

Independent evaluation of Reconnecting Northland's programme

Dynamic Evaluation Phase One Report

25 July 2024

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Glossary of terms and acronyms

A number of Māori terms used in this report are in common usage in New Zealand. These have been explained here to facilitate engagement with a wider audience.

| Terms | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Hapū | A subtribe or clan |
| Hui | Assembly, gathering, or meeting |
| Iwi | A tribe or nation, the largest social units in Māori society |
| Whakapapa | A line of descent from one's ancestors; genealogy |
| Kairaranga | A local community member who is onboarded by Reconnecting Northland to access all the services and resources available through Te Kete Hononga. The Kairaranga becomes the main facilitator for their community and central point of contact |
| Kaitiaki | Guardian. The process and practices of care for the environment are referred to as kaitiakitanga |
| Kaupapa | A foundational cause or purpose |
| Kawa | Ritual process, etiquette – a collection of tikanga that act as firm guidelines for activities and actions towards an identified goal |
| Mahi | Work or an activity |
| Mana | Prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma - mana is a spiritual force in a person, place or object |
| Manuhiri | A visitor or guest, also used to refer to exotic (non-native) forests and plants |
| Marae | The open area in front of a meeting house, often used in reference to the complex of buildings around the marae |
| Te Ao Māori | The Māori worldview, including knowledge, language, practices, customs, expressions, and sites of importance |
| Te Ao Mārama | The world of light and enlightenment based upon unbound wisdom and connection to the natural world which inspires, guides, and reforms our practices |
| Mātauranga Māori | Traditional Māori knowledge originating from Māori ancestors, including the Māori world view and perspectives, Māori creativity, and cultural practices |
| Taiao | Earth, the natural world, the environment, nature |
| Tangata whenua | Directly translates to 'human earth,' the original inhabitants of Aotearoa New Zealand |
| Tikanga | Māori customs and traditional values, what is done normally by people |
| Wānanga | The process of knowledge creation and knowledge sharing |
| Whānau | An extended family or community of related families who live together in the same area |
| Whanaunga | Relatives, blood relations |
| Whanaungatanga | Making and maintaining relationships |
| Whenua | Land, placenta |

| Acronyms | |
|------------|---|
| DIA | Department of Internal Affairs / Te Tari Taiwhenua |
| DOC | Department of Conservation / Te Papa Atawahai |
| MfE | Ministry for the Environment / Manatū Mō Te Taiao |
| MSD | Ministry of Social Development / Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora |
| TKH | Te Kete Hononga, Reconnecting Northland's main service delivery function |
| MEA | Mana-Enhancing Agreement, a social agreement based on the principle of mana |

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of Reconnecting Northland’s programme of work. The evaluation was led by an independent evaluator, Dr. Mathea Roorda, with support from a Reconnecting Northland staff member, Frankie Ancillotti.

About the Reconnecting Northland programme

Reconnecting Northland has four interconnected strategies and corresponding work programmes, at different levels of development. Their aim is to shift socio-ecological and social-economic systems in Northland to deliver regenerative outcomes for local ecosystems and communities, at scale. The strategies and associated work programmes include:

Connectivity Catalyst: connecting the best community-centric values and priorities and external resources, support, and agencies to achieve socio-ecological benefits on a regional level. Currently in design is a syndicated investment model called the Connectivity Partnership. Its purpose is to attract investment into Reconnecting Northland’s operational and community outreach activities.

Te Kete Hononga: a capacity and capability growth service that weaves together packages of support, tools, and resources to help realise community-led initiatives. A one-year trial reaching 16 community project groups was completed in June 2024.

Tapere: joined up community-led actions across whole catchments and large landscapes to achieve socio-ecological outcomes. To date, one Tapere has been established and two are in development. Reconnecting Northland is looking to scale this to a total of four Tapere across Northland in the next five years.

Nature-based enterprise: creating a regional programme that offers regenerative revenue streams for communities. Currently in design.

About the evaluation

This report is the culmination of the first phase of the Dynamic Evaluation - a ‘system’s approach’ to monitoring, evaluation, and learning that Reconnecting Northland has adopted to track the progress of its entire programme-level suite of activities. The Dynamic Evaluation will not be a one off – Reconnecting Northland plans to keep it alive by conducting it in phases that will each look at a set of different indicators. Once all indicators have been evaluated, Reconnecting Northland will circle back to the start and continue to track its progress and adopt learnings.

Four key evaluation questions (KEQs) and associated indicators¹ have guided the Phase One evaluation focus:

Table 1: Phase One evaluation Key Evaluation Questions and relevant indicators

| KEQ | Indicator |
|---|---|
| KEQ1: To what extent is Reconnecting Northland contributing to the development of new or stronger connections? | 1a: Identify (see) kaupapa partners at the niche level and the landscape level 1c: Bring together kaupapa partners in new ways around shared agenda for systems change |

¹ As outlined in Reconnecting Northland’s Dynamic Evaluation Framework (**Appendix B**). Reconnecting Northland selected specific indicators for the Phase One evaluation focus

| KEQ | Indicator |
|--|---|
| KEQ2: In what ways are Te Ao Mārama principles supporting and inspiring ecological practices, and transforming local economies? | 2aa: Shine light on the current system - purpose and consequences 2ab: Kaupapa partners in the system see clearly the issues and solutions to disrupt definition of 'good' |
| KEQ3: To what extent is Reconnecting Northland's and kaupapa partner's mahi contributing to the outcome of reclaiming healthy inflows and outflows? | 3a: Healthy inflows: Identify current inflows and healthy inflows needed to shift to next system: Kawa, tikanga, capital, knowledge, capabilities & skills, local ecosystems, water, energy, mauri 3b: Healthy outflows: Identify current outflows and healthy outflows in next system: Cultural wealth, whānau prosperity and wellbeing, thriving ecosystems, climate resilience, wairua, mauri |
| KEQ4: What else needs to happen to realise the next system's purpose? | 4a: Cluster of catchment-based solutions to realise next system's purpose |

Methods that informed the evaluation included a review of documents and resources produced by Reconnecting Northland; interviews and wānanga; and a survey of TKH Kairaranga and community group members. To keep the report relevant to terminology adopted by Reconnecting Northland, stakeholders are referred to as kaupapa partners throughout.

Evaluative assessment of Reconnecting Northland's programme

The findings are structured around the seven indicators outlined in Table 1. A summary of evidence to reflect on each indicator follows.

Indicator 1a: Identify (see) kaupapa partners at the niche level and the landscape level

Reconnecting Northland has strong connections at the niche (tangata whenua and community) and landscape (local government business units and a range of central government agencies) levels of the system. These have developed as part of hui and wānanga undertaken for research related to the Waioira River, creating collective visions and planning for Tapere, and through working with Kairaranga and 16 communities involved in the Te Kete Hononga (TKH) trial.

Other connections needed to shift the system from a fragmented state to a connected one are still emerging. A new collaboration is developing with three business partners; it has the potential to advance community and tangata whenua nature-based activities and enterprises and bring investment into environmental regeneration projects.

Beyond Aotearoa, Reconnecting Northland has partnered with two Australian counterparts in a trans-Tasman network called Conservation Across Large Landscapes Australia and New Zealand (CALLANZ). The network provides the opportunity to share information with other groups with a similar focus, and to learn from each other. Reconnecting Northland is also a member of a global collective of 12 indigenous guardians from five continents, the Indigenous Commons. The collective aims to establish a global participatory fund governed according to indigenous principles to protect the most critical bioregions on earth.

Indicator 1c: Bring together kaupapa partners in new ways around shared agenda for systems change

Reconnecting Northland is working with a cross section of communities to develop a shared vision and weave the connections they need to reach their aspirations. To date, one Tapere has been established and two are in development.

Several partners noted the alignment of Reconnecting Northland's policies and programmes to a Te Ao Māori approach, and how important it is in the context of Northland where 40% of the population is Māori. One example of this is Reconnecting Northland developing the concept for Mana-Enhancing Agreements (MEAs) which outline aspirations, a statement of belief, shared values and principles, agreed engagement processes, and the responsibilities of each partner. What sets a MEA apart is its intent to provide a Te Ao Māori-based code of conduct to guide how funders, community, iwi, and hapū groups interact with each other.

Government agencies see Reconnecting Northland as a catalyst, being able to plant a seed within communities with initial whanaungatanga and hui. An outflow of the TKH trial was that it had brought agencies and communities together in a place where they feel everyone is on the same side, "not just looking for things from each other." TKH has created a space where kaupapa partners can be open with each other about the needs and challenges that need to be addressed. One DOC Kairaranga described this as "huge" and very different to the space they are usually in as a DOC ranger and government employee.

A tension for Reconnecting Northland is ensuring there is alignment that benefits all involved. Business partners value Reconnecting Northland's approach to connecting people and recognise that it takes time to grow trust. However, some partners would like to see more momentum on progressing potential opportunities.

Indicator 2aa: Shine light on the current system – purpose and consequences

Reconnecting Northland staff are highly effective at facilitating a collective understanding of current issues and working with diverse partners to develop a plan for moving forward. There were numerous examples where engagement has been embedded in mātauranga Māori. Examples include working with tangata whenua and community groups to develop MEAs and weaving Te Ao Māori perspectives and Western science approaches in the Te Kawa Waiora research project.

An example of bringing Te Ao Mārama into decision-making spaces can be seen through Kōrero Tuku Iho, a reference group made up of Reconnecting Northland alongside local iwi, government representatives, and community leaders from the Kaipara. The reference group meets regularly to discuss weaving indigenous approaches into environmental management planning. The group seeks to facilitate experiences on marae and in other traditional Māori spaces to increase engagement and bring more of the community on board. Discussions that take place during Kōrero Tuku Iho meetings include the creation and adoption of a 'new' kawa as proposed by Te Kawa Waiora.

Indicator 2ab: Kaupapa partners in the system see clearly & disrupt definition of 'good'

Work to date has identified many challenges that make the regeneration of Northland's taiao difficult to achieve. These include social and climate change-related threats and man-made extractive practices. Te Kawa Waiora found that Māori communities are caught between wanting to reclaim mātauranga Māori to look after their lands and the costly reality of the contemporary system they find themselves in. Attempts made by multiple government agencies to absorb these communities into their existing universal systems have failed, and in some cases created further distrust through inconsistency of relationships and incremental funding.

Reconnecting Northland has facilitated planning sessions with tangata whenua and community groups. An early outflow of this work is that issues have been broken into more identifiable steps, and a vision has been shared with local and central government partners with a view to securing resources to progress the work.

Several government partners commented that Reconnecting Northland has provided them with opportunities to engage with community, where previously they had not been welcome. In this respect, Reconnecting Northland's role as a connector is highly valued.

Through the TKH trial, Kairaranga are now better prepared to engage with government partners and access the supports they and their communities need. Kairaranga say Reconnecting Northland staff have helped them understand what needs to be done to achieve their aspirations. Their involvement with TKH has given them a greater sense of hope for the future.

Indicator 3a: Healthy inflows: Identify current inflows and healthy inflows needed to shift to next system: Kawa, tikanga, capital, knowledge, capabilities & skills, local ecosystems, water, energy, mauri

Through the TKH trial, 10 Kairaranga have been engaged to work with 16 groups on taiao projects. A range of courses has been delivered to Kairaranga and community members, including training on predator trapping and use of chainsaws.

While the training was valuable for those that attended, several Kairaranga reported that courses were not always aligned to the needs of their community groups. Further, it was not always clear from the information they received what a course might include and who it was targeted at. Needs assessments were conducted with Kairaranga and their groups at the beginning of the TKH trial to inform the training that would be made available to them. However, at the time, one Kairaranga had not understood that this was one of the purposes of the needs assessments. This indicates the need to better communicate information about planning for an developing training opportunities to facilitate wider uptake of capability-building opportunities.

Access to funding is an ongoing challenge. Reconnecting Northland has recently attracted international philanthropic funding that embraces a systems' approach and aligns with Reconnecting Northland's kaupapa. However, the evaluation identified examples of resourcing that has not aligned so well. Where the alignment is missing, projects have either slowed down or weakened Reconnecting Northland's relationships with some kaupapa partners.

Reconnecting Northland is progressing a more sustainable financial model to support its programme and communities through a concept called the Connectivity Partnership, as well through its nature-based enterprises strategy. Both are in the early stages of development.

Indicator 3b: Healthy outflows: Identify current outflows and healthy outflows in next system: Cultural wealth, whānau prosperity & wellbeing, thriving ecosystems, climate resilience, wairua, mauri

Reconnecting Northland's existing reach through Tapere initiatives over the last two years encompasses approximately 100,000ha of taiao-related work. This has included:

- 95km of water way fencing
- 760,000 natives planted
- 176 training courses delivered
- 156 trainees received 47 certifications.

These achievements are direct outflows from capability and capacity growth activities and funding received by Reconnecting Northland, as identified in the previous section on inflows. Together, the above outflows have provided the foundation needed to regenerate biodiversity across the He Ripo Kau Tapere by creating a nature-based workforce. While it will likely take time to see the outcomes of waterway fencing and planting, there were many examples in the data of outcomes of training and capacity growth.

An outflow of capacity growth as part of the TKH trial is that Kairaranga and community members say they can now see a strategic pathway for their groups to continue the mahi. Capacity growth was also a feature of Te Kawa Waioira: embedded in the approach was a series of research training wānanga to ensure benefits for local communities would last beyond the life of the research project. There was an identified gap in iwi / Māori research capability in the region that this training sought to address.

A significant outflow of Te Kawa Waioira is the establishment of a ‘new’ kawa, combining new and old practices, with the intent of protecting and restoring the Waioira River and the communities that live alongside it. The ‘new’ kawa should include the role and impact of mātauranga Māori. Te Kawa Waioira investigated how a resourced hau kāinga² led kaitiaki network might operate and includes environmental planning tools with tangata whenua at the centre of decision-making. The notion of a ‘new’ kawa is an example of an outflow that is being explored by the Crown-iwi group Kaipara Moana Remediation, the adoption of which is being discussed through its Kōreo Tuku Iho reference group (thus becoming a new inflow).

Indicator 4a: Cluster of catchment-based solutions to realise next system’s purpose

Reconnecting Northland’s independence as a non-government organisation was considered a major strength that contributes to the success of its community-led approach. Kaupapa partners spoke about this factor as an enabler for the achievements of the He Ripo Kau Tapere and the TKH trial.

