



TE KETE HONONGA

THE BASKET OF CONNECTIONS

Evaluation Report - Te Kete Hononga
Trial Programme

JULY 2024

PREPARED BY

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PREPARED FOR

Reconnecting Northland

and participating
kaupapa partners

Contents

- He Mihi: Acknowledgements 2
- Executive Summary 3
- Kaupapa: Te Kete Hononga Programme 8
- Programme Evaluation Approach 11
- Findings – KEQ.1..... 14
 - KEQ.1:** How well and to what extent is Te Kete Hononga training and support connecting services and improving access for communities?..... 14
 - Improving Capabilities and Capacity 14
 - Connecting Services 22
 - Optimising Resource Flows 24
 - Meeting Needs 26
 - KEQ.1 Summary 30
- Findings – KEQ.2..... 32
 - KEQ.2:** To what extent is Te Kete Hononga enabling collective impact towards whenua ora, wai ora and tangata ora (socio-ecological outcomes)? 32
 - Collaborative Partnerships 32
 - Collective Impact Model 33
 - KEQ.2 Summary 34
- Recommendations for Te Kete Hononga..... 35

He Mihi: Acknowledgements

Maiea te tipua, maiea te tawhito, maiea te kāhui o ngā ariki, maiea tāwhiwhi ki ngā atua. Ōī, ka takina te mauri, ko te mauri i ahua noa mai ki runga ki ēnei taura, ki runga ki ēnei tauira. Kīa tau te mauri ki runga ki ēnei tamatāne, tamawāhine he tukuna nō te whaiororo a Tānetewaiora. Tēnei te matatau ka eke, whakatū tārewa ki te rangi. Ūhi, wēro, hara mai te toki, haumi e, hui e, taiki e!

Tēnei te tino mihi ki ngā pou kaha o tēnei kaupapa a Reconnecting Northland, ōtirā ki ngā kaimahi e mahi ai i ā rātou wāhi mahi katoa o te Taiao, mō ā rātou manaaki mai ki a Awa Associates mō tēnei pūrongo. Tēnei ka mihi, koutou anō ki nga hāpori me ngā whānau whānui o Te Kete Hononga, e hoahoa ana o koutou korokoro tūi i roto i tēnei pūrongo.

We wish to thank our evaluation participants from across the Reconnecting Northland kaupapa for contributing their time and energy to this programme evaluation. This evaluation report is anchored in your voice and collective insights of the merit and with of this kaupapa. We celebrate and honour the gift of your story through this evaluation report.

Executive Summary

Programme

Te Kete Hononga is an integrated model designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, resource distribution, and environmental management across Te Tai Tokerau. Te Kete Hononga aims to improve the capabilities and capacities of community and tangata whenua groups, enabling them to deliver significant environmental benefits. Te Kete Hononga aims to interlink training, support services, tools and investment to improve resource flows, enhance skills, and facilitate collaborative action that fosters sustainable environmental stewardship and community empowerment in Te Tai Tokerau.

Te Kete Hononga was undertaken as an 18-month trial between December 2022 and June 2024 in partnership with the Department of Conservation and the National Bioheritage Science Challenge. The trial was intended to validate the model as a proof of concept and demonstrate its potential to yield quantifiable benefits. 16 trial groups were selected across Te Tai Tokerau communities based on need, priority and strategic relationships. Needs assessments were conducted to help identify and prioritise the range of elements offered in line with presenting community needs and trial resourcing/scope.

10 Kairaranga were appointed to support implementation of Te Kete Hononga within their unique communities and wider objectives of coordinating collaborative ecological restoration projects. Kairaranga received targeted training to support effectiveness in their roles.

Te Kete Hononga offered and delivered 139 trial elements, as follows:

- Categories of trial elements, including a range of business, environment, logistics and monitoring modules

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Administration</i> | <i>Forest Protection</i> | <i>Fencing</i> |
| <i>Business Development</i> | <i>Licensing</i> | <i>Pest control - Animal</i> |
| <i>Financial Management</i> | <i>Vehicles and machinery</i> | <i>Pest control - Plant</i> |
| <i>Funding Support</i> | <i>Outcome Monitoring</i> | <i>Restoration Planting</i> |
| <i>Health and Safety</i> | <i>Output Monitoring</i> | <i>Water Management</i> |
| <i>Human resources</i> | <i>Project Management</i> | <i>Marketing & Comms</i> |

- Element delivery (1 Aug 2023 – 30 June 2024¹)

