable outcomes in education for all Māori and Pasifika whānau. “Interestingly enough, whenever I step out of the country, I can look back and see things so clearly,” Joanne says. “It brings this crystal clarity and I find mātauraka Māori seeping its way into all of my writing.”

Joanne has formed a close partnership with Te Pā o Rākaihautū through her Edmund Hillary Fellowship and her charitable trust, Kia Kotahi Ako (Learning As One), established in 2021. Joanne says her association with the Te Pā team feels like a homecoming. It marks the first instance in her life where she can engage with Māori in a Māori setting, experiencing the uncomplicated joy of embracing her Māori identity and feeling truly liberated.

Joanne's deep connection to her Māoritaka began in childhood, although she didn't know it at the time – it was just the way that her whānau lived.


“My mother was very tuned into our tīpuna, and she taught me how to listen to them and to connect to the natural world. She lived by the moon phases,” she recalls. “She was incredibly spiritually strong, and she used to talk about doing the ‘inner work’. But I didn't necessarily know that was a Māori way of living – it was just our life.”

Being blonde and fair-skinned, Joanne sometimes felt insecure about her identity as a wahine Māori, especially once the whānau moved to the North Island when she was about 13 years old. Despite her fierce advocacy for Māori throughout her career, it was only recently that she really reconnected with her whakapapa.

“Around the time the pandemic hit, I felt a karanga to come home,” Joanne says. Her mother's health was failing, and living and talking to her in her final months helped Joanne understand how much of her worldview had been handed down from her tīpuna. She travelled to Riverton and spent time exploring her marae and local museum, learning more about her history.

“I remember Mum telling me stories about playing in the Aparima river,” Joanne says. “I went into the museum and when the curator there realised I really was interested he showed me a whole room full of extra artifacts. My whole life was just changing every five seconds, it was like I was just reintegrating into this whole moment in time, seeing generation after generation just being opened up.”

Joanne sees her passion and drive as a gift that has been handed down from her tīpuna, and draws strength from their legacy. “I've got three companies, one in New Zealand, one in Australia and one here in America, I am the Chair of our charitable trust, I write books, I speak all over the world, and I am invited to be on global boards,” she says.

“But some days, when I am alone in a hotel room somewhere in the world, missing my whānau – I do think, why do I do this? Then something will happen to remind me why. I see that as my tīpuna holding me up, reminding me that I have been given these skills and that this is my way to contribute to humanity, for all our generations to come.” 

BEING BLONDE AND FAIR-SKINNED, JOANNE SOMETIMES FELT INSECURE ABOUT HER IDENTITY AS A WAHINE MĀORI, ESPECIALLY ONCE THE WHĀNAU MOVED TO THE NORTH ISLAND WHEN SHE WAS ABOUT 13 YEARS OLD. DESPITE HER FIERCE ADVOCACY FOR MĀORI THROUGHOUT HER CAREER, IT WAS ONLY RECENTLY THAT SHE REALLY RECONNECTED WITH HER WHAKAPAPA.

“AROUND THE TIME THE PANDEMIC HIT, I FELT A KARANGA TO COME HOME.”



Casting a Torchlight on Sonia Rahiti

Nā TINA NIXON

FOR 56 YEARS SONIA RAHITI HAS BEEN GOING TO THE TĪTĪ ISLANDS FOR the birding season. Her whānau has a house at Murderers Cove, on the south-east side of Taukihepa (Big South Cape Island), which is an island to the west of the southern tip of Rakiura.

Sonia is married to Emil, and they have a daughter, Kea Moana. The tītī harvest has brought families like hers together every year for generations. “We are a lot more spread out than we used to be,” says Sonia. “But I can’t think of another event which has the power to make people put their working lives and their differences aside and come together for eleven-and-a-half weeks every year.”

At the end of a season, the emotions running through Sonia are hard to capture on paper. When the time comes to return home, the families gather on the beach to board their boats.

“We begin to feel a sense of sadness,” Sonia says, “which I can only describe as being like a powerful feeling of homesickness. And we haven’t even left the island yet.”

When she returns to the mainland, she continues to feel a sense of disconnection from the island. “I avoid people for the first few days back home because I find my experiences on the manu too hard to convey to those who have never had the privilege to partake.”

Sonia’s bloodline comes from the Cleaver and Kini whānau, thus she affiliates to several manu. Her mother, Dale Cleaver (daughter of George

Cleaver and Martha Kini), has two rights to the tītī islands. Her father, Ronnie Bull (son of Freda and Jim Bull, descendant of Rewiti Te Akau), has another.

Sonia’s family has a four-bedroom home on Taukihepa. Her sister, Moana, has a three-bedroom house there too. Last year, 13 members of Sonia’s family stayed in her house, and five stayed at her sister’s. Her brother, Ranui, plans to build a third house there next year to help accommodate the growing number of “little people” who now make the trip over. A separate “workhouse” is close by, which the whānau make use of together.

Sonia comes from a fishing whānau. Each season they are transported to the islands on her brother Rewi Bull’s commercial boat, the *Shangri La*. However, not that long ago families used to go for weeks without seeing a boat. “Back when my parents were young, the food top-ups came from weka roaming the island, which they’d catch and eat. Their other source of sustenance was, of course, readily available kaimoana including pāua, crays and kina. Now there is the privilege

Above: The *Shangri La*, owned by Rewi Bull – taking tītī birders to the island since – forever! Above right: Sonia (far right) and whānau.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUPPLIED



of being able to replenish stores during each stay, because Rewi returns from Bluff to Big South Cape from time to time to bring back food and fuel."

Weka were brought to the tītī islands intentionally as a food source for whānau. They are now a threat to the tītī, and it's estimated weka are responsible for killing up to 10 per cent of the tītī population. The birds are now being targeted as part of the island's pest management programmes.

Tītī have historically been caught during the daytime, (nanao) using hooks and hands to remove them from their burrows. Nanao is not so common now. "People have work commitments now; they can't necessarily take two or three months off." And the birders are getting older and are not so keen on lying on the ground and reaching into burrows.

Now, tītī are mostly hunted on dark nights using torches, a method known as rama. This is when the chicks emerge in the dark to flex their wings and get ready to leave the nest.