With a more deliberate partnership model in place, one government partner said they could explore different ways to support Reconnecting Northland to fill the gaps government cannot get into. This is a key aspect of the syndicated investment model being proposed through the Connectivity Partnership.

What needs to happen next?

Kaupapa partners suggested Reconnecting Northland needs to engage with industry to facilitate mindset shifts within the private sector and commercial spaces. This was considered crucial to ensure consistent funding for both community initiatives and Reconnecting Northland itself. It was widely acknowledged that government rarely fund multi-year initiatives, leaving industry as the natural enablers to create sustainable communities. More efforts could be made by Reconnecting Northland to bring industry along for the journey and explore the possibility of creating something that’s just as economically profitable as it is socially impactful.

Several kaupapa partners identified potential revenue streams that Reconnecting Northland could pursue based on its expertise in bringing partners together. One such opportunity is to provide contracts for service to industry and government partners wanting to develop MEAs with community groups.

Final reflections

An unintended outcome of the evaluation is that the findings bring to light five mechanisms that explicitly surface a rationale for Reconnecting Northland’s programme. As evidenced by the data, many of these

² Home people, local people, people who belong to the local marae

mechanisms are already producing some outcomes. Table 2 outlines areas where they could be further developed or supported.

Table 2: Systems change mechanisms / rationale and areas for further development.

| Mechanism / rationale | Areas for further development |
|--|---|
| Healthy relationships and connections: Needed to break down isolation, polarisation, division, stereotypes and binary approaches. | There is a need for Reconnecting Northland to clearly communicate its value-add to different kaupapa partners to attracting investment opportunities to where they are needed. Government and business partners should work with Reconnecting Northland to ensure partnerships are deliberate and result in mutually beneficial outcomes. |
| Understanding root causes: The need to understand the past to move forward. | To shift the dial away from the negative ecological and social effects inhibiting Northland, Reconnecting Northland and all kaupapa partners have a part to play in developing and attracting nature-based enterprise opportunities to ensure sustainability of the region. |
| Individual change: Transformative change will occur when you have a critical mass of individuals involved. | Support is needed to fund and grow TKH to the rest of Northland. Clear communication is key to improve the understanding of Reconnecting Northland's vision for Taitokerau and what it means to enable the emergence of the 'next' system, in order to encourage more people to join the kaupapa. |
| Community led: Change is more sustainable if it is community led | Identifying courageous funders who are willing to fund Reconnecting Northland's community-led approach – acknowledging the timings needed and trusting communities to find the solutions. |
| Institutional development: Resources need to be fairly allocated to guarantee equity. | To ensure wider impacts and efficiencies can be created, Reconnecting Northland and government and business partners would benefit from working alongside each other to determine the operational details of partnerships to avoid being in competition with one another and to plug each other's experience gaps. |

Recommendations

The recommendations below outline the respective influence that Reconnecting Northland and its kaupapa partners can achieve going forward, to facilitate the emergence of a connected 'next' system.

Reconnecting Northland

1. Improve communications to:

- **Articulate** the Reconnecting Northland vision in a way that is clearly understood by all partners.
- **Articulate** Reconnecting Northland's value-add: its role and the different way it supports and works with kaupapa partners at a regional, national, and international level.
- **Advocate** for and celebrate Reconnecting Northland's achievements more prominently.
- **Simplify** the language used in Reconnecting Northland's Theory of Change and the Dynamic Evaluation framework before the next phase.

2. Strengthening industry and private sector connections and partnerships to:

- **Progress** the nature-based enterprise strategy and unlock security of funding.

All kaupapa partners

- 3. Advocate for Reconnecting Northland and the mahi it is involved with to shift resource flows and encourage more partners to join the kaupapa.**
 - Kaupapa partners could use their respective networks to advocate for Reconnecting Northland and attract more resources and partners to the mahi.

Kairaranga and community partners

- 4. Embrace Te Ao Mārama and continue to take part in Reconnecting Northland’s initiatives to shift capabilities, skills, and knowledge at the grassroots level.**
 - Kairaranga and communities should continue to engage with Reconnecting Northland and keep providing valuable feedback about what is working well and what is not, as they have for this evaluation.

Central and local government partners

- 5. Actively engage with Reconnecting Northland to co-design Connectivity Partnership details, and operational arrangements for individual partnerships, to shift the patterns of relationships and power.**
 - It will be essential for government partners to work with Reconnecting Northland to clarify the projected outcomes of the Connectivity Partnership to ensure that the outcomes are mutually beneficial.
 - Government involvement in standing up the Connectivity Partnership will also signal that power and resources can be decentralised as opposed to directed.

Private funder partners

- 6. Support Reconnecting Northland’s programme and the timing required for its community-led approach to shift system-wide incentives.**
 - By valuing the success of Reconnecting Northland’s initiatives and the potential for scale, funders can be a key part of the shift to the ‘next’ system by reestablishing what is incentivised and supported.

Business partners

- 7. Actively work with Reconnecting Northland to establish each other’s contributions to the kaupapa and where experience gaps can be filled by one another to shift the culture of working together.**
 - Co-designing roles and responsibilities within partnerships and initiatives will shift traditional working culture to one that is built around cooperation and value alignment.

Future industry partners

- 8. Support new value creation by facilitating nature-based revenue opportunities for communities.**
 - Engaging with Reconnecting Northland can ensure connections to people and places where nature-based enterprise can be established.

1. Introduction

This section provides an introduction to Northland’s environmental and social context and Reconnecting Northland’s strategies and its work programme.

Northland’s environmental and social context

Te Taitokerau (Northland) is a narrow peninsula located at the northernmost edge of Aotearoa New Zealand, stretching from the Tāmaki isthmus to Cape Rēinga. The region’s subtropical climate has traditionally been a thriving environment for flora and fauna, as well as those who have called this place home. The last 180 years, as Aotearoa became colonised, have seen a critical decline in native biodiversity as forests have been felled and wetlands drained. Despite this decline, Northland still has a wide diversity of ecosystems, including a high proportion of unique, rare, and threatened native species.³

The colonisation process also impacted on tangata whenua. Many lost access to their land or were forced to move to sub-optimal areas that are now bearing the brunt of climate change.⁴ Much of this loss was to the Crown and predominantly took place over a 25-year period starting in 1840 and during World War I, while many Māori leaders were posted overseas. A Waitangi Tribunal report provides insights into the impact, whereby iwi members became separated:

...Not just from their land but from their own identity grounded in their relationship with the natural world. Whenua (land) was surveyed into a series of discrete and unrelated economic commodities, fragmenting the spiritual aspect of customary relationships with the whenua and hapū identity, so closely bound to that of their tupuna, all the names they had given to its many landmarks and waterways and all the places remembered for their history there over generations.⁵

The current population of Northland is 200,000, of which 36 percent are Māori. As noted in Te Kawa Waiora, tangata whenua are “profoundly saddened” by current state of Northland, by its poor health and diminished wellbeing:

They mourn the loss of indigenous biodiversity, the desecration of wāhi tapu/sacred sites, the pollution of waterways, the diminishment of water sources and so much more.⁶

Tangata whenua leaders also lament the number of their community members who are disconnected from the environment. They note that this disconnection was a critical feature of colonisation.⁷ Consequently, Māori leaders argue that subsequent actions should involve a holistic approach that includes the environment and people as one.

Where land is still in Māori ownership, it has remained underdeveloped. This is a combination of land being held by multiple owners, lack of government structures, the fact that it is often marginal land, and also because there has been insufficient capital to develop it. Over time, this land has regenerated naturally, and as a result now has high biodiversity values.

³ Edgar, Nick. "Reconnecting Natural Northland: New Zealand’s Large Landscape Initiative." *Linking Australia's Landscapes: Lessons and Opportunities from Large-scale Conservation Networks* (2013): 221.

⁴ <https://www.nrc.govt.nz/environment/climate-action/climate-change-in-northland/impacts-of-climate-change-for-maori/>

⁵ Te Paparahi o Te Raki . / Wai 1040, p. 1137-1138

⁶ Te Kawa Waiora Research Report (2022), p.177

⁷ Te Kawa Waiora Research Report (2022)

About Reconnecting Northland

Reconnecting Northland is a non-profit organisation established in 2012 that has set out to reimagine how community environmental efforts can evolve into innovative, connected, resilient, and financially sustainable ventures and projects – capable of working together to heal the social and environmental fragmentation inhibiting Northland’s prosperity. Reconnecting Northland works to achieve its vision: ‘in three generations, Northland is a flourishing tapestry of abundant and resilient ecosystems.’

The organisation has four interconnected strategies and corresponding work programmes, at different levels of development. Their collective aim is to shift socio-ecological and social-economic systems in Northland to deliver regenerative outcomes for local ecosystems and communities, at scale. The strategies are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Reconnecting Northland strategies and work programme status

| Strategy stream | Status of work programme |
|--|--|
| Connectivity Catalyst: Connecting the best of ‘bottom up and top down’ to achieve socio-ecological benefits on a regional scale. | In design: A syndicated investment model called the Connectivity Partnership is being developed to attract investment into Reconnecting Northland’s operational activities. |
| Te Kete Hononga (TKH): Reconnecting Northland’s main service delivery function, weaving together packages of support to help realise community-led initiatives, whilst also growing capability and resilience of the community. | One-year trial completed June 2024: Reconnecting Northland provides access to targeted tools, services, and resources to communities groups via place-based coordinators called Kairaranga. A key focus is on centralising resources and growing local capability and capacity to undertake environmental work. |
| Tapere: Joining up community-led actions across large landscapes to achieve greater socio-ecological outcomes. | In implementation (since 2017): Reconnecting Northland is working with three Tapere: He Ripo Kau (South Hokianga), Mangakāhia, and Whangaroa. All are at different stages of development. Over time, Reconnecting Northland plans to extend its work to create four Tapere across Northland. |
| Nature-based enterprise: Addressing the high volunteerism rate and reliance on competitive grant funding in the environmental area, this strategy aims to create a regional programme that offers regenerative revenue streams for communities. | In design: Reconnecting Northland has connected with several enterprises that invest in regenerative activities and is working to develop a network with industry to enable revenue opportunities for communities.. |

2. Overview of the Dynamic Evaluation

Dynamic Evaluation is a ‘system’s approach’ to monitoring, evaluation, and learning that Reconnecting Northland has adopted to track the progress of its entire programme-level suite of activities. Dynamic Evaluation has evolved from an understanding that no one ‘silver bullet’ can drive transformative change at the systems level, aiming instead to understand the impact of multiple interrelated interventions, solutions, and innovations, including synergies and unintended consequences.

The Dynamic Evaluation will not be a one off – Reconnecting Northland plans to keep it alive by conducting it in phases that will each look at a set of different indicators. Once all indicators have been evaluated, Reconnecting Northland will circle back to the start and continue to track its progress and adopt learnings.

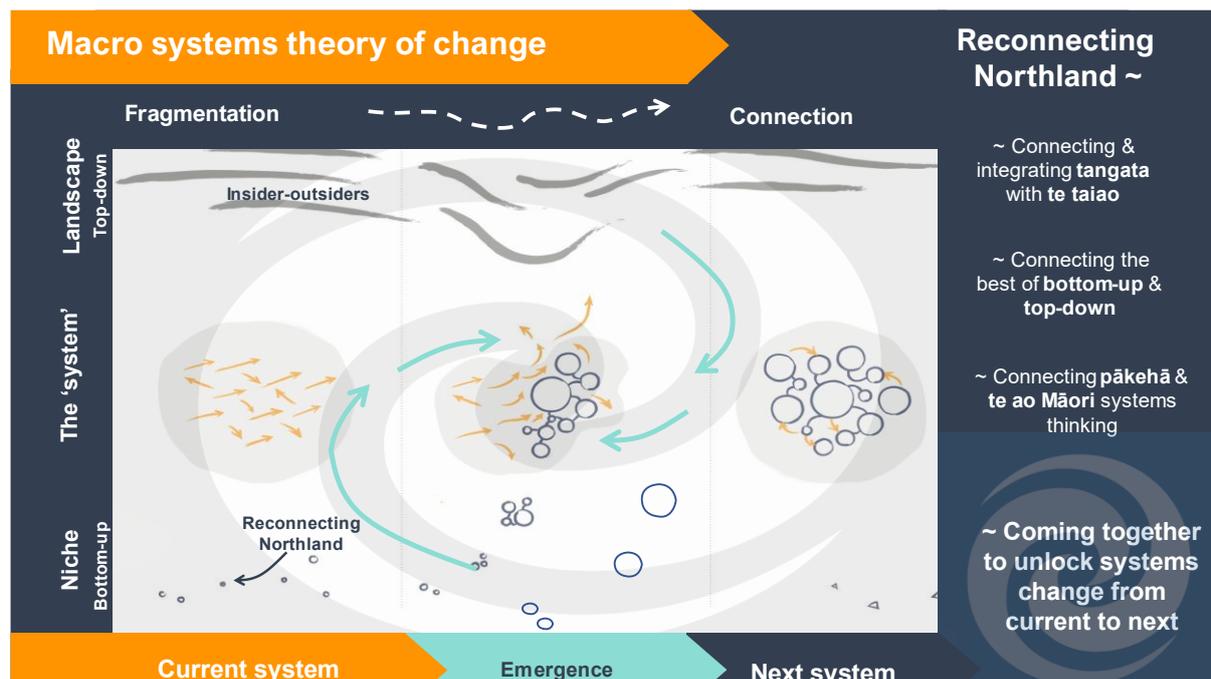
The overarching Dynamic Evaluation framework can be found at **Appendix B**.

Systems Theory of Change

In nature, water flows to where it is needed. – Funder

To guide the Dynamic Evaluation, Reconnecting Northland has developed the below system’s Theory of Change (Figure 1). It reflects that systems consist of parts; no one ‘partner’ alone can change a system.

Figure 1: Reconnecting Northland Theory of Change diagram



Systems change is not a predictable or linear process. Systems are changed by multiple and diverse partners – from both the ‘top’ and the ‘bottom’ – acting together in a dynamic relationship in response to real-time understanding of complexity, and to co-create new value. In this process of being dynamic, we begin to understand the link between our interventions and ‘systems change’ which requires change at each level. The Multi-Level Perspective diagram in Figure 1 above illustrates how systems change occurs.

At the ‘niche’⁸ level, Reconnecting Northland is engaged with other niche organisations and initiatives. The structural level drivers of the current system (the orange arrows) that create and perpetuate the system

⁸ Niches are described as local organisations or community groups committed to unlocking systems change

become disrupted by aligned niches influencing the ‘system.’ Aligned niches are infinitely more effective when they work together (vs alone). Collectively, niches can form the ‘seeds’ of a ‘next’ or ‘new’ system which bring with them new drivers. ‘Insider-outsiders’⁹ at the landscape/surface level play a critical role in supporting niche collectives to enable ‘new’ systems to emerge, resulting in new landscape/surface level outcomes.

