



Ngāraratunua Marae, Ngāraratunua, Whangarei

Ngāraratunua

Online Kōrero

DATE	30 October 2021
TIME	3-6pm
WRITTEN BY	Charles Royal
ON BEHALF OF	Reconnecting Northland
FOR	Waimā, Waitai, Waiora

Introduction

On Saturday, 31 October 2021, (3-6pm), the Te Kawa Waiora team convened an online kōrero with members of the Ngārara-i-tunua marae community. Members of other hapū communities attended and contributed as well. This online kōrero was created to replace the cancelled hui wānanga that was planned to be held at Ngārara-i-tunua Marae on 31 October and 1 November.

The kōrero commenced with karakia and mihi conducted by Charles and Winiwini Kīngi. Following this, each participant was invited to introduce themselves in a round of ‘whakawhanaungatanga’.

Charles then introduced the overall Te Kawa Waiora project and let attendees know that the project is nearing completion – the hui at Ngārara-i-tunua Marae being the second to last of the hui planned for the project overall.

Following the introduction to the project, Charles then facilitated a discussion regarding each of the three questions posed as the foci of research.

1. Research Question One

What is the traditional tangata whenua view of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs? (Expressed through such things as whakataukī, pepeha, waiata, kōrero, whakapapa and more.)

Charles explained that a significant feature of the Te Kawa Waiora project is to stimulate our tangata whenua communities to revisit and think deeply about their traditional knowledge as this reflects their tangata whenua/mana whenua relationship with their environment – their whenua, awa, maunga etc. It has been fruitful and enriching for communities to revisit their traditional kōrero as our people are constantly dominated by the Crown/Government and its ways of thinking.

Winiwini Kingi discussed several waterways that are important to the Ngārara-i-tunua community – including Rotomate, Waikoropupu, Wairua, Waiarohia and more. He mentioned two extinct volcanic cones (Ketenīkau, Parakiore) and that these areas are the traditional areas of the Ngārara-i-tunua people. Many of the waterways mentioned start above on the surrounding maunga and traverse underground before resurfacing as streams and rivers lower down.



Image 1: Winiwini Kingi sharing his kōrero on the many awa that are in the traditional area of Ngārara-i-tunua.

Others talked about the Hikurangi rēpō (swamp) area as the 'food basket' of the people, a place that sustained and nourished whole communities, including those travelling down to Kaipara. There was mention of the strong connection and relationships between the all the hapū that connect to the awa, all the way down to the Kaipara.

2. Research Question Two

What is the tangata whenua view of change in the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs since the 19th century? (Expressed through such things as letters to Government officials, petitions, court actions and manuscripts of various kinds.)

Regarding Question Two, there was significant discussion concerning the Hikurangi Swamp Drainage Scheme and its various aspects (such as the pump stations). This scheme turned the swamp from a ‘food bowl’ of the people to a large dairying area. The waterways of the swamp were also an important way by which the people were able to move quickly through the landscape.

3. Research Question Three

What is the tangata whenua view of the Wairoa River, its tributaries and environs today? What do they believe needs to be done now? What can tangata whenua communities do to improve the situation?

Winiwini called for the restoration of native species such as mānuka, harakeke (the traditional type) and tī kouka.

Chantez discussed the ongoing stresses and pressures of advocating and achieving change for the environment of the area. This relates to such things as the swamp pump stations. She explained that the aspiration of the Ngārara-i-tunua community is to see Hikurangi return to its natural state as a swamp. However, she is also clear about the barriers to achieving this, including the \$23M each year that is earned through dairying undertaken in the area.



Image 2: Chantez Connor-Kingi sharing her kōrero on the Hikurangi Flood Scheme and remedial work required.

Nikki Wakefield discussed how the iwi/hapū of the Whangārei lost so much land early in the colonisation of the area. She also mentioned the effects of the Resource Management Act 1991 and how it has not been effective in preventing environmental degradation. She touched on the need to create jobs and employment for hapū members so that they can be supported to achieve better environmental outcomes.

There was a wish to see the rēpō provide healthy traditional kai again for the hapū.