THEY ARE VERY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY. "BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY OF US, WE'VE MADE THE DECISION TO EFFECTIVELY CUT OUR HARVEST IN HALF."

Seasons are variable. The last three seasons have been good for Sonia and her whānau, "tītī are coming back in good numbers." But before this, her family had nearly 10 years of bad birding. Sonia's family regulate their tītī quota based on their own harvest numbers and on their observations from previous seasons. They are very aware of the importance of sustainability. "Because there are so many of us, we've made the decision to effectively cut our harvest in half."

Sonia has been involved with tītī islands research for many years, working alongside ecologist Henrik Moller, who started the original

research on tītī. His leadership has had her, and teams of field workers participate in dissections of tītī, collecting tītī samples, tītī transit methods and burrow scoping exercises.

"I have learnt so much about the science relating to the tītī population from Henrik's leadership," she says.


Pest control work on Taukihepa is done by multiple families and the Department of Conservation (DOC). They have identified several reasons for tītī population decline in recent years. Rats and weka eat large numbers of tītī eggs and young birds.

But commercial fishing by Japanese trawlers has also had an impact. These vessels have reportedly been responsible for killing millions of tītī as a by-catch. In addition, Japanese squid boats, which have been known to fish very close to shore, have interfered with rama.

Sonia recalls seasons where torches were not needed at night because lights from the squid boats would illuminate the beaches and forest. There is also strong evidence climate has affected the tītī population. A decline in their numbers has been linked by scientists to El Niño weather events.

When asked about her vision for the future of the islands, Sonia believes making them predator-free is an achievable goal. Pest control successes continue to be reported as the Rakiura community works together to restore the island's natural haven. "Predator-Free Rakiura is providing hope for our islands, especially the islands which lie closest to it," she says.

But there are big challenges to achieving that goal. Sonia's view is that to get the islands back to where they were, we need to get rid of rats and weka. "But weka are clever. A single weka on Codfish Island confounded pest eradication experts for a long time before it was discovered it was swimming to and from the island at low tide. And rats are relentless."

Removing pests completely from the tītī islands is, Sonia admits, a courageous and ambitious goal. But through continued research and pest control programmes, supported by like-minded whānau and dedicated birders like Sonia, the possibility remains that one day nature on the tītī islands will thrive again. 



Saving the Kākāpō

Nā PUAWAI SWINDELLS-WALLACE

KĀKĀPŌ ARE A THREATENED SPECIES THAT FACES IMMEDIATE RISK OF extinction. They are also one of 54 birds listed as taoka species in the Ngāi Tahu Settlement Claims Act 1998.

Taoka species feature in sections 287-296 of the Ngāi Tahu Settlement Claims Act 1998, which ensures that Kāi Tahu have mechanisms under the law to be acknowledged, consulted, and involved in the management and decision-making of all taoka species within the claim area.

Kākāpō get their name according to their active lifestyle at night, kākā referring to parrot and pō to the night. They have an owl-like face

and are the world's heaviest parrot, weighing up to 4kg. Good runners, they use their wings to balance when climbing trees and vines. Males make loud booming sounds throughout the night to attract females. Ripe rimu fruit triggers the kākāpō breeding season. Higher amounts of fruit bring a superior season and kākāpō chicks rely on this fruit as a food source for their first six months, feeding exclusively on regurgitated rimu fruit gathered by their mother each night.

For the past 18 years, Tāne Davis (Ōraka-Aparima) has worked as the Kāi Tahu representative on the Kākāpō Recovery team. He carries the memory of kaumātua who saw the need for Kāi Tahu representation on



taoka species recovery groups during the settlement claim process.

As a taoka species representative, Tāne has spent a lot of time with kākāpō, sharing that they have a unique smell, their feathers and colour mimic their surroundings, and that they carry a mauri and wairua you can feel when in their presence. Fifteen years ago, the team predicted the need for more habitats and the idea to look outside the Kāi Tahu takiwā was put forward.

Kākāpō first evolved millions of years ago and could be found nationwide. Habitat is now scarce and became limited to four offshore islands in Te Waipounamu. This year, Tāne accompanied kākāpō from



Above: Tāne Davis at the kākāpō release in Maungatautari, Sanctuary Mountain.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUPPLIED

Whenua Hou in the Kāi Tahu rohe to Maungatautari, which is under the mana of Ngāti Koroki Kahukura, Ngāti Hauā, Tainui and Waikato-Maniapoto and Ngāti Raukawa. These hapū and iwi were approached and asked if kākāpō from Kāi Tahu could be whāngai of Sanctuary Mountain.

“It really arrived sooner than we had anticipated. The La Niña weather patterns assisting with mass rimu fruiting meant good breeding seasons and habitat were needed faster than the team had expected,” says Tāne.

The process of releasing taoka from the Kāi Tahu takiwā to the hapū and iwi of Maungatautari was extremely significant, creating an exchange of kawa, tikaka and mātauraka. It was also important to preserve the whakapapa of translocated manu as the diversity of kākāpō genetics is deficient. There are two surviving genetic strains from Fiordland and Rakiura – the last two places in the country to see wild kākāpō. Tāne suspects our tīpuna likely used kākāpō to trade in the past. The recent translocation in July 2023 marks a different type of trade which will help preserve living manu.

It involved four male kākāpō, which bought the total population of Sanctuary Mountain to 10. They have been described as unsuspecting, trailblazing males who will enter the protection of local mana whenua. The team has already learnt a lot from these ground dwellers at their new 3000-hectare home, including the need to adapt the fence after three kākāpō scaled it and escaped.

These three curious kākāpō were juveniles and have since returned home to Fiordland, leaving seven at Sanctuary Mountain. Maungatautari is the largest predator-fenced habitat in Aotearoa and is the only option as kākāpō require large areas of podocarp forest to support their breeding habits. The return to the mainland is a major achievement for all involved as kākāpō have not been seen in the area for over 200 years.



[A] SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT CAME IN 2019 WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MAURI ORA KĀKĀPŌ TRUST MANAGED BY TE RŪNANGA O NGĀI TAHU. THE TRUST RECEIVES DONATIONS AND OTHER FUNDS GIFTED FROM THE PUBLIC TO SUPPORT KĀKĀPŌ RECOVERY.