Phase One evaluation

To keep the report relevant to terminology adopted by Reconnecting Northland, stakeholders are referred to as kaupapa partners throughout.

The Phase One evaluation has a learning focus. Its purpose is to gather insights into Reconnecting Northland’s programme-level suite of activities and their impact towards the emergence of a ‘new’ system. It is guided by four Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs):

- **KEQ1:** To what extent is Reconnecting Northland contributing to the development of new or stronger connections?
- **KEQ2:** In what ways are Te Ao Mārama principles supporting and inspiring ecological practices, and transforming local economies?
- **KEQ3:** To what extent is Reconnecting Northland’s and kaupapa partner’s mahi contributing to the outcome of reclaiming healthy inflows and outflows?
- **KEQ4:** What else needs to happen to realise the next system’s purpose¹⁰?

The Phase One report and recommendations will inform the next iteration of decisions about how Reconnecting Northland and its kaupapa partners can further support transformative systems change. The evaluation will also aid Reconnecting Northland and its kaupapa partners to remain accountable to the vision, to funders, and (in the case of Reconnecting Northland) its Board of Trustees.

To guide Reconnecting Northland through the first phase of the Dynamic Evaluation, and to add an extra layer of integrity to the process, an independent evaluator was engaged lead the Phase One evaluation, with support from a Reconnecting Northland staff member. The independent evaluator’s role was to provide oversight of data collection, analysis, and to make evaluative judgements against indicators selected for Phase One (outlined in Table 5). The independent evaluator has also made recommendations to improve and support the next phases of the Dynamic Evaluation to simplify and streamline the process.

Through discussions with Reconnecting Northland staff and the interviews with kaupapa partners as part of the data gathering process, it was established that some of the wording used in the Dynamic Evaluation framework and associated indicators were not clear. Thus, this report includes changes to several terms.

These changes were made in consultation with Reconnecting Northland, and include the following:

- ‘Niche’ has been replaced with ‘community and / or tangata whenua groups’ and ‘business partners’
- ‘Insider outsider(s)’ has been replaced with ‘champion(s)’

⁹ Insider-outsiders are described as those who currently function within the system (government, industry) but can see that it is broken and needs to shift in order to achieve greater connection between people and nature.

¹⁰ With agreement from Reconnecting Northland, KEQ4 was revised to be more future-focused. The original was: In what ways is Reconnecting Northland’s and kaupapa partner’s mahi contributing to a cluster of catchment-based solutions to realise the next system’s purpose?

- ‘Players’ has been replaced with ‘kaupapa partners’ or ‘partners’ – referring to Reconnecting Northland’s stakeholders.

Care has been taken throughout this report to define other concepts used by Reconnecting Northland, such as ‘fragmentation,’ ‘Te Ao Mārama,’ ‘systems,’ ‘systems change,’ and ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top down.’

It was also found that Key Evaluation Question 4 (KEQ4), as originally drafted in Phase One planning documents, was not enabling the type of useful information that would inform the recommendations.

Methods

Multiple methods informed data collection for the evaluation. They included:

- a review of more than 30 documents and resources produced by Reconnecting Northland
- interviews and wānanga¹¹ with kaupapa partners (Table 4)
- a survey of TKH Kairaranga and community group members. The survey was sent to 16 community groups; representatives from 10 groups responded (including a total of 15 survey responses).

Table 4: Number of partners who participated in an interview or wānanga

| Interviews / wānanga conducted with: | No. of interviews | No. of participants |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Reconnecting Northland | 2 | 4 |
| Central government | 4 | 7 |
| Local government | 2 | 4 |
| Private funder / trust | 2 | 3 |
| Business organisations | 3 | 5 |
| Kairaranga & community members | 2 | 13 |
| TOTAL | 15 | 36 |

The data were thematically analysed, and progress on indicators was assessed against the below performance ratings (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Performance scale used for the Phase One Dynamic Evaluation

|  Whakatō Kākano Seed Planted |  Tinakutanga Germinating |  Tupu New Shoots |  Tupu Kerekere Strong Growth |  Pāpua Mature |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Work related to this indicator are in design or in discussion with kaupapa partners. | Overall, evidence of some activities being implemented or trialed. Too early to see outputs or outcomes. | Overall, evidence of good performance with some areas that need to be nurtured, redesigned, or revised. There is evidence of outputs, but no outcomes. | Overall, evidence of strong performance and good outputs are evident, with one or two exceptions. There are one or two examples of outcomes for taiao and/or community. | Evidence of strong or exemplary performance, with no exceptions. There are numerous examples of outcomes for taiao and communities. |

¹¹ facilitated by Awa Associates who led a separate but parallel evaluation of the Te Kete Hononga trial

Limitations of the evaluation

Due to time and resource limitations, the perspectives of tangata whenua and community partners were limited to those who attended the wānanga or completed the online survey. It is suggested that Reconnecting Northland sense-check the key findings and recommendations of this report with tangata whenua and community partners, to facilitate a shared understanding of issues and next steps going forward.

More detailed information about the evaluation methods is included in **Appendix A**.

3. Phase One Evaluation Findings

The Phase One evaluation findings are in four sections that align with the outcome areas identified in Reconnecting Northland’s Dynamic Evaluation framework (**Appendix B**). Findings are based around the four Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs), and indicators of success. Each section starts with an assessment of progress against each indicator. This is followed by evidence to support the assessment.

Table 5: Outcome areas, associated KEQs and indicators

| Section / outcome area | Alignment of KEQs and indicators |
|--|--|
| <p>Connect across all levels Strong and connected partnerships across tangata whenua, community, industry and government.</p> | <p>KEQ1: To what extent is Reconnecting Northland contributing to the development of new or stronger connections?</p> <p>Indicator 1a: Identify (see) Kaupapa partners at the niche¹² level and the landscape¹³ level.</p> <p>Indicator1c: Bring together partners in new ways around shared agenda for systems change.</p> |
| <p>Reimagine system’s purpose Te Ao Mārama principles inspire ecological practices and transform local economies. There is increased capacity and capability to deliver ecological enhancing activities.</p> | <p>KEQ2: In what ways are Te Ao Mārama principles supporting and inspiring ecological practices, and transforming local economies?</p> <p>Indicator 2aa: Shine light on the current system – purpose and consequences.</p> <p>Indicator 2ab Kaupapa partners in the system see clearly the issues and solutions to disrupt definition of 'good.'</p> |
| <p>Reclaim healthy inflows and outflows Increased capacity and capability to deliver ecological enhancing activities. Joined up resourcing and nature-based enterprises support ecological activity at scale. Increased healthy inflows enables ecological and livelihood-based activities with healthy outflow creation.</p> | <p>KEQ3: To what extent is Reconnecting Northland’s and kaupapa partner’s mahi contributing to the outcome of reclaiming healthy inflows and outflows?</p> <p>Indicator 3a: Identify current inflows and healthy inflows needed to shift to the next system: kawa, tikanga, capital, knowledge, capabilities and skills, local ecosystems, water, energy, mauri.</p> <p>Indicator 3b: Identify current outflows and health outflows in next system: cultural wealth, whānau prosperity and wellbeing, thriving ecosystems, climate resilience, wairua, mauri.</p> |
| <p>Activate next system Tapere and nature-based enterprises enhance the mauri of the whole system. Thriving ecosystems provide wellbeing and livelihood for Northland’s people and communities.</p> | <p>KEQ4: What else needs to happen to realise the next system’s purpose?</p> <p>Indicator 4a: Cluster of catchment-based solutions to realise next system’s purpose.</p> <p><i>This section also identifies next steps for progressing Reconnecting Northland’s strategies.</i></p> |

¹² Community

¹³ Regional, national, and international

Connect Across all Levels

Overarching outcome: Strong and connected partnerships across the field of tangata whenua, community, industry and government

Reconnecting Northland's vision includes the establishment of enduring connections across te taiao (the natural world), tāngata (people), rawa (resources), and mauri (spirit or life force). As outlined in Reconnecting Northland's Theory of Change, the current system is viewed as fragmented, i.e. many people are disconnected from te taiao; some are disconnected from the mauri of their environments; there is disconnection between community and resources; and disconnection between Western / colonial and Te Ao Māori systems thinking.

Indicator 1a: Identify (see) kaupapa partners at the niche level and the landscape level



Overall assessment: Tupu / New Shoots

Relationships with community / tangata whenua groups and government agencies are growing strong. Relationships with business partners are emerging but need additional resource and focus to progress nature-based activities.

Over the past six years, Reconnecting Northland has connected with numerous community groups and tangata whenua in the region. These connections have included facilitating hui and wānanga for research related to the Waiora River, creating collective visions and plan for Tapere, and to onboard and grow the capability of the 10 Kairaranga working with 16 communities on Te Kete Hononga (TKH) trial over the past year.

The Kairaranga role has been critical to engaging with tangata whenua and community groups. Key to this role is that they have whakapapa connections to the communities they are working with:

There are people from outside organisations that meet our community, but when you are plugged in you get so much more done. - Kairaranga

I don't know we would've gotten this far in [name of place] without that on the ground engagement. We're very stretched and can't be everywhere at once, but it's also about the relationships and with a [kairaranga] who has whakapapa to the area, it's a big strength. - Government partner

Four Kairaranga were DOC employees, working 0.2FTE with their community groups as part of the TKH trial. The DOC Kairaranga reported they had better community engagement than they would normally achieve as DOC rangers.

Survey responses from Kairaranga indicate that their respective communities value the collaboration they have with Reconnecting Northland. All survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their communities shared areas of common interest with Reconnecting Northland and are keen to keep the collaboration going. Further, all but one¹⁴ said they view their collaboration with Reconnecting Northland as unique.

Overall, survey responses indicate community collaboration with Reconnecting Northland is either strong (8 responses) or heading in the right direction (7 responses). Time may be a key factor differentiating the

¹⁴ One person indicated they were not sure if their community's collaboration was unique

two groups, as most of the latter were communities that joined the TKH trial at least six months after the others. Further reflections from the survey of Kairaranga are included in the section on *Healthy Inputs*.

The quality of Reconnecting Northland staff is a factor that supports a deepening connection with those they work with. Reconnecting Northland staff are viewed by kaupapa partners as caring, dedicated, passionate, and mission driven. As one Kairaranga noted:

[Reconnecting Northland's] biggest asset is the people...[they] are so nice, lovely and caring. It makes us actually want to work with them.

Kairaranga and community members credited Reconnecting Northland staff with motivating them to get involved in activities they might not usually be open to. These activities included project management training, conversations with government agencies, and seminars with impact investors about nature-based enterprise opportunities.

Reconnecting Northland has strong connections with some local government business units and a range of central government agencies. Some central agency and local government partners sit on Reconnecting Northland's board as non-voting members. Several had co-funded projects in collaboration with Reconnecting Northland, such as the Te Kawa Waiora research project.

Reconnecting Northland's position as a non-government organisation is key to connecting government and community / tangata whenua. As one government partner noted:

Especially for a Crown agency, there's resistance from some communities (about engaging with government). So the way Reconnecting Northland is positioned [...] they can foster those relationships and start those introductions between the services that we provide.

Reconnecting Northland has developed a collaboration with three businesses with a taiao focus. One supports landowners to plant a diverse range of exotic and native trees by fronting the initial cost of tree planting and forest management. As the forests generate carbon credits through the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme, credits are sold, and the shares are returned to landowners. Two other businesses are in discussion with Reconnecting Northland about developing a regional restoration programme. If successful, the venture has the potential to bring international funding to taiao and Tapere initiatives.

All three business partners have the potential to advance community and tangata whenua nature-based enterprises or investment into Northland's environmental projects through the Connectivity Partnership, or the nature-based enterprise strategy. All partners describe their collaboration with Reconnecting Northland as important but still in the early stages. Further reflections on the next steps needed to progress Reconnecting Northland's strategies are included in the section on *Activating Next System's Purpose*.

Business partners see Reconnecting Northland as having an important role as a connector, providing a gateway to landowners who may be interested in nature-based revenue opportunities on their whenua, or who want to access funding for their projects:

When you engage with Māori landowners, we talk about having 1000 cups of tea. The idea is that Reconnecting Northland would do that. If we can bypass that, that becomes a significant opportunity for me. So my line of sight is on their existing relationships and connections with communities. We're a commercial outfit, we don't need that relationship connections-building capacity in-house, we just need people to get involved and make the connections.
– Business partner

Beyond Aotearoa, Reconnecting Northland has partnered with two Australian counterparts in a trans-Tasman network called Conservation Across Large Landscapes Australia and New Zealand (CALLANZ). The other initiatives are Gondwana Link, based in southwestern Australia and Great Eastern Ranges, on the east coast of Australia. The network brings the opportunity share information and learn from each other. To date, the network has collaborated on a ‘Art of Connecting’ webinar series, which looked at connectivity conservation as a direct response to climate change. A representative from Great Eastern Ranges noted that the strong connection Reconnecting Northland has with tangata whenua and Te Ao Māori has been particularly useful:

...It has inspired me to aim higher. It's too easy sometimes to lose sight of the fact that we're all so similar, and it's often by working across borders that we can identify new solutions to problems.

Reconnecting Northland is also a member of a global collective of 12 indigenous guardians from five continents, the Indigenous Commons. The collective aims to establish a global participatory fund governed according to indigenous principles to protect the most critical bioregions on earth. This connection is important, as it aligns Reconnecting Northland to other groups that embody indigenous principles in the way they work.

Indicator 1c: Bring together kaupapa partners in new ways around shared agenda for systems change



Overall assessment: Tupu / New Shoots

One Tapere has been established, with new connections being made across communities as a result of support from Reconnecting Northland. Mana Enhancing Agreements, informed by a Te Ao Māori code of conduct, have been adopted by community and government partners.