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Training elements | 85 |
| Service elements | 23 |
| Tools, guides, templates | 31 |
| Total elements delivered | 139 |

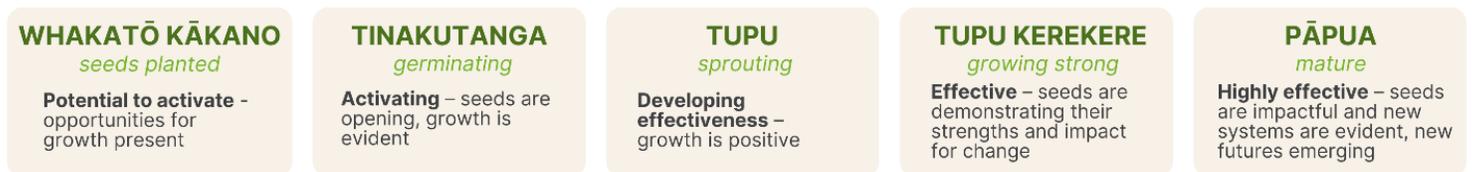
¹ Whilst the trial commenced in December 2022, Kairaranga induction began roughly six months later, and elements started to be accessed by trial participants from the start of August 2023.

- Training participation (1 Aug 2023 – 30 June 2024)

| NZQA accredited course n=8 | Specialised workshop/course n=8 | Total training participation |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 92 | 81 | 173 |

Evaluation Summary

A bespoke kaupapa Māori metric/scale, developed for this evaluation, 'Whakatō Kākano' (see below), was utilised to measure the programme's progress and impact.



Two Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) were explored:

KEQ.1: *How well and to what extent is Te Kete Hononga training and support connecting services and improving access for communities?*

KEQ.2: *To what extent is Te Kete Hononga enabling collective impact towards whenua ora, wai ora and tangata ora (socio-ecological outcomes)?*

Findings

KEQ.1: How well and to what extent is Te Kete Hononga training and support connecting services and improving access for communities?

Te Kete Hononga trial is rated as Tupu Kerekere – **growing strong** for this KEQ.



Overall, participant feedback was positive and the core objectives of the trial phase have been met. Te Kete Hononga emphasised enhancing group capabilities and capacities, with the evaluation noting substantial growth among all groups, particularly among more established (tuākana) and less experienced (tēina) groups.

Tuākana-tēina relationships were crucial, backed by a strong emphasis on whakawhanaungatanga, shared values, and collective objectives. This fostered knowledge sharing, with real-life experiences from various contexts used to navigate, and accelerate overcoming challenges.

The Kairaranga role was pivotal in addressing community need and enhanced the effectiveness of Te Kete Hononga across participating groups.

While broad successes were observed some **variability in outcomes** was seen due to factors such as group readiness to deliver, understanding of the programme content by Kairaranga and/or trial group team leads, and participant availability being affected by lead-in times. An ongoing focus is on optimising resource flows to better integrate future resources.

Improving Capabilities and Capacity

Te Kete Hononga aimed to improve organisational and community capabilities and capacity through targeted training elements. Training content was based on initial needs assessments of the groups. The reported outcomes of the training were mixed, where all groups reported improved capabilities at varying levels. Trial limitations were acknowledged and considered in planning for future scaling of Te Kete Hononga.

Quality training provided by Te Kete Hononga

- Received positive feedback, noted for its engaging facilitation, passion and expertise.
- Included training topics, including compliance certifications, that were highly relevant to most participants' roles and needs.
- Helped participants gain deeper team insights and stronger connections to the kaupapa, boosting confidence.
- Offered an alternative pathway for engaging with systemic operations and achieving shared goals without losing individual autonomy.
- Led to significant personal and professional growth among some attendees.
- Reflect that the programme was most effective for established groups (tuākana) and provided essential support for newer groups (tēina).
- Approach had an emphasis on Te Ao Māori, enhancing relevance to local context, and underscoring the importance of cultural understandings in environmental conservation.
- Approach was adjusted and enhanced based on real-time feedback, including extended sessions, formal qualifications, and support for overcoming attendance barriers.
- Noted that while training had high attendance, it was affected by limited availability and sometimes unclear communication of training purposes.
- Reflect that clearer, more inclusive communication strategies could optimise the reach and impact of training.