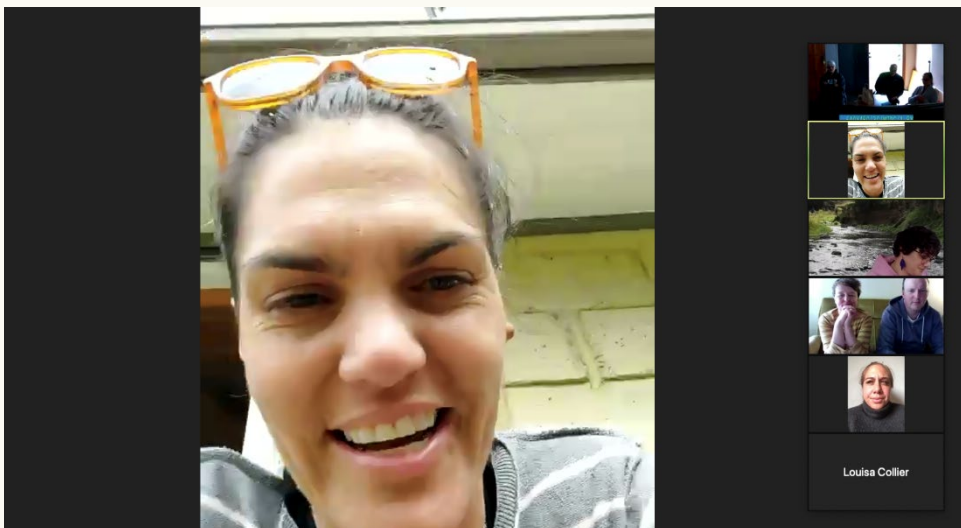


Image 3: Nicki Wakeford sharing her kōrero concerning settlement research and the amount of loss that has taken place and how to we achieve better outcomes for our people and the natural world.

4. Applying the Research

The final session of the online kōrero concerned ‘applying the research’. Charles explained that the Te Kawa Waiora team has been thinking a great deal about how to utilise the research to create change. He explained four key areas that the team is exploring, as follows:

- The development of a resourced, sustainable Kaitiaki network throughout the catchment area
- The creation of a ‘kawa waiora’ - new rituals and ceremonies of community and relationship to the waterways to nurture an ethic kaitiakitanga/deep care in those communities
- Meaningful contributions to Farm Environment Plans (Freshwater Plans)
- Creation of a Kaitiakitanga Planning template for Iwi/hapū/whānau/marae (tangata whenua) communities

Charles explained that the project has reached a stage where the team is summarising key points and messages articulated by the tangata whenua communities we have visited. One of the Key messages is as follows:

- Tangata Whenua communities recognise the Crown’s Treaty derived right to conduct ‘government’ or kāwanatanga. The Crown will continue to exercise this right into the future and tangata whenua communities do not seek to fundamentally inhibit the Crown from exercising this right to management in this regard.
- However, tangata whenua communities do not support an approach to environmental management in the future where the Crown and its agencies (local, regional, central Government) are the *only parties* resourced, sustained and authorised to undertake environmental management. This is for a number of reasons:
 - Tangata Whenua communities hold the Crown/Government responsible for the historical despoliation and damage to the environment leading to the poor health and wellbeing of the environment today.
 - Tangata Whenua communities are alarmed and deeply concerned by the limitations and problems of Crown/Government power and management and its ongoing inability to successfully address issues of environmental health and wellbeing.
 - Tangata Whenua communities believe that an environmental management system of the future that is dominated by the Crown/Government represents ‘more of the same’ and improvements are unlikely to be achieved.

- Consequently, tangata whenua communities assert that space and opportunity must be created to enable alternative approaches, including those conceived created and implemented by tangata whenua communities, to be explored, developed and applied for the benefit of the environment and for all people.
- Consequently, tangata whenua communities are deeply committed to developing approaches to environmental management to supplement those developed and implemented by the Crown/Government.
- For some years now, tangata whenua communities have been exploring and advancing an approach called *Kaitiakitanga* which is:
 - Led by tangata whenua communities
 - Grounded deeply in traditional indigenous knowledge/mātauranga Māori.
- Tangata whenua communities assert the need to develop ‘ground up’, tangata whenua led environmental management action that is resourced, sustained and authorised to undertake environment management activities. Such an approach would supplement the Crown’s efforts and approach.
- Tangata Whenua seek to advance Kaitiakitanga for two reasons:
 - Like the Crown, tangata whenua communities too have a right derived from Te Tiriti-o-Waitangi to maintain a critically important role in environmental management and seek to exercise that right.
 - Tangata Whenuatanga, mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori and so on, represent significant opportunities to develop alternative and innovative approaches to environmental management. This includes such things as an entirely different understandings of the environment, its place in human health and wellbeing and more.

Attendees:

Chantez Conner-Kingi

Lisa Clunie

Nicki Wakeford

Pari Peihopa

Winiwini Kingi

Anh Nguyen

Louisa Collier

Delaraine Armstrong

Kauangarua Kingi

Haami

Te Whata Paul

Gail Paul

Te Kawa Waiora Team:

Charles Royal, Celia Witehira, Hineāmaru Davies-Lyndon



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