Evidence of progress

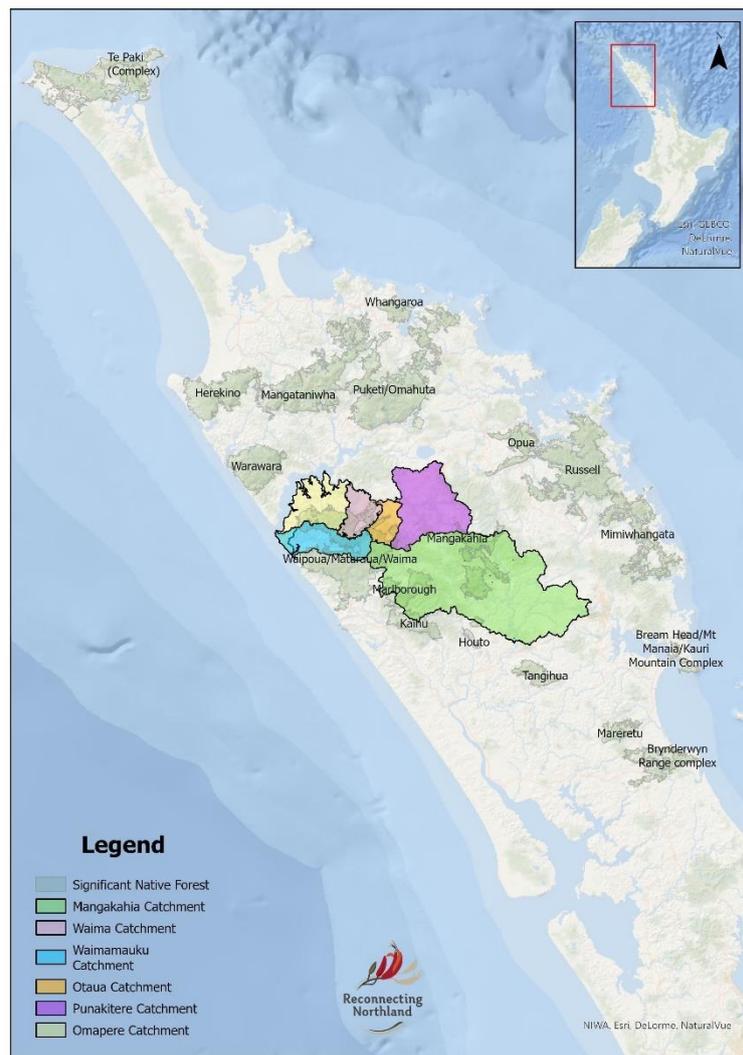
Reconnecting Northland is working with a cross section of communities to develop a shared vision and weave the connections they need to reach their aspirations. To date, one Tapere named He Ripo Kau has been established in the South Hokianga. It encompasses five catchment areas, as depicted in Figure 3 below. Communities within He Ripo Kau have developed a shared vision and completed five Taiao plans to operationalise this vision.

As a result of He Ripo Kau and the TKH trial many of the same groups were a part of, new connections have been made across communities. For example, one Kairaranga commented they had met:

Other hapū in the Hokianga [...] who are at different stages and drawing those learnings from them of what's worked and what hasn't. What they can see in te taiao space [now] is connection in the Hokianga. Where they're at now is at the beginning of actually getting the jobs done.

Several partners noted the alignment of Reconnecting Northland's policies and programmes to a Te Ao Māori approach, and how important it is in the context of Northland where almost 40% of the population is Māori. One example of this is Reconnecting Northland implementing the concept for Mana-Enhancing Agreements (MEAs) which outline aspirations, a statement of belief, shared values and principles, agreed engagement processes, and the responsibilities of each partner. What sets a MEA apart is its intent to provide a Te Ao Māori-based code of conduct to guide how funders, community, iwi, and hapū groups interact with each other. MEAs have been signed by communities engaged in the He Ripo Kau Tapere.

Figure 3: Established He Ripo Kau Tapere areas and developing Mangakāhia Tapere areas



Reconnecting Northland also worked with six other partners¹⁵ to develop a MEA for the Waimā Waitai Waiora Partnership. The Partnership started with funding from the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) Freshwater Improvement Fund and a kaupapa to improve the health, wellbeing, and mauri of the Waiora River with positive flow-on effects for all of the Kaipara. In a hui held to reflect on the last five years of the partnership, the MEA was identified as having pushed the partnership, especially Northland Regional Council (NRC) as the administrator of the MfE funding, “to go beyond business as usual, and investigate other options (for ways of working).”¹⁶ These included a hapū coordinator role being implemented within NRC, new policy to allow remuneration of volunteer members, targeted assistance to Māori-owned farms and farming trusts, and partnership meetings being held on marae.

Partners reflected that the MEA was not perfect:

It did not reflect real partnership in equity and decision making. It did however provide a platform for diversity of thought and a safe place to share and work through any issues.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ngā Kaitaki O Ngā Wai Māori, Te Roroa, Northland Regional Council, Te Uri O Hau, Living Water, Million Metres Streams Project

¹⁶ Waimā Waitai Waiora Summary Report (March 2023)

¹⁷ Waimā Waitai Waiora Summary Report (March 2023)

The importance and appreciation of a community-led approach was evident in all our interviews with kaupapa partners. The implications, when this did not occur, were also observed by Reconnecting Northland and its partners. By example, a Reconnecting Northland team member described an opportunity that was funded by the Jobs for Nature initiative, a government programme (2019-2024) that managed funding across multiple agencies to support community environmental efforts across Aotearoa. A stipulation of the funding for Northland initiatives was that the contract be held by Reconnecting Northland and not individual community groups.

This presented a predicament for Reconnecting Northland – on one hand, the opportunity provided access to funding for environmental work that included training and employment opportunities; on the other hand, the funding criteria were misaligned with the Taiao plans that had been developed for the He Ripo Kau Tapere groups. The opportunity also came with little time for consultation with relevant communities. Nonetheless, Reconnecting Northland took the contract, and some key ecological outputs were achieved; however, this came at a cost:

[It] created significant tension (between Reconnecting Northland and some communities) that we had to work through and it wasn't overcome and resolved immediately. We had to rebuild that trust over subsequent years. – Reconnecting Northland

Government agencies see Reconnecting Northland as a catalyst, being able to plant a seed within communities with initial whanaungatanga and hui. As one government partner observed:

Reconnecting Northland has planted the seed. So the seed is there, we just have to keep engaging with (Reconnecting Northland) and when the time is right they'll circle back to us. It's about timing, we don't want to be seen pushing our way in there and saying 'hey, we're here'. That's the thing with [Reconnecting Northland, they'll] let us know when [the community] is ready, when they're investment ready and when they are ready to receive the Crown.... And that's the beauty of Reconnecting Northland being in that space, having people understanding those spaces and sharing that information about when and who to engage with.

Further, a DOC Kairaranga noted that a key outcome of the TKH trial was that it had brought agencies and communities together in a place where they feel everyone is on the same side, “not just looking for things from each other.” TKH has created a space where kaupapa partners can be open with each other about the needs and challenges that need to be addressed. This DOC Kairaranga described it as “huge” and very different to the space they are usually in as a DOC ranger and government employee.

To bring community and government partners together, Reconnecting Northland has regularly hosted events on marae or community spaces such as the Hihiaua Cultural Centre in Whangārei. These events have included the launches of Te Kawa Waiora research project and the TKH trial. Events such as these have been opportunities for community members share their stories to government partners in an environment that is mana-enhancing and quintessentially Māori, as opposed to agency buildings and offices which some find overwhelming. By example, a government partner said they met staff from two other agencies at a TKH event and they had gone on to do more work together.

A tension for Reconnecting Northland is ensuring there is alignment that benefits all involved. Business partners also value Reconnecting Northland's approach to connecting people, and while one partner described this as “non-threatening, compassionate,” at times this has slowed down momentum on progressing the nature-based enterprise strategy.

Reimagine System's Purpose

Overarching outcome: Te Ao Mārama principles inspire ecological practices and transform local economies; Increased capacity and capability to deliver ecological enhancing activities

For Reconnecting Northland, Te Ao Mārama represents the 'next' system, a world free from confusion, competition, and conflict; a new world of clarity and peace inspired by kinship, balance, and reciprocity with the natural world. Te Ao Mārama is Reconnecting Northland's 'why' – and *Reimagining System's Purpose* reflects on Reconnecting Northland's aspiration to illuminate the path towards the emergence of and into Te Ao Mārama.

Indicator 2aa: Shine light on the current system - purpose and consequences



Tupu Kerekere / Strong Growth

Kaupapa partners understand the purpose and consequences of the current system. Te Ao Mārama principles, whilst not necessarily named as such by kaupapa partners, are key drivers in almost all of Reconnecting Northland's initiatives and partnerships.

Evidence of progress

Facilitating a collective understanding of the issues faced by a particular group is key to how Reconnecting Northland works with kaupapa partners. This can be interpreted as a principle of Te Ao Mārama, metaphorically defined as coming out of the 'night' of conflict and chaos and into the 'day' of peace and resolution. While 'the problem' might look different depending on the kaupapa partner and the context they function within, creating and documenting a shared understanding of the most relevant issues faced helps to identify areas Reconnecting Northland can add value to. It also begins to paint a common vision for how to achieve desired outcomes and aspirations.

An example of this comes from a collaboration between Reconnecting Northland and several business partners. At the first official meeting, fragmentation and chronic underinvestment were identified by all involved as the current key inhibitors for transformational change in the taiao space in Northland. From there, the business partners and Reconnecting Northland established that unprecedented collaboration between government, businesses, and communities, embedded in mātauranga Māori, was the approach required to progress real systems change.

Reconnecting Northland has a long track record of incorporating mātauranga Māori and Western science, another key principle of Te Ao Mārama. For example, Te Kawa Waiora, project managed by Reconnecting Northland, recognised that bringing diverse parties together using mātauranga Māori would be more effective for the community sustaining the Waiora River than one based solely on Western scientific knowledge. Several kaupapa partners saw the connection of Western and Māori approaches as a key strength of this project.

Mātauranga Māori can help guide a process of recovery or restoration of the fundamental relationship with the natural world, rather than being superior to it.¹⁸

One of the distinctive contributions that tangata whenua can bring to ecological activities is an holistic vision and Te Ao Māori perspectives about how to look after and sustain the environment.¹⁹ This is because tangata whenua have a kinship-based relationship with the natural world, a belief that humans are part of

¹⁸ Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, CALLANZ Art of Connecting webinar 1 - We Are Nature

¹⁹ Te Kawa Waiora Research Project (2022)

the natural order, not superior to it. Evidence of this can be found in the aspirations set out in the He Ripo Kau MEA: to ensure that the health and wellbeing of the Hokianga – its lands, waters, river, sky, tribes and people – is restored, uplifted and maintained. Thus, the environment and its people are viewed as one.

Weaving of indigenous and Western knowledge was also present in Reconnecting Northland’s submission to the government’s consultation for the development of a biodiversity credit scheme in late 2023. In their submission, Reconnecting Northland advocated for seven mātauranga Māori principles to be at the core of the government’s proposed system, to improve effectiveness and guide applicability:

1. **Tangohanga:** the acquisition of social, cultural, environmental, and financial wealth
2. **Tohatoha:** the distribution system based on need, participation, and contribution
3. **Kawa:** a collection of protocols that act as guidelines for actions towards an identified goal
4. **Whakapapa:** understanding the genealogical connections and act in ways that strengthen them
5. **Utu:** reciprocity with interest that demonstrates generosity to others
6. **Tohungatanga:** specialist technical and local input for successful biodiversity protection
7. **Kaitiakitanga:** upholding guardianship for future generations

One business partner commented that Reconnecting Northland’s approach to successfully giving expression the above principles stems from an ability to enter different contexts without a paternalistic, top-down view. This view was supported by a funder who had observed Reconnecting Northland starting off new connections and partnerships by establishing what value add they can bring to a particular kaupapa. This enabled a working relationship to evolve into more of a weave, made up of different sources of knowledge and expertise.

What I know of communities is when you do that in a very mana-enhancing way, you’re never forgotten. – Funder

One government partner emphasised on how well Reconnecting Northland acknowledge what they call ‘hoa haere’ – all of those who have come along with them on a journey. In their experience working with communities, you will go much further when you do not forget all who have worked towards a particular goal alongside you. One funder also highlighted that Reconnecting Northland is skilled in its ability to walk into the water with people. They had heard community members comment on this, and reflected that Reconnecting Northland is seen to be taking a very humble and open approach to engagement.

Several kaupapa partners described Reconnecting Northland as a responsive, transparent, learning organisation:

The impact mahi that they’re doing, part of that for [us] is seeing how they’ve pivoted and become more connected and relevant to what they offer to communities. – Funder

This does not just apply to their partnerships with community; another example was provided by a funder. They had observed Reconnecting Northland pivoting its approach to reporting based on changes happening at the time. This had ensured information provided to the funder was relevant and fit-for-purpose. Two government partners added to this by mentioning their appreciation for how up-front Reconnecting Northland is, never shying away from admitting when something was not landing, and always willing to find a solution. Reconnecting Northland demonstrates Te Ao Mārama by being open, responsive, and accountable to the changes happening around them, in their approach and across their connections.

Bringing community groups together to work towards a collective vision, whilst recognising their unique identities, has contributed to the emergence of holistic solutions key to Te Ao Mārama. The Tapere strategy has been successful in bringing together the surrounding catchments that make up He Ripo Kau in the

South Hokianga. Five Taiao plans have been developed and aligned to commit to a long-term approach to restore the mauri of this Tapere, identifying integrated solutions to target multiple issues. TKH acts as a natural progression of the Tapere strategy by focusing on individual needs and what must take place within each community to contribute to collective aspirations.

Te Ao Mārama continues to be an inspiration for Reconnecting Northland's future work and planning as well. An example of bringing Te Ao Mārama into decision-making spaces can be seen through Kōrero Tuku Iho, a reference group initiated through Kaipara Moana Remediation, which was inspired by Te Kawa Waiora. Reconnecting Northland is represented on the Kōrero Tuku Iho Reference Group alongside local hapū, government representatives, and community leaders from the Kaipara. The reference group meets regularly to discuss weaving indigenous approaches into environmental planning and initiatives. The group seeks to advocate for and elevate tirohanga Māori²⁰ practices in hapū and whānau-led environmental initiatives across the Kaipara. Discussions that take place during Kōrero Tuku Iho meetings include the creation of and implementation of a 'new' kawa, proposed as part of the Te Kawa Waiora research project.

Indicator 2ab: Kaipapa partners in the system see clearly the issues and solutions to disrupt definition of 'good'



Tupu / New Shoots

Connection and knowledge sharing have improved accessibility. Some evidence of kaupapa partners identifying the key drivers inhibiting meaningful systems change, however more work is needed to see sustained outcomes.