Connecting Services

The diversity and expansiveness of Te Tai Tokerau fuels multifaceted resource use, and nurtures unique local expertise. Within this context Te Kete Hononga was able to:

- Effectively strengthen relationships across services, organisations, communities, and government agencies.
- Promote genuine interaction and deep connections, reflecting shared values of environmental stewardship.
- Utilise whakawhanaungatanga to enhance relationships and resource mapping, strengthening ties that support collective goals.
- Enable the sharing of knowledge between trial groups, especially from experienced (tuākana) to newer (tēina) groups, facilitating valuable learnings from the successes and challenges of others and underlining the significance of a unified network for enduring environmental management.

Optimising Resource Flows and Meeting Needs

- Ongoing efforts aimed at enhancing resource distribution, were evident across the trial delivery phase of Te Kete Hononga.
- Early research shaped a targeted framework to effectively meet local community and organisational needs. Each whenu/strand within this framework has been given a rating on the 'Whakatō Kākano scale' and is analysed for quality and success in the context of the trial:
 - *Project design* is rated as *germinating* - based on multiple learnings around effectively supporting the Kairaranga role, to be actioned in the next period of programme delivery.
 - *Resources and support* is rated as *growing strong* - *effectively* meeting needs based on the quality of training elements, progress in funding support, and positive feedback around wellbeing support.
 - *Empowering people* is rated as *growing strong* – *effectively* meeting needs based on effective engagement support reported by Kairaranga and quality environmental education and cultural support in the context of the trial reported by participants.
- This initial trial phase of Te Kete Hononga has established a robust foundation for ongoing growth and adaptation.

KEQ.2: To what extent is Te Kete Hononga enabling collective impact towards whenua ora, wai ora and tangata ora (socio-ecological outcomes)?

This KEQ is not rated for effectiveness, but rather analyses Te Kete Hononga trial contributions towards progress and learning for collaborative partnerships and collective impact. Key findings in relation to this KEQ are:

- Te Kete Hononga trial is positioning trial groups for **collaborative partnerships**, strategic relationships and knowledge sharing across Te Tai Tokerau, establishing a foundation for effective resource use and collective impact.
- Networking and collaborative experiences have underscored the need for genuine partnerships, and Te Kete Hononga approach is removing power dynamics to enhance authenticity.
- Te Kete Hononga is supporting **progress in strategy alignment** among some groups, evident in the successful completion of strategic plans, grant acquisitions, and communal resource sharing.

- Te Kete Hononga is laying the groundwork for **developing a localised collective impact model**, focusing on closing capability gaps, supporting collaborative partnerships, and optimising resource distribution.
- **Learnings from Te Kete Hononga trial** can be used to enhance the development of a quality and successful collective impact model for Te Tai Tokerau.

Recommendations/Considerations

Overall, the Te Kete Hononga trial is instrumental in paving the way for a sustainable collective impact framework, ensuring that ecological and community resilience is supported through a collaborative network of skilled organisations with high capacity and efficient resource management.

Future enhancements based on the evaluation findings are detailed in this report.

- Assess group readiness, tailoring 'first steps' for tēina and 'next steps' for tuākana groups.
- Enhance training quality by incorporating mātauranga Māori, local history, and environmental practices via wānanga and haukāinga-led sessions.
- Emphasise whanaungatanga through targeted wānanga for relationship and resource mapping, continued focus on tuākana-tēina relationships.
- Improve the timeliness and clarity of communications, detailing the benefits and purposes of training. Establishing a specific communications role is recommended.
- Prioritise alignment and collaboration between organisations and agencies. Establishing a specific relationships role is recommended.
- Strengthen Kairaranga capacity with local ties for greater impact, consider expanded role FTEs.
- Continue to develop Kairaranga capabilities in management, planning, and administration, focusing on their strengths.
- Strengthen community and agency ties by leveraging mātauranga Māori and maintaining clear, purpose-driven communication.
- Enhance the use and coordination of existing tools and templates, improving communication strategies around resource flows.
- Encourage participants to manage workflow impacts effectively to ensure opportunity quality.
- Sustain resourcing to mitigate impacts on individual capabilities, extending benefits across Te Tai Tokerau.