With the population doubling over the past seven years, and the predator-free offshore breeding islands almost at capacity, Maungatautari was the only viable option.

The significance of sharing taoka with Ngāti Koroki Kahukura, Ngāti Hauā, Tainui and Waikato-Maniapoto and Ngāti Raukawa has been powerful and moving for Tāne. It has been a memorable and personal experience for all those who've worked in the recovery programme over the years.

Once consumed as a food source by Māori, the rapid decline of kākāpō began in the 1800s as intensive human settlement transformed Aotearoa, destroying the ecosystems of thousands of species. Deforestation, felling rimu and the introduction of cats, rats, stoats, ferrets and rabbits ruined the natural habitat where the flightless kākāpō had once thrived. In 1894, Richard Henry, a conservationist, translocated several hundred to then predator-free Resolution Island. Stoats and ferrets, however, swam from the mainland to Resolution, and by 1900 the kākāpō were extinct on the island.

Between 1949 and 1967, 60 expeditions were made to locate kākāpō, with only six males found over the 18 years. By 1975, three males, including one named after Richard Henry, were transferred to Te Pateka (Maud Island). An estimate of 200 kākāpō were counted on Rakiura in 1977 and heading into the 1980s tracker dogs were used to catch and add radio tags to each manu. The first hand-reared chick hatched in 1992 and, despite intervention, only 51 remained by 1995, just 20 of them female.

A Department of Conservation National Kākāpō team was established at this point to actively manage the fading species. By 2000, numbers increased to 62 and in 2005 kākāpō were established on Pukenui (Anchor Island) in Fiordland. Work to eradicate predators on Tau Moana (Resolution Island) began in 2017, 123 years after Richard Henry had first moved kākāpō there.

Another significant development came in 2019 with the establishment of the Mauri Ora Kākāpō Trust managed by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. The trust receives donations and other funds gifted from the public to support kākāpō recovery.

The management of a species brings with it various research projects to inform decisions and understand how better to protect and preserve. Kākāpō research topics are varied, from supplementary feeding to tree phenology (seasonal timing of growth stages), avian diseases, artificial insemination, reproductive behaviour and genetics.


While the breeding programme has proven successful, the numbers



Above, left - right: Tāne Davis, Deidre Vercoe, DOC Kākāpō Recovery Manager, and DOC kaimahi Alyssa Salton.

are still low. Genetic sequencing has been done to track the whakapapa lineage of each manu. Inbreeding within the species has been an obstacle for decades and management minimises abnormalities, which were stopping eggs from hatching.

Whānau Kāi Tahu can be the voice of a taoka species, expressing rakatirataka and kaitiakitaka to make an intergenerational difference. Tāne regards the role as a responsibility that requires time and dedication to the species and the tribe. Participating in the enhancement of kākāpō maturaaka and tikaka keeps the knowledge and practice of our tīpuna alive.

There are currently 252 kākāpō in Aotearoa. 

Puawai is a taoka species representative working with Hoiho/Takaraha (yellow-eyed penguin) and wants to encourage Kāi Tahu whānui to take up the role of kaitiakitaka as a taoka species representative for Kāi Tahu.

A relationship of many chapters

Nā JODY O'CALLAGHAN

CHRISTCHURCH'S FOUNDERS HAD HIGH ASPIRATIONS - TO ESTABLISH

learning institutions comparable to those in Britain. In 1873 Te Waipounamu was already the place to go for a tertiary education, with the University of Otago founded two years before. But with no engagement with mana whenua – Kāi Tahu – the universities remained closed off to its people, despite promises made by the Crown when it finished purchasing 80 per cent of the island in 1864. This carried on for the University of Canterbury's first 100 years.

The iwi was out of sight and out of settlers' minds throughout the region until the late 1900s.

For Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha - University of Canterbury's 150th anniversary, the office of treaty partnership pou whakarae Professor Te Maire Tau dissected the troubled history between the university and the iwi in its commemorative pukapuka – *A New History: The University of Canterbury 1873–2023*. He reflects on how that history, frankly, immortalised in the 28-page chapter, all stems from the fact that for Kāi Tahu, the university was always another face of the Crown.

When the Crown started purchasing land for very little money in the takiwā in the 1840s, many promises were made that it would build schools (and hospitals) in their villages. The settler in charge of land sales among the iwi on the island, Walter Mantell, noted that without promises made to build the assets "I could not have got their assent to the Cession of the land."

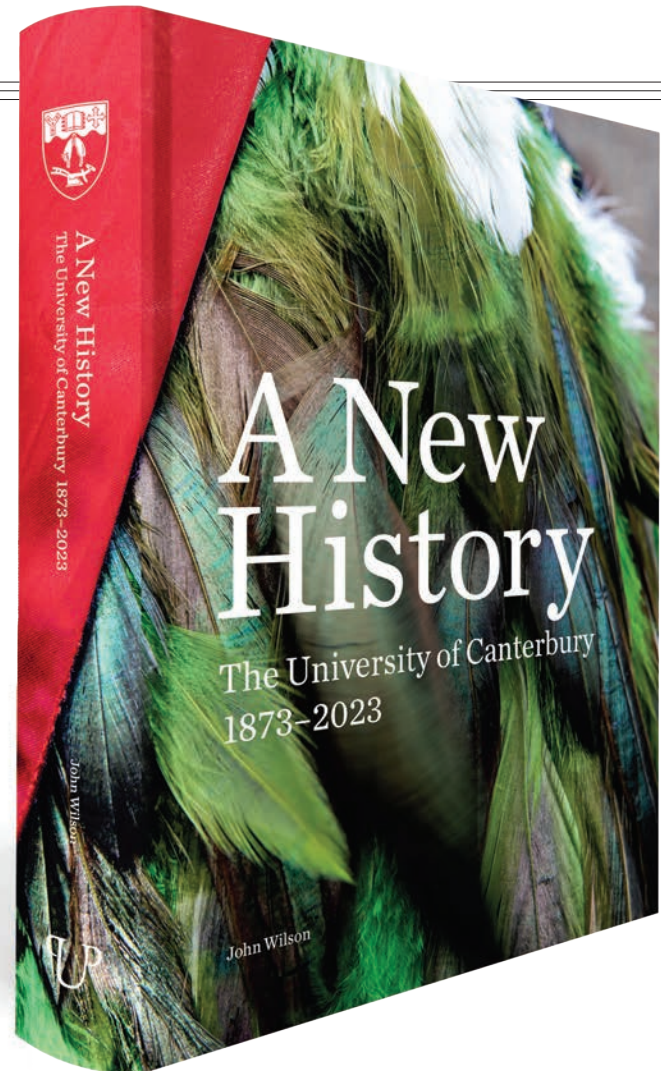
As early as the 1850s, after the land had been purchased, a Crown official wrote that Māori parents had wrongly assumed education was a right when in fact education for Kāi Tahu was the government 'conferring a favour'. Those promises were never met.