Evidence of progress

There are a multitude of challenges that make the regeneration of Northland's taiao difficult to achieve. These include social and climate change-related threats and man-made extractive practices. Te Kawa Waiora found that Māori communities are caught between wanting to reclaim mātauranga Māori to look after their lands and the costly reality of the contemporary system they find themselves in. Attempts made by multiple government agencies to absorb these communities into their existing universal systems have failed, and in some cases created further distrust through inconsistency of relationships and incremental funding.

Nevertheless, Reconnecting Northland's vision-setting work with communities has resulted in multifaceted outcomes:

Planning for the collective vision does not only break up issues into more identifiable steps, making things more manageable and less overwhelming, but also communicates the vision to local and central government with a view to secure continuous funding to resource the outlined activities.²¹

To support its kaupapa, Reconnecting Northland has actively sought out partnerships that seek to give effect to Te Ao Mārama. The result is that organisations that recognise the connection between people and nature, and create systems that holistically respond to those needs, make up the largest portion of Reconnecting Northland's partnerships. By example, one business partner's kaupapa is based around an intergenerational programme that sees the forest as 'te marae o Tāne Mahuta'²² – exotics trees are manuhiri on that marae and have to bring certain values and relationships with them, and mātauranga

²⁰ Māori worldview

²¹ Waimā Waitai Waiora Partnership Summary Report 2023

²² Translates to the marae (meeting house) of Tāne Mahuta, the Māori god of the forest

from the place they come from is used to manage and look after them. Specific budgets are allocated to local whānau to help manage these new manuhiri species on their whenua, including through the establishment of a local workforce.

Several government partners valued the opportunities Reconnecting Northland has provided to help open access points to community spaces they would not normally be invited into. One government partner gave the example of the opportunity to whanaungatanga with a community Reconnecting Northland introduced them to:

Reconnecting Northland had been working with [the community] for six to seven years but it wasn't a community we had any existing relationship with and we didn't know them at all. That was super helpful. We have formed a partnership with that community under a programme [...] which ensures community resourcing and support systems to enable them to achieve their goals and aspirations and work on projects they want to do.
– Government partner

One Kairaranga also discussed Reconnecting Northland's role as a connector by using their own group's experience as an example. Reconnecting Northland had organised an information hui with a government agency to discuss their services with the group of Kairaranga. This Kairaranga and the community group they worked with were dubious about the value of attending, given negative past engagements with the agency. However, the Kairaranga trusted Reconnecting Northland enough to know there would be value in attending; they ended up leaving with what they described as a surprising amount of new information about training, support, and grant opportunities to take back to their community that they were not aware of beforehand and would not have been able to find through the agency's website alone.

The biggest issue for groups is knowing where to go for training, which agencies to go to, what funding is available – Te Kete Hononga did a lot of that leg work, could just present it to people in a package. Lots of group members are volunteers and don't have time to navigate that space themselves. – Kairaranga

The increase in capability and resilience within the community and of the Kairaranga themselves as a result of the TKH trial was discussed in detail during the community evaluation wānanga. One Kairaranga stated that TKH has prepared and equipped them and their group as best as possible for the new funding and political challenges facing Aotearoa today – they just wished that the trial could continue. Kaupapa partners across the board talked about the success of TKH as an alternative pathway for communities to engage with the system, and work towards the same aspirations, without diminishing mana motuhake.²³ TKH was credited by several DOC Kairaranga as helping to improve their confidence when working with communities in place, giving them a license to make brave decisions and think differently, including within the parameters of the agency that employs them.

Multiple partners cited the inspiration and excitement that the small team of six Reconnecting Northland operational staff lead with as being infectious at all levels of the system. Reconnecting Northland, through TKH, had helped one Kairaranga understand what needs to be done to achieve their aspirations and had given them a sense of hope. A funder described this inspiration element as “wonderful” and emphasised Reconnecting Northland's ability to operate with a spirit of abundance and collaboration as the reason they want to ensure their partnership continues to thrive.

²³ Self determination

Reclaim Healthy Inflows & Outflows

Overarching outcome: Increased capacity and capability across Northland to deliver ecological enhancing activities. Joined up resourcing and nature-based enterprise supports ecological activity at scale. Increased healthy inflows enables ecological and livelihood-based activities with healthy outflow creation.

Traditionally, theories of change focus on inputs (such as resources), that are expected to generate outputs (activities), outcomes, and impact. Reconnecting Northland has adopted the terms ‘inflows’ and ‘outflows’ to reflect a systems-focus that is self-nourishing and replenishing. For example, an inflow includes growing capacity through training and an outflow is increased capability within a group, and sustainable employment. Likewise, coordinated and facilitated connections are viewed as an inflow, with the outflow being stronger relationships and new partnerships.

Indicator 3a: Healthy inflows: Identify current inflows and healthy inflows needed to shift to next system: Kawa, tikanga, capital, knowledge, capabilities & skills, local ecosystems, water, energy, mauri



Tupu / New Shoots

Capability growth has progressed well through the TKH trial and been highly valued by those who have engaged. Better communication of training opportunities is needed to ensure wider uptake. Reconnecting Northland has successfully leveraged funding for TKH and Tapere initiatives. At an early stage of development are two strategies (Connectivity Partnership and nature-based enterprises) that aim to provide a more sustainable funding for Reconnecting Northland the initiatives it supports.

Evidence of progress

Throughout the TKH trial, 10 Kairaranga have been engaged to work with 16 groups on taiao projects. A range of courses has been delivered to Kairaranga and community members, including training on predator trapping and use of chainsaws:

The predator trapping course was one that we really needed – real taiao-based. – Kairaranga

The chainsaw course was a real highlight for me. I’ve been using a chainsaw for years but this was the first time any health and safety was a focus. Just learning those basic skills and being able to deal with people – knowing that they have been trained too. So better confidence (now) that nothing will go wrong. – Kairaranga

While the training was valuable for those that attended, several Kairaranga reported that courses were not always aligned to the needs of their community groups. Further, it was not always clear from the information they received what a course might include and who it was targeted at. Needs assessments were conducted with Kairaranga and their groups at the beginning of the TKH trial to inform the training that would be made available to them. However, at the time, one Kairaranga had not understood that this was one of the purposes of the needs assessments. This indicates the need to better market information about training opportunities to facilitate wider take-up of capability-building opportunities.

As one Kairaranga commented:

I had to go back to Reconnecting Northland and get them to explain in plain language what those workshops meant for our people. You actually need to explain really plainly what's it for, why you should be doing it, how can it benefit our community.

Aligning themselves with partners who share the same values and appreciation for the connection between taiao and tangata has been described as something Reconnecting Northland does proficiently. One business organisation Reconnecting Northland is exploring a partnership with has a model based around stacking revenue opportunities for communities, much like the Connectivity Partnership concept. In one collaboration between Reconnecting Northland and several business partners, the financial realities of regenerating biodiversity have been balanced with seeking a funder who won't be expecting an instant return on investment, but rather one who will be willing to fund the set up costs for initiatives to then go on and have an impact – understanding and navigating the fundamental mismatch between the financing world and what the collaboration is trying to achieve.

Reconnecting Northland is practical and understanding and was willing to sit down and listen, so we developed a really good connection and have been exploring doing more work together.
– Business partner

However, not all partners have evolved and grown in alignment with Reconnecting Northland. Before implementing a contract that had been signed as part of a partnership with one business partner, Reconnecting Northland noticed that the partner's kaupapa had changed and was no longer aligned with Reconnecting Northland's values. They proceeded to put a pause on the contract until further discussion could be held with the business partner to re-establish the best approach and ensure beneficial outcomes. This will guarantee that Reconnecting Northland stays true to the healthy inflows it aims to bring into the communities it works with.

Reconnecting Northland was started with Aotearoa-based philanthropic funding. While hugely beneficial to kick-start the Reconnecting Northland programme, a limitation was the funder's resistance to a 'systems' focus based around Te Ao Māori approaches:

We were held in a one-sided space for a while by our initial funders because their bread and butter used to be environment, and any attempt to go beyond that and recognise these other aspects of our world were rejected. – Reconnecting Northland

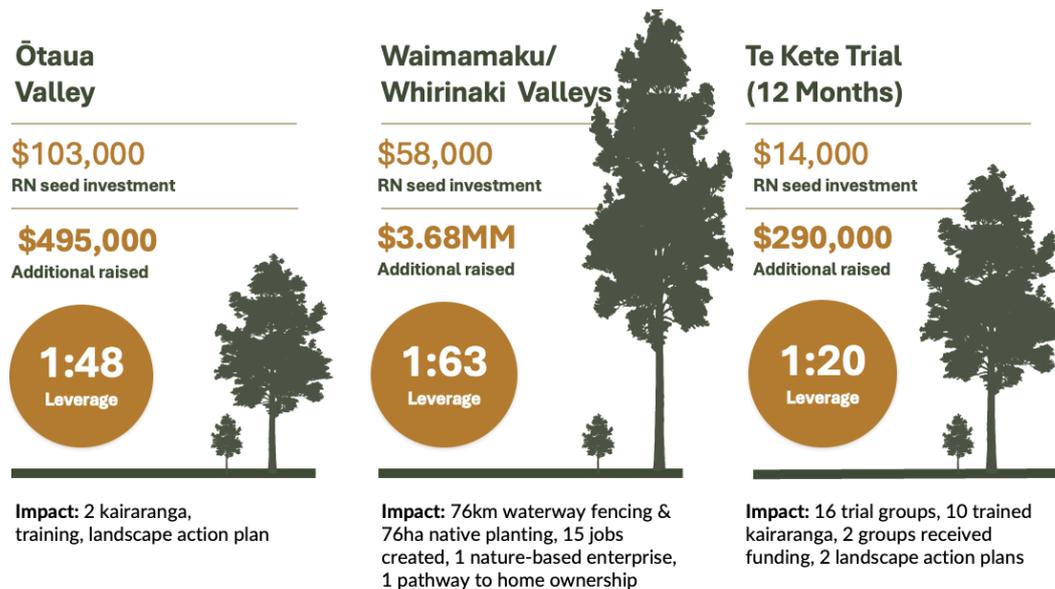
More recently, Reconnecting Northland has attracted international philanthropic funding that embraces a systems' approach. This is reflected in the following comment:

We think that anyone saying 'we know the solution' would be disingenuous. What would help is all of us recognising that we don't know, and meeting each other in that whole spectrum. From a replication standpoint that's going to look different for every community. The way it's being talked about is we live in a culture of scarcity, separation, and powerlessness, we can move towards a culture of connection, our infinite power to co-create and co-liberate, abundance, and we can recognise that many things are dying and need to be cared for and no longer fit for purpose, and many things are also growing out of that simultaneously. A lot of folks just want to focus on one or the other, we're in a highly polarised political landscape. What I seek ... is to connect people with decades of research that says the most effective thing in helping people change is focusing together on the future we want to move towards.
– Funder

The inflow of philanthropic funding has enabled Reconnecting Northland to provide seed investment to Tapere initiatives and to the TKH trial, amongst other projects, and to leverage to access additional funding to support and grow initiatives. By example, Reconnecting Northland invested \$58,000 into the He Ripo Kau Tapere initiatives in the Waimamaku / Whirinaki Valleys. Through connections made to bring more funders to the table, that figure has ballooned to \$3.68 million, 63 times more than what was originally contributed / invested by Reconnecting Northland. This is illustrated in Figure 4.

In total, Reconnecting Northland has administered funds totalling \$8.7 million over a seven-year period. Of this, two thirds (\$5.5 million) has gone directly to community initiatives.

Figure 4: Examples of Reconnecting Northland leveraging funding



The challenges related to funding large landscape biodiversity initiatives were evident in a collaboration Reconnecting Northland has with two business partners. The collaboration is exploring ways to fund regenerative initiatives with investors who are not solely seeking to make a profit. One business partner said it was important to find a funder who recognises potential and is willing to fund set up costs, in order for initiatives to be able to get off the ground. They have observed that Reconnecting Northland understand both the value and the challenges of navigating this environment and are confident that Reconnecting Northland is not going to leave the collaboration if or when things become difficult.

Reconnecting Northland is progressing a more sustainable financial model to support its programme and communities through a concept called the Connectivity Partnership, as well through its nature-based enterprises strategy. Both are in the early stages of development.

A Connectivity Partnership concept paper has been developed, promoting pan-agency, industry, and businesses co-funding Reconnecting Northland to facilitate (project manage and coordinate) landscape-scale initiatives. Over the past year, the Connectivity Partnership model has been socialised with government agencies, philanthropists, and business partners. The concept was reportedly well received by the former Minister for the Environment, Hon James Shaw, who commented that he had been trying to get agencies to do something similar for the past decade. A change of government in 2023 has meant that Reconnecting Northland is in the process of introducing the Connectivity Partnership to current incumbent Ministers and officials.

The nature-based enterprise strategy aims to establish a continuous source of income by combining carbon credits, biodiversity credits, and the development of nature-based revenue streams. The goal is for profits created by these opportunities to allow the nature-based initiative to yield a return on investment for both the financial investor and the landowner.

In terms of progressing the concept of biodiversity credits, Reconnecting Northland has identified financial support as critical to their success. This includes providing tangata whenua and community groups with resources to protect existing biodiversity and to facilitate restoring biodiversity where it has been lost. Further, supports are needed to create an incentive for those not currently involved in biodiversity enhancement to do so.

Reconnecting Northland has also undertaken work with the Indigenous Commons, as outlined in the *Connect Across all Levels* section. This has included the development of a case study of Reconnecting Northland to appear in a US paper on systems change to move global financial resources to ecological restoration.

Indicator 3b: Healthy outflows: Identify current outflows and healthy outflows in next system: Cultural wealth, whānau prosperity & wellbeing, thriving ecosystems, climate resilience, wairua, mauri



Tupu Karekare / Strong Growth

Achievements include completion of waterway fencing, planting of natives, training courses delivered and trainees receiving certifications. These outflows provide a good foundation for revitalising biodiversity across the He Ripo Kau Tapere. As a result of the TKH trial, Kairaranga and community members say they can now see a strategic pathway for their groups.

Evidence of progress

Reconnecting Northland's impact report for 2023 notes that the existing reach through Tapere initiatives over the last two years encompasses approximately 100,000ha of taiao-related work. Outflows realised included:

- 95km of water way fencing
- 760,000 natives planted
- 176 training courses delivered
- 156 trainees received 47 certifications.