Kaupapa: Te Kete Hononga Programme

Te Kete Hononga is an integrated model designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, resource distribution, and environmental management for communities across Te Tai Tokerau looking to achieve socio-ecological outcomes. The main focus of Te Kete Hononga is growing capability of community and tangata whenua Taiao groups to deliver positive outcomes by:

- **Providing greater access to the services and supports that community and tangata whenua groups need.**
- **Improving efficiency of agencies and service providers through better connected services.**

The idea to develop Te Kete Hononga first emerged 5 years ago when Reconnecting Northland recognised that the main challenges facing Taiao groups included capacity gaps within local collectives as well as limited access to resources and support at the community level. Engaging with government agencies and services that tend to work independently from each other also meant communities were left to navigate and coordinate the holistic support they need, ultimately fragmenting the impact of taiao groups working across Te Tai Tokerau.

By interlinking training, support services, tools and investment, Te Kete Hononga seeks to improve resource flows, enhance skills, and facilitate collaborative action that fosters sustainable environmental stewardship and community empowerment in Te Tai Tokerau.

Te Kete Hononga was recently undertaken as an 18-month trial between December 2022 and June 2024 in partnership with the Department of Conservation (DoC) and the National Bioheritage Science Challenge. The trial was intended to validate the model as a proof of concept and demonstrate its potential to yield quantifiable benefits.

Capability and resilience within the community is grown through the Kairaranga role, a local community member who is onboarded by Reconnecting Northland to access all the services and resources available through Te Kete Hononga (known as trial elements). Kairaranga becomes the main facilitators for their communities and central points of contact for trial coordination. 10 Kairaranga were appointed on a part-time basis to support implementation of Te Kete Hononga within their unique communities, including four DoC rangers who dedicated 0.2FTE to the trial. Kairaranga received targeted training to support effectiveness in their roles and wider objectives of coordinating collaborative ecological restoration projects.

16 trial groups were selected across Te Tai Tokerau communities based on need, priority and strategic relationships. Needs assessments were conducted to help identify and prioritise the range of trial elements offered in line with presenting community needs and trial resourcing/scope.

The trial groups were made up of tangata whenua and community members, Kairaranga, volunteers, and in some instances team leaders and employed kaimahi. Overall, 173 people attended one or more training courses offered by the trial.

Te Kete Hononga trial offered and delivered 139 trial elements, as follows:

- Categories of trial elements including a range of business, environment, logistics and monitoring modules

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Administration</i> | <i>Forest Protection</i> | <i>Fencing</i> |
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| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
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Alongside the trial delivery partners mentioned above (DoC and the National Bioheritage Science Challenge) the Te Kete Hononga trial wouldn't have been possible without the funding and support of the Ministry for the Environment and the Cisco Foundation.

Other partners involved in the kaupapa through delivery and/or provision of the trial elements include:

| | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|
| <i>Literacy Aotearoa</i> | <i>Reland Enviromental Consultants</i> | <i>Volunteering Northland</i> |
| <i>Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology/ Te Pūkenga & DOC</i> | <i>Vertical Horizonz</i> | <i>Training Ventures</i> |
| <i>REAP – Driver licensing</i> | <i>Future Whenua</i> | <i>Te Puni Kōkiri</i> |
| <i>Ministry for Social Development</i> | <i>Northland Inc</i> | <i>Access to Experts</i> |

² Whilst the trial commenced in December 2022, Kairaranga induction began roughly six months later, and elements started to be accessed by trial participants from the start of August 2023.

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <i>NorthTec / Te Pūkenga</i> | <i>Northland Regional Council</i> | <i>National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research</i> |
| <i>Whitebait Connection</i> | <i>Predator Free New Zealand</i> | <i>Predator Free Te Tai Tokerau</i> |
| <i>Sciencelearn</i> | <i>Toi Ohomai</i> | <i>WorkSafe</i> |

The end of the Te Kete Hononga trial was celebrated at a Whakanuia event at the Hihiaua Cultural Centre in Whangarei on 18 June 2024. Most trial groups attended the event to mark the end of the trial and celebrate their achievements. An iconic kaumatua (Te Wārahi Hetaraka – Ngāti Wai) presented cultural context and shared mātauranga Māori in relation to te taiao at this event.

Programme Evaluation Approach

The primary purpose of this kaupapa Māori evaluation is to evaluate quality and success within Te Kete Hononga delivery, and evidence the difference Te Kete Hononga is achieving with participating trial groups and communities.

Kaupapa Māori programme evaluation draws from a wide range of approaches, methods and tools to best fit the context and answer the questions important to the kaupapa partners³. It is therefore a hybrid evaluation, focused on a shared evaluation journey - both the journey of unfolding an adaptive evaluation process and also the way in which the evaluation journeys alongside our kaupapa partners to tell their stories as they activate their approach. Accountability to whānau, hapū and iwi are prioritised. This means documents and processes are shared and socialised as part of the shared journey in the evaluation from the outset. Evaluation findings are socialised with them at the same time as the funder - this is to prioritise their voice and ensure the evaluation journey and story remains connected to those who matter the most.