The iwi's argument is that its rights and circumstances are unique to other tribes – one of the main mitigations offered to secure the land purchases in Te Waipounamu was "the promise that Kāi Tahu would have access to Western education."

"Ngāi Tahu understood that to become part of the wider world change was needed, and that meant the adoption of new knowledge and technology as well as political and financial institutions," Professor Tau writes. It also knew "universities and the mastery of knowledge were fundamental to the tribe's survival."

The University of Canterbury – considered to be the Crown entity responsible for delivering tertiary education within the takiwā – was the institute to fulfil Crown obligations. Professor Tau links Kāi Tahu and the iwi's long-standing quest for knowledge back to the mid to late 1700s, when its people settled on the Canterbury Plains – on lands taken by right of conquest (rika kaha) – and created the largest fortified village, Kaiapoi.

Upoko-ariki (Senior leader) Tūrākautahi's sole concern was the security of his people who had been under attack by his kin tribe Kāti Māmoe, that occupied much of Te Waipounamu and his homeland



along the East Coast. Peace was slowly established with Kāti Māmoe through the process of tribal marriages, alliances, and agreements. But occupying a land is not the same as being of the land, and Tūrākautahi was well aware he lacked knowledge of it, its ancestry and origins – its tapu.

There were kin tribes throughout Te Waipounamu who predated Kāti Māmoe and held 'customary knowledge' of the South Island. Tribes such as Ngāti Wairaki (East Coast), Ngāti Whata (North Canterbury), Rapuwai (Arowhenua) and Hāwea (Ōtākou) were known as the takata whenua whose knowledge of the land came from the long



absorbed Waitaha. To be of the land, Tūrākauahi recognised he needed to bend his knee to learn from the two tribal tohuka who had killed his brothers Tānetiki and Moki.

Kāi Tahu traditions say while Tūrākauahi was one of only two who survived to return from Te Tai Poutini as a tohuka, his wife Hinekāwai was the price for that ascendancy and died from sorcery cast by Ngāti Wairaki. But the knowledge was now secured to his iwi at Kaiapoi and passed down. When settlers arrived, Kāi Tahu never saw a division between its knowledge system and settler knowledge.

By the 1840s it was clear that Pākehā had brought with them knowledge that had value to them.

“I don’t think people understand how important things like iron is. That was introduced. And so was salt,” Professor Tau says. Technological innovations were the easiest and most immediate, such as the conversion from double-hulled canoes to whaleboats that “made it easier for them to be what they wanted to be,” he writes.

“In all this change, Ngāi Tahu was adopting technology not to become more Western, but to become more themselves.”

The iwi tested, adapted, and accepted knowledge and technologies as these evolved and developed. While still retaining traditional knowledge “because they hold kernels of truth that retain relevance to the world we live in.”

Professor Tau uses eels as an example. Today mana whenua accepts the scientific categorisation of both longfin and shortfin eels in Aotearoa, but they had learnt another important taxonomy.

The genealogy traces the descent line from tuna, that Kāi Tahu considers to be the original eel that represents the perfect idea – or form – of an eel, rather than a species of the genus *Anguilla*. The descent lines from there are an organisational system of the types of eels which are a major food source found in Te Waipounamu.

Tuna kouka were large eels that would koukou (bark) at night. Horehore-wai were larger mature eels found inland and usually avoided because of their high fat content and thick skins. Horepapa – green-coloured with a white belly – were taken in the spring. Tuna-ā-tai and hao were taken as they migrated out to sea and were cleaner. Mata-moe were small black eels taken from the mud, and, like

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS WERE THE EASIEST AND MOST IMMEDIATE, SUCH AS THE CONVERSION FROM DOUBLE-HULLED CANOES TO WHALEBOATS THAT “MADE IT EASIER FOR THEM TO BE WHAT THEY WANTED TO BE ... IN ALL THIS CHANGE, NGĀI TAHU WAS ADOPTING TECHNOLOGY NOT TO BECOME MORE WESTERN, BUT TO BECOME MORE THEMSELVES.”

PROFESSOR TE MAIRE TAU



aroheke, were avoided because of their taste. All information important for survival.

Rivers were ordered according to their characteristics, as were weather patterns.

All cultures started with their own anecdotal observations, and “science relies on observation and extends it,” Professor Tau says.

“There’s always a cultural base to science. Science doesn’t exist without culture. In the end all knowledge must be contestable.”

Water is made of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom, but “if you want to know the water types in the South Island ... or the flora and fauna species and the landscape” then local hapū have that knowledge. The process of the university establishing a formal relationship with Kāi Tahu as takata whenua, and with Ngāi Tūāhuriri, mana whenua over the rohe around campus, began in the 1970s. But the decisive moves did not come until decades later. Tau used to visit high schools in the rohe and play a part in guiding rangatahi into careers, such as the Māori Trade Training scheme at Rehua Marae.

By the 80s, Kāi Tahu students were arriving at university. They saw lecturer Tā Tipene O’Regan, who flew down from Pōneke every Monday during the buildup to the iwi settlement, “breaking ground on teaching treaty history.”

“It fitted the zeitgeist of the era. He was an academic that Māori and Ngāi Tahu could identify as theirs. He was at the front end of the academic world for Māori.”

Students would attend settlement hearings at Tuahiwi where Professor Tau’s students would write submissions. The same was done recently when students assisted with the iwi’s claim in the High Court at Christchurch against the Crown in 2020 that it has rakatirataka over wai māori in its takiwā.

One of those students was water scientist Conor Redmile, a Kāi Tahu scholarship recipient who won a position at Oxford University

– one of the British counterparts the university’s founders aspired to emulate.