These achievements are direct outflows from capacity growth activities and funding received by Reconnecting Northland, as identified in the previous section on *Healthy Inflows*. Together, the above outflows provide the foundation needed to regenerate biodiversity across the He Ripo Kau Tapere by creating a nature-based workforce. While it will likely take time to see the outcomes of waterway fencing and planting, there were many examples in the data of outcomes of training and capacity growth.

One of the success stories of He Ripo Kau is a young Māori man who has been supported by Reconnecting Northland to grow his taiao business, to the extent that he has been able to build up a workforce of 10 fulltime employees. The man had taken over the business after his uncle became ill. He had found it hard to get things off the ground, and credits Reconnecting Northland with helping him implement new business processes and procedures, including those required to manage staff and comply with employment legislation. One of their projects has involved reforesting 60ha of farmland with 50 species of native plants that flower at different times of the year to create a food source for native and indigenous species of birds.

This businessman’s story is an example of how outflows become self-nourishing and replenishing. The business owner said he had gained leadership skills for himself and his team, and he is now seen as a role model for rangatahi:²⁴

Showing people how to achieve their goals through action, good habits, giving anything a go and not being afraid to fail [...] We are only limited by what we think is possible – whatever the mind can conceive the mind can achieve, if I can do it anyone can do it.

An outflow of capacity growth as part of TKH is that Kairaranga and community members say they can now see a strategic pathway for their groups to continue their mahi. This is significant, as some Kairaranga reported they were starting from scratch when they first engaged with TKH:

[There is now] a vast improvement from where we were at the beginning to where we are now.

New knowledge had flowed between the Kairaranga group, between Kairaranga and government partners, and between Kairaranga and their respective community groups. Kairaranga shared information about each other’s projects and how they conducted work on the ground. Reconnecting Northland refer to this flow of knowledge as a form of tuākana-teina: the concept of an older or more expert siblings helping and guiding a younger or less expert sibling. As one Kairaranga observed:

If anything has come out of this trial, it’s a sense of unity within our community. We’ve seen our community go from separated to coming together. Where I see this trial has helped us is just connecting it all together – meeting other hapu within Hokianga who are at different stages and being able to draw that information from them. What’s worked, what hasn’t worked, what we should be doing, what we can try. And just that whanaungatanga with our neighbouring hapū.

After attending some TKH events and witnessing the community engagement taking place, NRC deployed two kaiāwhina²⁵ to attend all future TKH wānanga and events. This connection has been useful for Kairaranga who have subsequently made contact with the NRC kaiāwhina to request advice from experts and other supports from within the Council.

Capacity growth was also a feature of Te Kawa Waiora. Embedded in the research approach was a series of research training wānanga to ensure benefits for local communities would last beyond the life of the research project. Seven online research training modules (each one day long) were delivered for hau kāinga²⁶ communities in 2020 and 2021. The training covered the basics of research and what an ‘iwi’ approach might look like. One participant described the value of the training as follows:

The concept that research creates new knowledge was profound to me. We are looking into the past to help us create new knowledge. That was mind blowing.

At least one participant said they planned to use the research training to further whakapapa research for their iwi, demonstrating again the connection between taiao and tangata.

Similar outflows were noted by some Kairaranga, who commented that their involvement in the TKH trial had helped their own personal journeys of reconnection to Te Ao Māori.

²⁴ A collective term for young persons, youth.

²⁵ Helper, assistant, supporter, contributor, counsel, advocate.

²⁶ Home people, local people, people who belong to the local marae

Another outflow of Te Kawa Waiora is the proposition to establish a 'new' kawa to help protect and regenerate the Wairoa River. The research project investigated how a resourced hau kāinga²⁷ led kaitiaki network might operate and includes environmental planning tools with tangata whenua at the centre of decision-making. The TKH trial tested this concept of a kaitiaki network through the Kairaranga roles. The notion of a 'new' kawa is an example of an outflow that is being explored by the Crown-iwi group Kaipara Moana Remediation, the adoption of which is being discussed through its Kōreo Tuku Iho reference group (thus becoming a new inflow).

A further outflow from Te Kawa Waiora is that it provided tangata whenua who participated in the project with permission to think about issues affecting the river from an indigenous perspective:

It stimulated our memories, triggering our indigenous understanding of the world and how we see it.

²⁷ Home people, local people, people who belong to the local marae

Activate Next System’s Purpose

Overarching outcome: Tapere and nature-based enterprises serve new systems’ purpose to enhance mauri of whole system; thriving ecosystems provide wellbeing and livelihood for Northland’s people and communities.

Reconnecting Northland defines the ‘next’ system or the ‘new’ system as one that enables connection and integration between people and nature, community and decision-makers, and Te Ao Māori and Western thinking. Reconnecting Northland’s approach is that this will occur through joined-up landscapes (speaking to the Tapere strategy) that create catchment-level solutions, supported by connections made with kaupapa partners at all levels of the system. This section begins with an assessment of progress against Indicator 4a and then discusses what else needs to happen to activate the next system’s purpose.

Indicator 4a: Cluster of catchment-based solutions to realise next system’s purpose



Tinakutanga / Germinating

While seeds to progress systems change have been sowed, catchment-level solutions have not yet come to fruition. Independence, community-led approaches, and the Connectivity Partnership are some of Reconnecting Northland’s major strengths, while better descriptors of its contributions and stronger, deliberate industry relationships need more work.

Evidence of progress

Reconnecting Northland’s independence as a non-government organisation was considered a major strength that contributes to the success of its community-led approach. Kaupapa partners spoke about this factor as an enabler for the achievements of the He Ripo Kau Tapere and the TKH trial.

Reconnecting Northland has demonstrated it is able to advocate for community-led approaches with its government partners. One government partner stated that Reconnecting Northland’s independence has allowed them to diversify the ways communities receive support, beyond what government would usually have the ability to do. This is reflected in documents associated with the He Ripo Kau Tapere and what Kairaranga discussed at the evaluation wānanga: Reconnecting Northland brings a “clean slate” and can step into spaces government is not often invited into.

The way RN is positioned at the grassroots level, they can foster relationships and start those introductions between the services that Crown provides and the communities that haven’t engaged with these services yet. – Government partner

Another government partner noted that with a more deliberate partnership model in place, they could explore different ways to support Reconnecting Northland to fill the gaps government just can’t get into – a key aspect of the syndicated investment model proposed by Reconnecting Northland through the Connectivity Partnership.

As discussed in the *Connect Across all Levels* section, Reconnecting Northland has taken part in initiatives and projects where in practice, the approach was not community-led, due to pressures of government funding and delivery criteria. One government contract Reconnecting Northland is currently undertaking has experienced milestone delays due to unforeseen circumstances within the community involved. While Reconnecting Northland would usually be more flexible about project delivery timelines, this has made the

government partner responsible for the contract dissatisfied with what they perceive is a “sluggish” approach to contract management and delivery.

Reconnecting Northland’s community-led approach has enabled mindset shifts across all levels of the system. Communities that have taken part in the TKH trial are engaging with the Crown and making use of services and supports they have not previously accessed, as described in the *Reimagine System’s Purpose* section. One funding partner appreciated Reconnecting Northland’s openness to many ways of thinking through Te Ao Mārama and ability to break down highly polarised political landscapes, motivating them to uplift similar kaupapa with other indigenous groups they work alongside. This approach has also won Reconnecting Northland many champions across the system, with one business partner noting that it has inspired them to think differently. Government partners mirrored this sentiment and noted that Reconnecting Northland always takes time to walk them through unfamiliar concepts and their ways of thinking.

Tangible, flow on effects of these mindset shifts are yet to come to light, however the stage is set for all kaupapa partners to utilise new approaches, ways of thinking and of leading out work, and learning from each other, to break down the fragmentation and disconnection inhibiting the ‘next’ system to emerge.

Multiple kaupapa partners admired Reconnecting Northland’s ability to enter community spaces with the deepest humility and utilising discussion points (such as TKH) to say “look, we don’t know everything but together we can use this and maybe it can benefit us both.” Bringing tools and approaches into community spaces enables Reconnecting Northland to use these as tohu²⁸ to start a discussion instead of coming in empty handed expecting communities to be ready to tell them what they want. After witnessing the success of this trust-building approach, kaupapa partners that engage with communities identified it as another inspiration they will take forward in their own future approaches.

What needs to happen next

A missed opportunity mentioned by several kaupapa partners is Reconnecting Northland’s connections with industry, which remain underdeveloped, and investing time and energy to make mindset shifts within the private sector and commercial spaces. This was considered crucial to ensure consistent funding for both community initiatives and Reconnecting Northland itself. It was widely acknowledged that government rarely fund multi-year initiatives, leaving industry as the natural enablers to create sustainable communities. More efforts could be made by Reconnecting Northland to bring industry along for the journey and explore the possibility of creating something that’s just as economically profitable as it is socially impactful.

Plug into the right networks to have them showcase benefits from the inside to bring more people along for the ride – those that are part of the system can be key drivers for change.
– Business partner

One business partner pointed out that smart and deliberate partnerships can then respond to experience gaps when delving into the world of industry and to progress nature-based enterprises. By example, partnering up with a commercial outfitter can help turn a ‘good idea’ into a business plan, and that outfitter can also help to source funding to make that idea into a reality through connections with impact investors. The current partnerships Reconnecting Northland holds with business have laid a good foundation to progress this; partners acknowledged that Reconnecting Northland doesn’t need to do it all and invited it to ask for help when needed.

²⁸ A mark, direction, sign, proof

Several Kaupapa partners identified potential revenue streams that Reconnecting Northland could pursue based on its expertise in bringing partners together. One such opportunity is to provide contracts for service to industry and government partners wanting to develop MEAs with community groups.

Reconnecting Northland's role as a Connectivity Catalyst was recognised by all kaupapa partners, with most valuing the work it does to create the conditions for communities and taiao to thrive. However, this role becomes murky for those who are new to the kaupapa or have patchy engagement with Reconnecting Northland. Funder and government partners noted that it's important for Reconnecting Northland to tell a clear story about what the projected outcomes of their work will be for all those involved. This will enable the shifts Reconnecting Northland is trying to bring about to be easily recognised and convince more partners to join the kaupapa.

The loftiness of [Reconnecting Northland's] goal is good, I guess the thing is identifying what the journey is to get there. I feel that there's a bit of a missing piece there, the pathway to achieve that needs to be better defined and how they're going to partner with all the different entities out there that are going in a similar direction. – Government partner

Government partners discussed the social license Reconnecting Northland has gained from working with communities and the time it has invested building meaningful connections with them (the 1000 cups of tea mentioned in the *Connect Across all Levels* section). These same partners were adamant that Reconnecting Northland could be using this social license with more conviction by being more "loud and proud" about the mahi that has taken place to date. Whilst Reconnecting Northland's humbleness has been successful in gaining this social license, they are seen as needing to become more prominent when advocating for Northland, particularly to bring revenue opportunities to the communities they work with.

One business partner emphasized that this social license makes them extremely well placed to funnel the right data to investors to illustrate possible outcomes and unlock funding opportunities, without burdening the groups working on the ground. However, Reconnecting Northland need to jump on this waka soon in order to continue to be "the people's choice," as one funding partner put it, or the first that communities think of to pick up the phone and call.

Reconnecting Northland doesn't leave footprints. We need someone with big blinkin' boots, shiny hat, neon lights – [they] need a bigger profile. So on everyone's lips, when they have a problem, Reconnecting Northland is the first thing they think of reaching out to. – Government partner

Another suggestion made by business, funder, and government partners alike is that Reconnecting Northland should place a greater focus on developing operational coordination with those they partner with. By setting practical parameters and working out which organisations have the resources and scale to do what Reconnecting Northland can't do and vice versa, Reconnecting Northland could improve efficiencies within the system. One government partner noted that while Reconnecting Northland spends a lot of the time on value alignment and governance-level coordination with partners, more time should be given to define roles and responsibilities and mutually beneficial outcomes.

One major piece of work Reconnecting Northland is currently undertaking to progress its vision and activate the 'next' system is the development of the Connectivity Partnership. Work remains to be done to establish benefits for each part of the investment stack, how to report on tangible predicted outcomes, and generally giving all involved confidence and clarity about what their investment will achieve. Nevertheless, all kaupapa partners that have engaged with the Connectivity Partnership concept consider it innovative and valuable. One government partner described it as an ideal way to work smarter in a

complex environment where the goalposts keep shifting and everyone wants to make a collective difference but doesn't know how.

Reconnecting Northland's approach is the best I've seen because it's not naive, it's capable and very engaged in local community, and it is a genuine joiner between the path and the road, the path being indigenous kaupapa and the road being the big bad world of money and resources. – Business partner

One business partner noted that through the Connectivity Partnership, Northland could become an exemplar of how different partners could pool their funding together for community outcomes – with Reconnecting Northland being the best waka to bring everybody together (as they have recently accomplished with the TKH trial). One government partner commented that the Connectivity Partnership accurately reflects the reality of nature-based issues and solutions around us: the interconnected social, cultural, economic, environmental issues. However, business and government partners also discussed the need for more detail around how the Connectivity Partnership could look in practice and what the projected outcomes would be before they dive into it with resourcing and support.

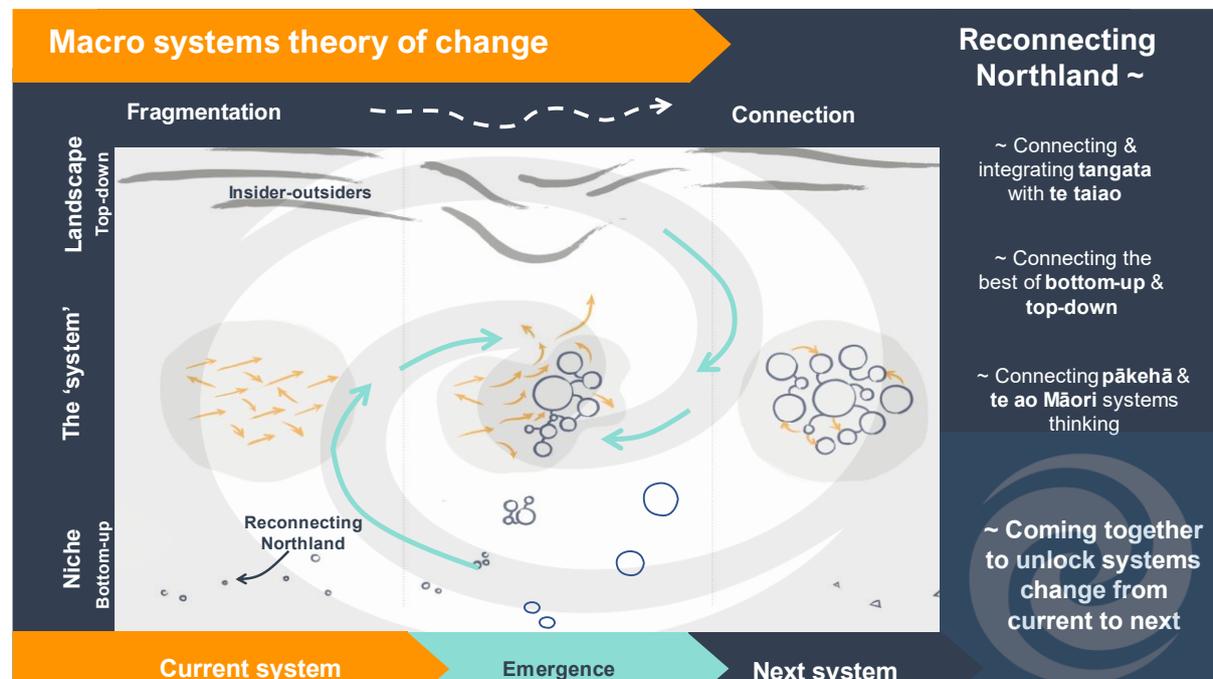
Nevertheless, kaupapa partners could see the potential of a model that recognises that current compartmentalisation of what should be a more holistic picture. If Reconnecting Northland can mould that into more of a weave, the Connectivity Partnership can go a long way in helping to deliver cool projects that will see papatūānuku²⁹ thriving – and will turn Reconnecting Northland into a significant thought leader within Aotearoa and beyond.

²⁹ The mother earth figure in Te Ao Māori

4. Final reflections and recommendations

In this section we return to Reconnecting Northland’s Theory of Change. This was developed to illustrate the current system and the system Reconnecting Northland wants to unlock to achieve a region that is a “flourishing tapestry of abundant and resilient ecosystems.”

Figure 1: Reconnecting Northland Theory of Change diagram



In brief, the diagram (Figure 1) shows the current system as including multiple partners, situated at two disconnected levels: niche (including tangata whenua, community groups, and businesses) and landscape (including partners at a regional, national, and international level). The diagram also shows a desired movement towards a ‘next’ system. This is described as a state in which the niche and landscape levels are connected, where tangata are integrated with te taiao, and where Western and Te Ao Māori systems thinking are connected.

While describing what it is trying to achieve, the Theory of Change does not include detail about the ‘how.’ An unintended outcome of the evaluation is that the findings bring to light five mechanisms that explicitly surface the rationale for the activities implemented (or being implemented) as part of Reconnecting Northland’s programme. These are outlined below, with a summary of what is currently working well under each, and suggestions informed by the evidence about what else needs to happen.

Healthy relationships and connections

Rationale: Healthy relationships and connections help to break down isolation, polarisation, division, stereotypes and binary approaches.

What is working well: Reconnecting Northland has brought together kaupapa partners from different levels of the system in new ways and in ways that have broken down barriers and fragmentation. The TKH trial has brought agencies and communities together in a place where they feel everyone is on the same side, where partners can be open with each other about the needs and challenges that need to be addressed. Communities are engaging with Crown agencies and accessing support mechanisms that they did not have prior to working with Reconnecting Northland. Business partners are creating partnerships with Reconnecting Northland to share expertise and work towards the same goals and aspirations.

What else needs to happen: There is a need for Reconnecting Northland to clearly communicate its value-add to different kaupapa partners to attracting investment opportunities to where they are needed. Government and business partners should work with Reconnecting Northland to ensure partnerships are deliberate and result in mutually beneficial outcomes.

Understanding root causes

Rationale: It is difficult to move forward unless you first understand the past.

What is working well: Reconnecting Northland, anchored by Te Ao Mārama, has facilitated opportunities for kaupapa partners to engage with mātauranga Māori and Western approaches, to connect with te reo Māori, to explore how Māori principles can inform action and behaviour, for example creating 'new' kawa, and to develop large landscape-scale holistic visions for ecological and social wellbeing. Government, funders, and business partners have funded initiatives, embraced concepts, and supported events to take place in the right spaces.

What else needs to happen: To shift the dial away from the negative ecological and social effects inhibiting Northland from thriving, Reconnecting Northland and all kaupapa partners have a part to play in developing and attracting nature-based enterprise opportunities to ensure the sustainability and prosperity of the region.

Individual change

Rationale: Transformative change will occur when you have a critical mass of individuals involved.

What is working well: To date, more than 150 tangata whenua and community members have been upskilled and certified through the TKH trial. Reconnecting Northland has facilitated hui, wānanga, and networking opportunities to connect communities to each other. Communities are attending events, talking with each other, and embracing the tuākana-teina concept by sharing knowledge and experience.

What else needs to happen: Support is needed to fund and grow TKH to the rest of Northland. Clear communication is key to improve the understanding of Reconnecting Northland's vision for Te Taitokerau and what it means to enable the emergence of the 'next' system, in order to encourage more partners to join the kaupapa.

Community-led

Rationale: Change is more sustainable if it is community-led.

What is working well: Reconnecting Northland is working with a cross section of communities to develop shared visions and weave the connections needed to reach their aspirations. To date, one Tapere has been established and two are in development. Government partners are engaging when invited in, offering support in the form of expertise and funding.

What else needs to happen: Identifying courageous investors who are willing to fund Reconnecting Northland's community-led approach, acknowledging the timings needed and trusting communities to find the solutions.

Institutional development

Rationale: Resources need to be fairly allocated to guarantee equity.

What is working well: The Te Kawa Waiora methodology for applying indigenous knowledge to inform ecological regeneration and management has been adopted by the Crown-group Kaipara Moana Remediation and is being advanced through its Kōrero Tuku Iho reference group. MEAs are being taken up

by government partners and improving engagement with communities. The Connectivity Partnership concept is widely viewed as innovative and a smart model to help support flow into the right places.

What else needs to happen: To ensure wider impacts and efficiencies can be created, Reconnecting Northland and government and business partners should work alongside each other to work out the operational details of partnerships to avoid being in competition with one another and to plug each other's experience gaps.

Recommendations

The recommendations below outline the respective influence and impact that Reconnecting Northland can achieve going forward. Recommendations are also included for every kaupapa partner group to account for the system's focus of the evaluation, recognising no one partner alone can facilitate the emergence of a connected 'next' system.

Reconnecting Northland

1. Improve communications to:

- **Articulate** the Reconnecting Northland vision in a way that is clearly understood by all partners. Simple descriptions are needed to facilitate universal understanding. Components of the vision that need to be better explained include concepts such as taiao restoration at scale; community-led through Te Ao Mārama; growing community capability and capacity; building on tangata whenua and community strengths and knowledge; and bringing partners together.
- **Articulate** Reconnecting Northland's value-add: its role and the different way it supports and works with kaupapa partners at a regional, national, and international level. Consider developing an 'elevator pitch' – a simple, clear way to explain to partners what it is that Reconnecting Northland does, and how it does it.
- **Advocate** for and celebrate Reconnecting Northland's achievements more prominently. Whilst Reconnecting Northland's humbleness has been credited as a success for engaging and working with community, a better balance could be struck to become more 'loud and proud' about the work Reconnecting Northland has catalysed, and to be a stronger voice for Northland when engaging with non-community kaupapa partners.
- **Simplify** the language used in Reconnecting Northland's Theory of Change and the Dynamic Evaluation framework before the next phase. Throughout this evaluation, it became apparent that some of the terminology used to develop the Theory of Change and Dynamic Evaluation framework was confusing and not fit-for-purpose. Reconnecting Northland should avoid using confusing terminology and jargon and provide more descriptors where possible to give all staff clarity and confidence to describe foundational documents when required.

2. Strengthening industry and private sector connections and partnerships to:

- **Progress** the nature-based enterprise strategy and unlock security of funding. Sustainable funding is essential for the continuation of the Reconnecting Northland programme and all the initiatives it supports. Exploring and creating new partnerships with industry and the private sector can provide a new pathway to sustainable funding to mitigate Reconnecting Northland's reliance on government grants and philanthropic funding, and enable nature-based revenue opportunities for Reconnecting Northland and the communities it works with.

All kaupapa partners

3. Advocate for Reconnecting Northland and the mahi it is involved with to shift resource flows and encourage more partners to join the kaupapa.

- With a small operational team (currently six staff), Reconnecting Northland can only achieve so much on its own. Kaupapa partners could assist by using their respective networks to advocate for Reconnecting Northland and attract more resources and partners to the mahi.

Kairaranga and community partners

4. Embrace Te Ao Mārama and continue to take part in Reconnecting Northland’s initiatives to shift capabilities, skills, and knowledge at the grassroots level.

- The contributions of Kairaranga and communities have been fundamental to the success of Reconnecting Northland’s programme. It is imperative that Kairaranga and communities continue to engage with Reconnecting Northland and keep providing valuable feedback about what is working well and what is not, as they have for this evaluation.

Central and local government partners

5. Actively engage with Reconnecting Northland to co-design Connectivity Partnership details, and operational arrangements for individual partnerships, to shift the patterns of relationships and power.

- It will be essential for government partners to work with Reconnecting Northland to clarify the projected outcomes of the Connectivity Partnership to ensure that the outcomes are mutually beneficial. The same is important for individual partnerships between Reconnecting Northland and specific agencies and/or business units. While Reconnecting Northland can facilitate and coordinate the process, government partners taking an active role in designing the details will ensure partnerships are realised to their full potential.
- Government involvement in standing up the Connectivity Partnership will also signal that power and resources can be decentralised as opposed to directed, encapsulating the current Government’s belief that “local people know local issues and find solutions.”³⁰

Private funder partners

6. Support Reconnecting Northland’s programme and the timing required for its community-led approach to shift system-wide incentives.

- By valuing the success of Reconnecting Northland’s initiatives and the potential for scale, funders can be a key part of the shift to the ‘next’ system by reestablishing what is incentivised and supported. Recognising the elements required for Reconnecting Northland to successfully apply its community-led approach includes providing seed funding and not expecting immediate return on investments.

Business partners

7. Actively work with Reconnecting Northland to establish each other’s contributions to the kaupapa and where experience gaps can be filled by one another to shift the culture of working together.

³⁰ Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment, 26th Bluegreens Forum – February 2024

- Reconnecting Northland is not always familiar with the extent of their business partners' scope of work. Co-designing roles and responsibilities within partnerships and initiatives will shift traditional working culture from risking to be in competition with one another to one that is built around cooperation and value alignment.

Future industry partners

8. Support new value creation by facilitating nature-based revenue opportunities for communities.

- Many industry groups are seeking opportunities to be more environmentally sustainable and connected to their communities. Engaging with Reconnecting Northland can ensure connections to people and places where nature-based enterprise can be established, helping to secure sustainability and prosperity for Northland.

Appendix A: Phase One evaluation approach

Evaluation methods

The Phase One evaluation has been led by an independent evaluator, Dr Mathea Roorda, with support from a Reconnecting Northland team member. Data collection included a desk-based review of documents and resources (Table 2); interviews with key participants (Table), and a survey of Te Kete Hononga Kairaranga and group members, referred to as the Collaborations Survey (**Appendix C**).

Desk top review

The evaluation included a review of over 30 documents and audio visual resources produced by Reconnecting Northland. These included trust board reports, business plans, reports to funders, and evidence of key outputs such as Te Kawa Wairoa research report, submission to government, and web presentations.

Table 2: Document types and number reviewed

| Document type | No. reviewed |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Board reports | 5 |
| Scoping documents | 2 |
| Meeting minutes | 4 |
| Reports to funders | 1 |
| Research reports | 6 |
| Submissions to government | 1 |
| Key outputs | 7 |
| Contracts | 1 |
| Audio visual presentations | 4 |
| Total | 31 |

Information from the documents / audio visual resources were thematically analysed using Miro, an online whiteboard tool.

Interviews and wānanga

Interviews were identified through a stakeholder analysis process. Most interviews were undertaken by the lead evaluator, with a Reconnecting Northland team member providing support with note-taking. Those interviewed were offered the opportunity to contact the lead (independent) evaluator separately if they wished to provide additional, confidential information. None took up this opportunity.

All interviews conducted by the evaluator made time to participate in the evaluation, indicating strong engagement and interest in Reconnecting Northland's programme. A total of 13 interviews were conducted, with 23 participants. The type of participants interviewed is included in Table .

The two wānanga with Kairaranga and community members were facilitated by Awa Associates who led a separate but parallel evaluation of the Te Kete Hononga trial. Both evaluations included many of the same participants; thus it was agreed Awa lead kanohi-ki-te-kanohi wānanga that would cover areas of interest for both evaluations. This approach helped to reduce the risk of over-burdening community participants. A total of 13 kairaranga and community members attended.

Survey of collaborations

A social network analysis (SNA) survey was undertaken to provide baseline information on the strength of collaborations Reconnecting Northland has with communities / tangata whenua.

The survey included 30 questions. These included two demographic questions followed by questions that aligned with one of three foci, as outlined in Table.

Table 4: Collaborations survey questions and foci

| Questions | Foci |
|-----------|---|
| 5 – 11 | Determining the need for a collaboration |
| 12 – 24 | Healthy inflow (environment required to sustain an effective collaboration) |
| 21 – 28 | Healthy outflow (results of the collaboration between partners and Reconnecting Northland). |

It was made clear to respondents that the survey would not be entirely anonymous – whilst their name was not required, the survey asked them to list what organisation / community group they are part of and their position within the organisation / group. However, it was noted that responses would not be shared beyond Reconnecting Northland.

The survey was administered online using Qualtrics and through providing hard copies of the survey at the evaluation wānanga events. It was sent to 14 Kairaranga who were asked to forward the survey invite the 16 community groups involved in the Te Kete Hononga trial to take part.

The survey had 15 responses representing 10 organisations / community groups.

The responses were analysed by focus area. In addition, responses to the quantitative questions were given a score (strongly agree = 1; disagree = 2; not sure = 3; agree = 4; strongly agree = 5).

These informed the analysis of the strength of community / tangata whenua relationships with Reconnecting Northland.