“He will meet the tribal needs, he knows his stuff, is academically sound, and he won a position at Oxford. It is great,” Professor Tau says.

It was the 2010/2011 Christchurch earthquakes that gave a boost to iwi-university engagement. The university rebuild, \$260m Crown payout was tied to its tribal performance – or the expectation it would be relevant to the tribe, Professor Tau says.

“The Crown said, ‘We’re going to give you this money, how is it going to be relevant to Ngāi Tahu Māori?’”

But the two bodies still had communication breakdowns until finally establishing a treaty partnership in 2021. The tribe has expectations from universities within its takiwā to establish professional units that outline its requirements, then implement programmes to meet the tribal good.

This means producing lawyers, economists, historians, scientists, and engineers to support tribal goals.

Professor Tau does not like “race theories” and is uninterested in quota systems. But there is not equal opportunity, and the iwi and university have an obligation to ensure there is.


“I don’t like the idea that Ngāi Tahu is there because they’re Māori. We’re not there because of being a race, it’s a contractual relationship with the Crown.”

He’s not interested in universities taking on the “disembodied knowledge” of mātauranga with “lots of karakia and no content.”

“The term mātauranga implies a lot but no-one has really dug down to what it means.”

For the tribe, it’s very clearly rooted in the environment, and local knowledge that is relevant and an important asset to making tertiary education relevant to the community around it – a challenge they all face. At times they get lost in critical theory, but the value to the community is “questionable”. That is why science, engineering, and economics are important, he believes.

“If there’s a water problem, the tribe knows it. We’re only going to solve it with technology.

The university’s founding aspiration to emulate those in Britain is now setting itself apart as a Treaty university steeped in knowledge of the community around it. Now it is time to start earning the name it was gifted (Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha) and start delivering,” Professor Tau says. 

Above: Professor Te Maire Tau.

Left: University of Canterbury Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha library building.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUPPLIED

Magical Memories

Nā HANNAH KERR



"I REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE KIDS ... WE WERE JUST SO PROUD ... SO PROUD TO TELL PEOPLE WE HAD MĀORI BLOOD IN US."

KATHY COOMBES

IT WAS A BLUSTERY SPRING DAY AND THE FLOWERS I HAD PICKED FOR THE host of our interview were battered and bruised by the time they found their way into a vase and onto the table.

Regardless of the weather, the view from host Patti Vanderburg's house is spectacular over Waikouaiti Awa towards Waikouaiti Beach and the scenic headland of Matainaka. Today the ocean is wild with white caps. One of the only fishing boats left in Karitāne is trying to return home back across the bar.

Kathy Coombes and her mokopuna Shaunae arrive soon after we move furniture around in Patti's living room. The kettle is on, and the smell of fresh baking fills the house. Brendan and Suzi Flack arrive with pikelets crammed with jam and cream and, before we know it, this casual conversation between friends has become a feast. With coffee poured and plates full, Kathy's stories of her life here in our village begin to flow.

Kathy has lived in the small village of Karitāne most of her life. Growing up there she attended school on the site of the current Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki Rūnaka office.

Leaving school at 16, she went to Roxburgh to work in the health camps before meeting her future husband, Roy, at a party in Dunedin. Parties were something Kathy loved to attend and host. Laughing, she recalls one of her first: "I had a party after school, with my friends, with all of mum's fine china, and she came home to find us. That was it, no more parties, off to the crayfish shed, out of trouble."

Back in the day Kathy says 20 to 30 boats would be moored at Karitāne. Her brothers, Gary and Wayne, would go crayfishing. Her dad, Rata, and her mum, Betty, worked the crayfish shed, with Kathy joining occasionally after school, on weekends, or during school holidays. When asked about crayfishing seasons and the signs to look for when the kōura begin their walk, Kathy says, "I wouldn't have a clue. I've never been on a boat, I can't swim!"

Her brothers bought and built boats. Kathy says the income was steady if you were a fisherman in Karitāne at the time, so they knew the boats would pay for themselves. Her husband, Roy, had pleasure boats, not fishing boats, but she never set foot on one.

"Roy sunk his boat at Ahuriri rock," she says. "He was too far in, and the wave broke on him ... he didn't see it coming and got swamped. Took the roof off!"

Our eyes must have widened because she quickly followed up with, "He was OK ... but his mate wasn't, he couldn't swim and he had his bloody freezing works' white gumboots on. Roy managed to get him up and into a friend's boat, but Roy was worried about his own (artificial) leg, that it might fall off!"

The boats grew bigger in the 1960s and 70s as crayfishing started to boom. More fishermen joined the cavalry of boats leaving the Waikouaiti River mouth and the shed began sending packed crayfish overseas.



Above: Fishing boats moored at Karitāne in the 1970s.

Left, left to right: Kathy's mokopuna Shaunae, Kathy, Brendon Flack, Patti Vanderburg and Suzi Flack.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUPPLIED

"It went to America. It went to Australia too because I did get a letter from a girl in Australia," Kathy recalls. "I wrote my name in the crayfish tub, in the lid of the crayfish box so they could write back to me. And I got a letter from a girl in Australia, and also got a letter from a guy in America.

"He wanted to know all about it, so I had to get mum to help write a letter about what we did. So, I wrote and sent it to him, and he put it in the newspaper over there. Everyone knew what they were doing with the crayfish before they ate it."

After living for a time in Invercargill, Kathy and Roy moved back to Karitāne in 1980 to run the iconic Karitāne shop. "You don't really realise how much work you've got to do when you're in those places," she says.

While selling milk, bread and other general store stuff, she was also the post-mistress, and handed out money to beneficiaries and pensioners every week. The cash would arrive on the back of the bus in a mailbag, and she often wondered if people would try to steal it, but they never did. "If it was going to happen, it would've happened."

Kathy tried to group the beneficiaries into batches to make her job easier, as she had to ring through to Dunedin to confirm the totals were correct for each person. There was a telephonist in Waikouaiti who would transfer her calls through to the Dunedin office.

Newspaper delivery was also part of the job. At the time they owned a V8 Premier, which became the village alarm clock. When locals heard Roy and his V8 rumbling through the village early in the morning, they knew it was time to get out of bed. "If he was late, then everyone was late."