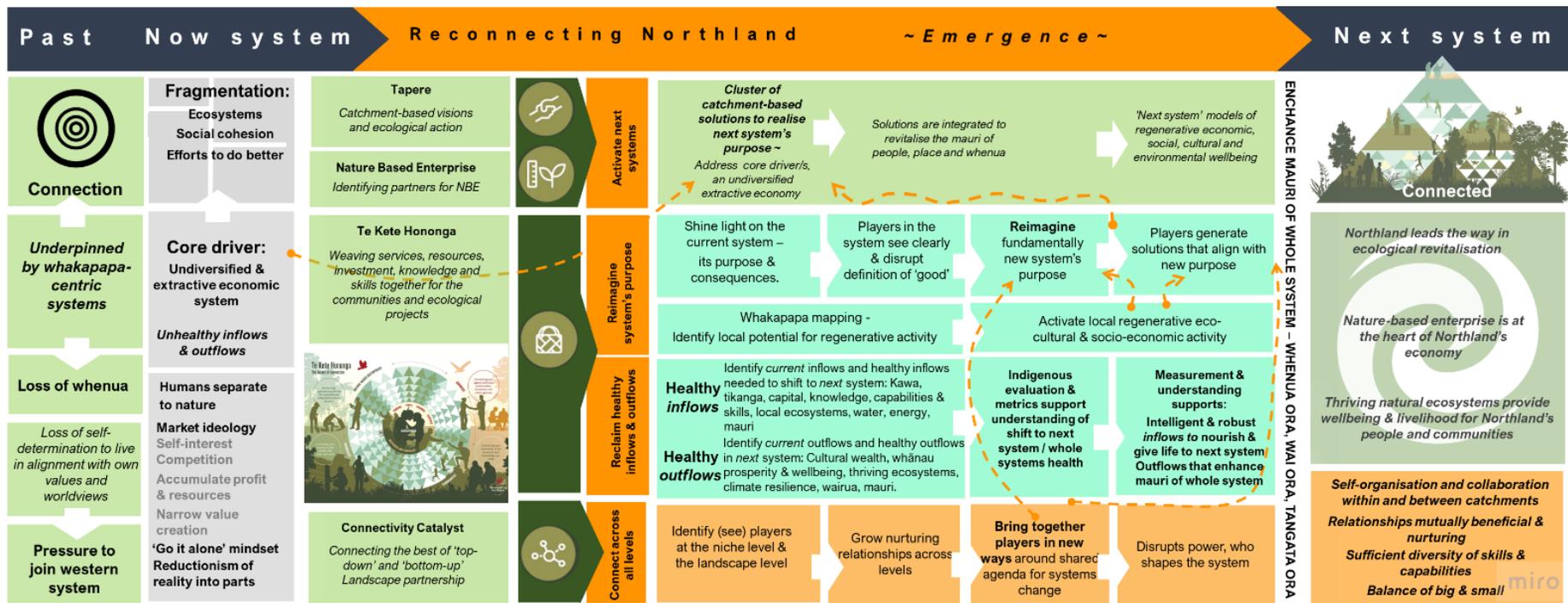
Limitations of the evaluation

Due to time and resource limitations, the perspectives of tangata whenua and community partners were limited to those who attended the wānanga or completed the online survey. It is suggested that Reconnecting Northland sense-check key findings with tangata whenua and community partners, to facilitate a shared understanding of issues and next steps going forward.

Appendix B: Dynamic Evaluation Framework

The Dynamic Evaluation Framework that follows is comprised of four levels intended to help us understand the links between baseline performance, activities, strategic interventions, and systems change. The four levels are:

1. Indicator Categories: the middle block below, also presented on the following page – high-level indicators aligned to the Theory of Change that give insights of the efficacy of strategic interventions
2. Nested Indicators: clustered under the indicator categories, unique for each phase of the Dynamic Evaluation – detailed indicators that provide the ‘bridge’ between activities and intervention; and
3. Static Indicators: also clustered under the indicator categories for each phase – support understanding of baselines and improvements, often provide the enabling conditions



Appendix C: Collaborations survey

Reconnecting Northland is kicking off an evaluation to monitor the impact of all our activities and initiatives and how they work together. This will help us track progress towards our vision "In three generations, Northland is a flourishing tapestry of abundant and resilient ecosystems."

This survey is evaluating Reconnecting Northland's collaborations with different kaupapa partners.

We'd love to hear your perspective of the collaboration your group / organisation has with Reconnecting Northland. What has worked well? What are the challenges? What, if anything, has been achieved as a result of the collaboration?

The survey has three parts and should only take about 15 minutes of your time.

If you agree to participate in the survey, we will ask you to provide the name of the group / organisation you represent. This is so Reconnecting Northland can tailor its collaboration to the needs of your group / organisation. Your response will be confidential to Reconnecting Northland; it will not be shared with anyone else.

The survey closes on 4 June 2024. If you have any questions about the survey, please email us: survey@reconnectingnorthland.org.nz

Demographics

3. What is the name of your group / organisation?

4. What is your role in the group / organisation?

This information will be kept confidential. It will not be shared with anyone outside Reconnecting Northland.

This first section is about whether there is a need for a collaboration between your group / organisation and Reconnecting Northland.

Thinking about your group / organisation, to what extent do you agree with the following:

5. We share areas of common interest with Reconnecting Northland.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

6. We have a desire to collaborate with Reconnecting Northland.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

7. Our group shares Reconnecting Northland's commitment to systems change and reduced fragmentation (e.g. working in silos).

- 1 - Strongly disagree

- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

8. Our group is willing to share ideas, resources, and influence with Reconnecting Northland to reach the goal of systems change.

1 - Strongly disagree

- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

9. Our group's collaboration with Reconnecting Northland is unique from other collaborations we are part of.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

10. There is a clear need to continue our collaboration with Reconnecting Northland.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

11. Any comment about the need for a collaboration with Reconnecting Northland?

This section is about the environment required to sustain an effective collaboration.

Thinking about your group / organisation, to what extent do you agree with the following:

12. There is a history of good relations between Reconnecting Northland and ourselves.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

13. The current decision-makers in our group fully support a collaboration with Reconnecting Northland.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree

- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

14. Our group has been adequately involved in setting the direction of the collaboration with Reconnecting Northland.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

15. The roles, responsibilities, and expectations of our collaboration with Reconnecting Northland are clearly defined and understood.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

16. Our group has the necessary resources to collaborate effectively.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

17. There are formal processes in place for sharing information and resolving issues.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

18. There are informal ways to share information and resolve issues.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

19. Any challenges related to the collaboration between our group and Reconnecting Northland have been adequately addressed.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree

- 5 - Not sure
- 6 - We have had no challenges

20. Any comments about the environment required to sustain an effective collaboration with Reconnecting Northland?

This final section is about what has been achieved as a result of the collaboration between your group / organisation and Reconnecting Northland.

Thinking about your group / organisation, to what extent do you agree with the following?

21. There is a strong level of trust between our group and Reconnecting Northland.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

22. The collaboration with Reconnecting Northland has uplifted the capabilities of our group.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

23. Reconnecting Northland and our group have a shared understanding of the issues that need to be addressed.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

24. The collaboration is being promoted and communicated to our communities and networks.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

25. New connections have been formed with other groups / organisations as a result of our collaboration with Reconnecting Northland.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

26. Our group is seeing improved efficiencies within the system (e.g. reduced fragmentation) as a result of the collaboration.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Agree
- 4 - Strongly agree
- 5 - Not sure

27. If you answered agree or strongly agree to the previous question, how is the collaboration improving efficiencies within the system?

28. Are there any other outcomes (positive or negative) that you have observed as a result of your group's collaboration with Reconnecting Northland?

29. Any final comments?

Thank you very much for completing the survey; your responses have now been recorded.

Appendix D: Evaluation information sheet

What is a Dynamic Evaluation?

Reconnecting Northland is kicking off a Dynamic Evaluation – an approach that aims to understand and leverage the impact of our mahi to help stay on track to generate and scale solutions that successfully disrupt, and ultimately transform, the status quo. Dynamic Evaluation evolved from an understanding that no one ‘silver bullet’ can drive transformative change. By monitoring the impact of all our activities, and how they work together, we can track progress towards Reconnecting Northland’s vision:



The first phase of the Dynamic Evaluation will be conducted between **February and July 2024**. As someone who has been involved with Reconnecting Northland’s mahi, either on an ongoing basis, recently, or in the past, we want to hear your experience and perspectives.

How will the data be used?

Your insights will help the development of lessons learnt and recommendations for improvement for Reconnecting Northland. These will inform the next iteration of decisions about how we can further support transformative change, whether that be at the grassroots level or by advocating to decision-makers. The evaluation will also help Reconnecting Northland to stay accountable to funders as well as our Board and other kaupapa partners. You will receive a copy of the final evaluation report.

Who is involved?

The evaluation is being lead by independent evaluator Dr Mathea Roorda, with support from Reconnecting Northland staff and Awa Associates. For evaluation team profiles, see details below.

Confidentiality

Data and insights that we collect through engaging with you will be anonymised, and we will not ask any information that means anything can be attributable to you (unless specified and agreed by you).

Informed consent

The purpose of this information sheet is to gain your informed consent to take part in the evaluation. We want to make sure you understand the purpose of the evaluation, and how any information you give us will be used.

Your participation in the evaluation is voluntary; you have the right to not answer any questions. If you agree to participate we will ask your permission to record the interview to help with our written notes of the interview.

Verbal or written consent is provided Yes / No

Name: _____

Date: _____

Dynamic evaluation team

| Name | Role | Profile |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Dr. Mathea Roorda | Independent Lead Evaluator | Mathea’s parents arrived in Aotearoa from the Netherlands in the 1950s, and she was born in Mangakino. She has worked as an evaluator for 25 years, and lives part-time in Whanganui-a-tara, and part-time in Puna-rua-whiti , Te Taihu-o-te-Waka (Marlborough Sounds). As the Independent Lead, Mathea has overall responsibility for ensuring the Dynamic Evaluation is defensible and useful for Reconnecting Northland and kaupapa partners. Mathea is involved in all aspects of the evaluation design and implementation. |
| Frankie Ancillotti | Lead Analyst | Frankie moved to Te Whanganui-a-Tara from Italy with her family when she was 10 years old and still identifies strongly and equally with both cultures. She recently relocated to Kerikeri and joined Reconnecting Northland in December 2023 to manage several workstreams, including the implementation of the Dynamic Evaluation. Frankie’s background is largely focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation policy and consulting. As the Lead Analyst, Frankie has a key role in supporting the evaluation design and implementation. She will be collecting and analysing data and will be responsible for drafting the Phase One Evaluation Report alongside Mathea. |
| Eamon Nathan | Technical Advisor | Of Te Roroa, Ngāti Torehina, Ngāti Arera, Crete, Scottish and Irish whakapapa, Eamon joined Reconnecting Northland in 2016 as Pou Manatū. Eamon is an expert weaver of community |

| Name | Role | Profile |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| | | <p>through creative and experimental means with a background in industry training, research, and community-led initiatives.</p> <p>Eamon will act as a Technical Adviser for the Dynamic Evaluation by helping to navigate each individual rohe and ensure that tikanga and kawa is upheld through all engagements. Eamon will have oversight across the first phase of the evaluation and will be responsible for approving the final Phase One Evaluation Plan.</p> |
| Thalea Tane | Technical Advisor | <p>Thalea’s key whakapapa linkages are Te Roroa, Ngāti Whātua, and Ngāpuhi, which has enabled her to be of service to her iwi and communities on several initiatives and arenas over the years. Thalea has a passion for growing capacity and capability in collectives who facilitate community-led initiatives, which she has been consistently delivering on since joining Reconnecting Northland in May 2023 as the Te Kete Hononga Project Manager.</p> <p>Thalea is supporting the evaluation as a Technical Advisor – her intimate knowledge of the Te Kete Trial groups is key to supporting and guiding engagements with communities.</p> |
| Suaree Borell & Karly Brett | Evaluation Associate, Awa Associates | <p>Suaree and Karly, from Awa Associates, are leading a separate but parallel evaluation into the performance of the Te Kete Hononga trial, on behalf of Reconnecting Northland. As they will be speaking with many of the same community and iwi groups identified as kaupapa partners for this Dynamic Evaluation, they are leading a series of the kanohi-ki-te-kanohi engagements that will cover both, while Mathea and Frankie will lead virtual engagements for the Dynamic Evaluation only.</p> <p>Suaree and Karly will also support the analysis of data collected through all engagements and will review the draft final report prior to completion.</p> |

If you have any questions about the evaluation, or would like to ask for a copy of the information you will provide, or to have it corrected, you can contact Frankie at [\[email address\]](#) or Mathea Roorda at [\[email address\]](#).

Appendix E: Interview guides

Interview guide for Reconnecting Northland

Connecting across all levels of the system

1. Thinking about where you were two-three years ago, how far has Reconnecting Northland come in terms of connecting with different levels of the system?

Probes:

- *Have these connections been informed by Te Ao Mārama principles? If so, in what ways?*
- *What have you learnt? What's worked/not worked so well?*
- *What needs to happen next?*

Reimagining the system's purpose

2. What does it mean to shine a light on the current system? What's worked? What hasn't? What have you learnt? What needs to happen next? (ask for specific examples)
3. What does disrupting the definition of 'good' look like?

Reclaiming healthy inflows and outflows

4. What does a 'healthy' inflow / outflow look like?
5. What has been done to shift to healthy inflows (kawa, tikanga, capital, knowledge, capabilities & skills, local ecosystems, water, energy, mauri)? (*Activities, processes, people*)?
6. What has been done to shift to healthy outflows? (Cultural wealth, whānau prosperity & wellbeing, thriving ecosystems, climate resilience, wairua, mauri)? (*Activities, processes, people*)?
7. What else needs to happen to reclaim healthy inflows and outflows? Who needs to be involved?

Activating the next system

8. What else needs to happen to realise the next system's purpose?
9. What support, if any, do you need to achieve this? From whom?

Interview guide for kaupapa partners

Connections

1. Tell us the story of your connection with RN?

Probes:

- *Why have you connected with RN?*
- *What added value (if any) does RN bring to your mahi?*
- *What have you learnt? What's worked/not worked so well with the work you've done to date with Reconnecting Northland?*
- *What needs to happen next with making your connection stronger?*

Contribution to increased capacity and capability

2. Part of RN's role is to focus on growing the capacity and capability of the groups it works with?

- *Do you have a view about how well this mahi is going? What's working well / less well?*
- *What is your role, if any, in this mahi?*
- *What's happened to date?*
- *What needs to happen next? (Who is responsible?)*

Contributing to solutions

3. What else needs to happen (to realise the next system's purpose)?

4. Who else needs to be involved? How?

5. What are the factors that will contribute to success?

Finally

6. Any final comments that you think are relevant to our evaluation?

THANK YOU