After selling the shop in the late 1980s, Kathy, Roy and her dad began chatting to David Ellison about what would eventually become the East Otago Taiāpure. Newspapers took an interest and Kathy says it divided the whole community. "They thought, 'Not allowed to fish, we can't go on the beach ... what are we going to do?' And they thought if we [Taiāpure] put signs up, they'll run them over anyway, just bowl them down. It had nothing to do with the beach or fishing, but that's what people thought."

At the time, newspaper articles were being published that reflected



a view Māori were attempting to lock people out of the fishery and decisions were being made along “racial lines” that pitted people “iwi versus Kiwi”, but Kathy says it was all nonsense.

Kathy had to catch a lot of the chatter in the wind: “We tried to keep to ourselves.”

“Didn’t go down to the pub?” Brendan asks. “Nope ... if we did no-one mentioned it!” she replies.

Today, the East Otago Taiāpure extends from Ohineamio (Cornish Head) past Te Awa Koiea (Brinns Point) near Seacliff to Waiweke (Potato Point), but the proposed area was quite a bit bigger.

Kathy says the Ministry of Fisheries didn’t like it as it was too big to police, so a smaller area, point to point, was eventually approved. “What changed?” Patti asks. “Persistence really,” says Kathy.

There was a big meeting in the old hall where Puketeraki Marae now stands, “Doug Kidd, the minister at the time, even came down for it,” Kathy recalls. The application was presented and supported by multiple clubs in the areas. It went to Parliament in 1992, but it took years for it to be finally actioned. Kathy says she can’t remember the exact moment she learnt they had been successful, but says she would have felt relief.

To this day Kathy is still a committee member and attends every meeting she can. “What do you reckon about the taiāpure now?” Patti asks. “It’s a good thing, I’m quite amazed how the community has changed their ways ... I haven’t heard anyone against it, mind you I don’t go out enough to hear it,” she laughs. Then, more seriously, “and the

students who are coming out, they’re doing a good thing. If we didn’t have them, I don’t think we’d be doing what we are.”

Kathy is referring to students from Otago University’s Marine Science Department, led by Professor Chris Hepburn. They have been coming to work and study the East Otago Taiāpure for years. “They appreciate feeling part of the community and they get a real sense of the place. In fact I have some who just keep coming back to visit; they’re my friends now.”

The work Chris and his students have done is incredibly valuable to Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki and the East Otago Taiāpure Committee. “I quite enjoy the students coming to the meetings, because you don’t know what they are going to come up with next, new stories about our area each month.”

Huriawa was officially closed in 2010, meaning no pāua could be taken. This decision was made by local takata tiaki exercising their kaitiakitaka in a bid to rebuild the pāua fishery, so future generations, like Kathy’s granddaughter, can have access to pāua and learn traditional mahika kai gathering skills from their families.

At Easter last year, an authorisation was written by Puketeraki Takata Tiaki for a small group of Puketeraki kaumātua to source a few pāua from the Taiāpure. Professor Khyla Russell along with Brendan Flack, Adam Keane and a couple of marine science students gathered a handful of pāua for the kaumātua. It was a beautiful occasion, and I would be lying if a few of us didn’t shed some tears, especially as one kaumātua

“THE STUDENTS (FROM OTAGO UNIVERSITY’S MARINE SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, LED BY PROFESSOR CHRIS HEPBURN) WHO ARE COMING OUT, THEY’RE DOING A GOOD THING. IF WE DIDN’T HAVE THEM, I DON’T THINK WE’D BE DOING WHAT WE ARE ... THEY APPRECIATE FEELING PART OF THE COMMUNITY AND THEY GET A REAL SENSE OF THE PLACE.”

KATHY COOMBES




Left: Pāua harvested from Taiāpure for local kaumātua. Far left: Gathering pāua from the Taiāpure for local kaumātua, Easter 2022.

popped his first pāua off a rock in over a decade. Kathy couldn't attend the day, but some were dropped off for her and she says it was great to finally taste it again.

Part of the reason the authorisation was granted was to see if the pāua that was taken would replenish itself and grow back to a suitable size. This information is extremely valuable to takata tiaki and marine scientists as they continue to research this unique piece of moana with the end goal of reopening the fishery so it can be used in a sustainable way and feed future generations.

The light began to fade in Patti's living room before we realised how long we had been talking. The day was ending, and it was almost time for dinner.

Just as plates were being cleared, I asked Kathy one last question: What does being Kāi Tahu mean to her. She looked a little confused, then laughed. "I remember when we were kids ... we were just so proud ... so proud to tell people we had Māori blood in us."

Her eyes light up and the cheeky grin returns. 

AT EASTER LAST YEAR, AN AUTHORISATION WAS WRITTEN BY PUKETERAKI TAKATA TIAKI FOR A SMALL GROUP OF PUKETERAKI KAUMĀTUA TO SOURCE A FEW PĀUA FROM THE TAIĀPURE. PROFESSOR KHYLA RUSSELL ALONG WITH BRENDAN FLACK, ADAM KEANE AND A COUPLE OF MARINE SCIENCE STUDENTS GATHERED A HANDFUL OF PĀUA FOR THE KAUMĀTUA. IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL OCCASION, AND I WOULD BE LYING IF A FEW OF US DIDN'T SHED SOME TEARS...

Photographs and words nā PHIL TUMATAROA

TE AO Ō TE MĀORI

A WINDOW INTO THE RICH LIFESTYLES OF CONTEMPORARY MĀORI









Eight years ago Libbie Faith was working in the Australian oil and gas industry doing industrial rope access work. “The money was great,” she says, “but morally I felt I wasn’t helping anybody, so I started volunteering with St John and realised I’d found what I wanted to do.”


Libbie spent four years with St John and completed their Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) programme to become clinically qualified as an ambulance officer. In 2019, she jumped at the chance to join the Taupō rescue helicopter and was able to work while she completed her Bachelor of Health Science degree through AUT distance learning to be a paramedic.

In August, Libbie (Kāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu) landed a job with Westpac Rescue Helicopter based at GCH Aviation in Christchurch; it’s a job she loves and it has focused her sights on the bigger picture of creating better health outcomes for Māori in Aotearoa.

“In the future I want to change it up and do Māori public health. I love my job and I really love flying, and I love helping people on what is sometimes the worst day of their life. A lot of the things that I see on a daily basis could be prevented through better access to healthcare, access to prescriptions, warm living environments, even just having petrol in the car.”

Libbie grew up in Te Kohurau and has returned south after 20 years living in and around Taupō. She says Taupō was starting to feel like home, but she wanted to be closer to her whānau with a sister in town, and her parents and 17-year-old daughter Niamh at boarding school down the road in Timaru.

Throughout Libbie’s schooling learning te reo Māori was important to her, inspired by her native speaking Taua Ngareta (Letty) from Moeraki. “Since primary school I’ve been learning te reo Māori; at high school I was speaking te reo a lot, but then I was away from it for so many years. So for the past eight years I have been taking te reo Māori classes and learning online.”

Libbie has also been learning raraka for the past year and is starting a course at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa in the new year. She has also joined a waka ama club since arriving. “It’s different down here, but I’m loving being back in Te Waipounamu.” 



AUKAHA



Capturing the magic of the tītī islands

Nā HANNAH KERR

In the wild depths of the Southern Ocean amid the roaring forties, sit the majestic tītī islands. These windswept islands are located north-east, east and south-west of Rakiura (Stewart Island) and are home to the tītī (muttonbirds or sooty shearwaters). Eighteen of the tītī islands are referred to as the Beneficial Islands, and only certain whānau Kāi Tahu have rights to harvest muttonbirds from them. The harvesting



Above: Plastic in bird stomach (This is becoming an all too common sight in the gizzard of the tītī chicks). Photo Jan Trow.
 Left: Ranui, Oraka (inside) and Kurenga McLaughlin. Photo submitted Moana McLaughlin, taken by 16-year-old Riki Bull. This is the pahori Manu i roto built by whānau members about 20–25 years ago.

season runs from 1 April to 31 May each year, with the families journeying to their homes on the islands to continue the traditions of their tīpuna. The tradition of birding helps whānau to survive the fiercely cold Southern winters, returning to the mainland strong with replenished wairua and enough tītī to sustain them. Their tīpuna are everywhere on the tītī islands, watching and guiding them as kaumātua pass down


the knowledge of this whenua and tradition to their mokopuna.
 A photography competition was run by the *Tītī Times* for whānau who were on the islands during the 2023 harvest season. The competition was judged by award winning photographer Amber Griffin.
 Riki Bull won the competition with the wonderful photo of Ranui, Oraka and Kurenga McLaughlin.



Competition judge Amber said, “The pluck house image was compositionally well-balanced and beautifully illustrated the unique environment. The joy emanating from the children’s faces is beautifully balanced by the well-lit greenery surrounding them. This decisive moment is perfectly exposed with a successful use of fill flash that can be difficult to achieve.”

Aurora Metzger won first place in the under-16 section with her stunning sunset photo on Kundy Island, a 19 ha tītī island south-west of Rakiura. Aurora has beautifully captured golden hour as the light seems to effortlessly coat the lush green canopy as the sun slips into the seemingly calm ocean to begin his daily slumber.

Kā mihi to all the other finalists! And thank you to all of the tītī island whānau who submitted pics for the competition. More images will be published in future issues of the *Tītī Times*.

Contact TinaNixon@gmail.com for more information on the Tītī Times. 





Above left: Toutouwai – Stewart Island Robin on Taukihepa. (Kanawera), photo Jimi Bull.

Above centre: Pōhā – kelp bags to store tītī. Photo Jacqui Caine Horomamae.

Above right: Max and Frank Thomas working birds on Poutama, photo Riley Thomas.

Left: Sunset on Kundy Island by Aurora Metzger, aged 15.

REVIEWS



LITTLE DOOMSDAYS

Nā NIC LOW
AND PHIL DADSON
MASSEY
UNIVERSITY PRESS
RRP \$45.00

REVIEW nā HANNAH KERR

Little Domsdays, written by Nic Low (Ngāi Tahu) with illustrations by Phil Dadson, is the fifth in the ground-breaking *Kōrero* series where writer and visual artist work together to create a stunning piece of literature.

Little Domsdays pulls the reader into a world where real life and fiction live so closely together it's almost impossible to tell them apart. Nic Low has cleverly woven tales of sacred texts from antiquity, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, with modern-day knowledge of climate change and technology. The story is set as the reader uncovers "the Ark of Arks" at Ōraka, placing Kāi Tahu as a holder of immense knowledge.

The narrator speaks directly to the reader, pulling them into the story, as if the tale could not be completed without them. *"You will be told to visit the great wharenuī at Ōraka and to find the stainless-steel waka huia. You are to take out the screens and power them up. As you have just done. You have found the Ark of Arks. You are reading it now. We have found you at last."*

While the theme of magic realism seeps from the pages, I found the underlying message was a call to action to fight for our whenua, our climate and our mokopuna to preserve the knowledge of our ancestors, their ancestors and the knowledge we continue to gain each day. Passing down traditional knowledge rather than passing on our old iPhone.

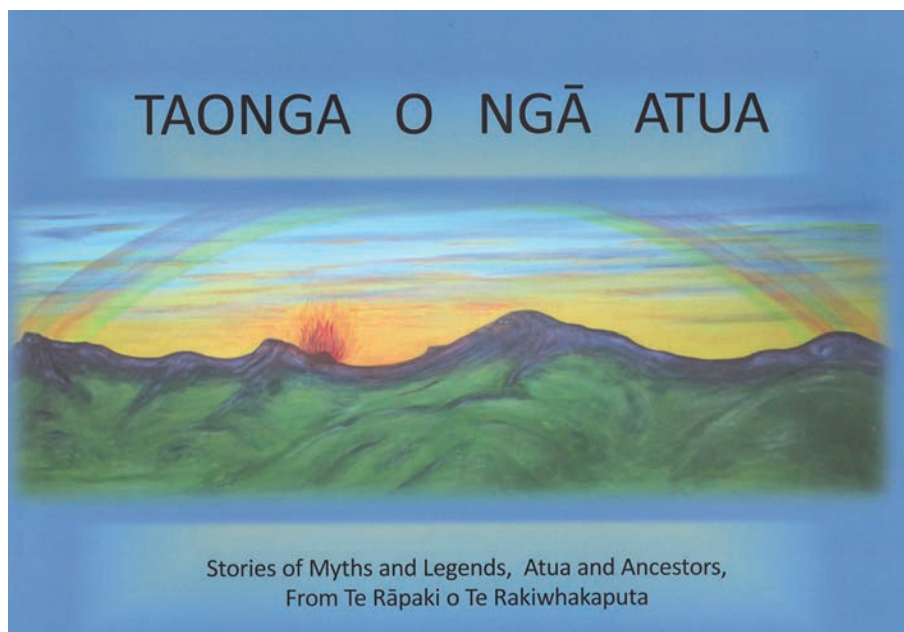
“Time is running out” is mentioned multiple times in various forms. The narrator then says: “There are no heirlooms in the age of tech. It is said that we found ways to pass on clean rivers, but so far this is a lie.”

This lets us know that what we are currently doing is not good enough.

The narrator could be seen as somewhat unreliable, especially given the use of language such as “It is said ...” to pass on information to the reader, but they are simply acting as a guide for the reader to discover the meaning of the tale on their own, rather than handing it to us on a silver platter.

This sort of writing reminds me of intricate, speculative fiction novels, where everything isn't as it seems. The narrator speaks to you at varied points throughout the story, intertwining tales of ancient texts, information about modern-day arks and tales of our tīpuna, merging the world's stories together as one.

Little Doomsdays is a stunning book. It has filled a void in the writing world by placing real Kāi Tahu knowledge alongside the land of magic realism. Lovers of speculative fiction will particularly enjoy it, but all will be left curious whether the tales about tīpuna hiding tools and knowledge, for those who know where to look, in the rugged whenua of Ōtākou and Murihiku, are true.



TAONGA O NGĀ ATUA

Nā REWI COUCH
INDEPENDENTLY PUBLISHED AND AVAILABLE AT LONDON STREET BOOKSHOP AND LESLIES BOOKSHOP IN ŌHINEHAU, LYTTTELTON
RRP \$40.00

REVIEW nā ILA COUCH

When it was decided the beloved, century-old hall at Rāpaki was no longer safe for use or salvageable, opinions were divided on whether to replace the colonial-style building with a carved meeting house. Ultimately the will for a Whare whakairo prevailed and by 2010 the Whare Tīpuna o Wheke at Rāpaki Marae was completed. *Taonga o Ngā Atua: Stories of Myths and Legends, Atua and Ancestors from Te Rāpaki o Te Rakiwhakaputa* is an illustrated, easy to read, pukapuka by artist, author, and Rāpaki kaumātua Rewi Couch who brings to the page the pūrakau that have been woven, painted, and carved into the very fabric of Wheke. 🇩🇪



Hannah Kerr (Ngāti Wheke, Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki,) is a Writer based in Ōtepoti (Dunedin).



Ila Couch (Ngāi Tahu – Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke) is a multimedia producer, writer, and filmmaker based in Ōtautahi.

Opinions expressed in REVIEWS are those of the writers and are not necessarily endorsed by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.

HE TAKATA



PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED



GRACE MANAWATU

NGĀI TAHU – KAIKŌURA

I was born and raised in Kaikōura with my amazing whānau. I am No.2 of seven in my whānau, and have six brothers. I moved to Christchurch in 2012, where I met my partner. Our first born, Cassius, arrived a couple years later. My son was my inspiration to return to study because it was important for me to be a good role model for him.

I studied nursing at Ara and graduated with a bachelor's degree. Halfway through my degree I thought it was the perfect time to have our second child and our son, Tobias, was born. I now have my dream job working as a district nurse in the community where I engage with people and see the impact I have on people's lives with the care I give. I want to be able to help my people by providing the information needed and showing that Māori are not just a number in statistics.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A GOOD DAY?

A good day is when the sun is out, being in the garden with a good book playing in my ear pods.

ONE THING YOU COULD NOT LIVE WITHOUT?

I couldn't live without my Kindle.

WHO OR WHAT INSPIRES YOU AND WHY?

My mum Moana inspires me with her kindness and resilience. She has taught me how to appreciate the small things and to always do my best in what I do.

HIGHLIGHT IN THE LAST YEAR AND WHY?

Taking my kids on a trip to see my brother in Australia. It was an amazing time being able to see where he has built his new life and to see my kids excited about the theme parks.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

Buying my first home.

FAVOURITE WAY TO CHILL OUT? FAVOURITE PLACE?

I love to chill out reading a book with a good plot.

My favourite place would have to be my home town in Kaikōura.

DANCE OR WALLFLOWER?

I'm definitely a wallflower. However, I can dance when around family.

WHAT FOOD COULD YOU NOT LIVE WITHOUT?

Absolutely could not live without pāua or prawns.


WHAT MEAL DO YOU COOK THE MOST?

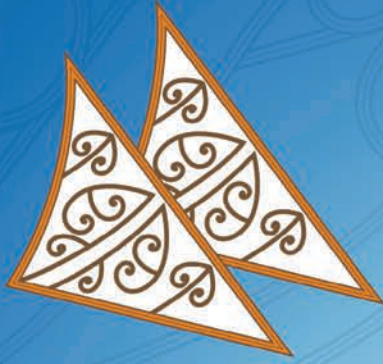
My go-to top dish would be a mince pasta bake or seafood pasta.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

Apart from having my two beautiful boys my greatest achievement would be getting my Bachelor of Nursing.

DO YOU HAVE AN ASPIRATION FOR KĀI TAHU TO ACHIEVE BY 2050?

A goal I have is to ensure future generations have the right tools for learning new skills to cultivate their lives. 



TE WAIPOUNAMU

TANGATA WHENUA PLACE NAMES
PRIOR TO EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT



Key to symbols

- Mununga
- Pā / kāinga
- Māhinga Kai
- Wahi Tapu / Drupa
- Significant Site
- River
- Cave
- Spring / Waterfall

Scale: 1:1,000,000



Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa

Rēkohu | Wharekauri



Te Moana-tāpokopoko-a-Tāwhaki



This QR code links the index on the back of this map, including the current official place names. Learn more about place names: www.land.govt.nz/products-services/place-names