This evaluation is focused on answering the following Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs):

KEQ.1: How well and to what extent is Te Kete Hononga training and support connecting services and improving access for communities (for community groups to make a difference)?

- a) How well is delivery of tools, services, training and guides improving capabilities and meeting the needs of participating services? E.g. Te Kete trial elements
- b) In what ways are resource flows being optimised? E.g. resourcing, investment and information
- c) In what ways is TKH enhancing access to services?

KEQ.2: To what extent is Te Kete Hononga enabling collective impact towards whenua ora, wai ora and tangata ora (socio-ecological outcomes)?

- a) In what ways are strategies and efforts being aligned through collaborative partnerships? E.g. coordination, efficiencies, interconnected system
- b) In what ways are communities, services/businesses and agencies benefiting?

The evaluation utilises multiple data sources, enabling triangulation of data to provide robust answers to the key evaluation questions. Methods of data collection remain flexible and adaptable to the context, alongside a range of evaluation tools discussed further in this document. Four areas of data collection were undertaken through this evaluation journey:

³ As a Kaupapa Māori organisation, we use the term 'kaupapa partners', instead of 'stakeholders', to describe all audiences and participant groups involved in a given kaupapa. 'Stakeholders' refers to the colonial process of individuals using stakes in the ground to claim that whenua for themselves, irrespective of the Indigenous peoples that exist/ed there prior. For this project, 'kaupapa partners' include the Reconnecting Northland team and facilitators, and those with an interest, influence or impact including service users and their whānau.

| | | Number (n) of participants |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Āta Tohutoro <i>Document and artifact reviews</i> | - Programme documentation as supplied by evaluation sponsor | n=7 |
| Āta Wānanga <i>Activities and workshops</i> | - Group interviews, activities and workshops with programme participants | Wānanga n=3 Participants n=20 |
| Āta Kōrero <i>Key informant interviews and stories</i> | - Explore the unique journeys and stories of key informants - Video interviews, phone calls and kanohi-ki-te-kanohi - Unpacking successes, challenges and learnings with kaupapa partners | n=2 |
| Tatauranga <i>Surveys and feedback</i> | - Targeted pātai addressing KEQ's, with a range of response options | n=1 |

Data collection is guided by principles of kaupapa Māori evaluation and makes the following commitments:

- **Tikanga Māori** and processes are followed, from inception for the dissemination of findings;
- Respectful relationships are established through ongoing **whanaungatanga**, and community voice remains at the centre of our approach;
- Kaupapa Māori is validated with **mātauranga Māori**-based quality and success measures;
- A **Māori world view** values multiple perspectives and strives for a shared understanding of issues;
- Māori have the strongest 'voice' in enquiries that occur in a Māori context, where views and beliefs (including thoughts and experiences) of **Māori are elevated**.

Data is periodically analysed via thematic analysis where data is coded/organised by emerging themes and ideas, then synthesised across evaluation insight focus areas. Generally, we apply inductive data analysis to ensure authenticity and accuracy, and deductive data synthesis in line with our evaluation frames (i.e. to answer the KEQ's). Evaluation assessment scale responses are collated and synthesised to give a credible and defensible progress or quality 'rating' for each KEQ.

An evaluation assessment scale allows for measurement over time across a range of dimensions and data sources. The 'Whakatō Kākano' scale is one bespoke assessment scale which connects deeply with a kaupapa Māori methodology to determine value and merit across all components of the programme. This scale is adapted to assess *quality and progress* in the context of this programme trial.

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <p>NGĀ KĀKANO <i>seeds planted</i></p> <p>Potential to activate - opportunities for growth present</p> | <p>TINAKUTANGA <i>germinating</i></p> <p>Activating – seeds are opening, growth is evident</p> | <p>MĀTĀTUPU <i>sprouting</i></p> <p>Developing effectiveness – growth is positive</p> | <p>WHAKATUPU <i>growing strong</i></p> <p>Effective – seeds are demonstrating their strengths and impact for change</p> | <p>PĀPUA <i>mature</i></p> <p>Highly effective – seeds are impactful and new systems are evident, new futures emerging</p> |
|--|--|---|---|--|

Alongside this programme evaluation, a significant piece of research to inform trial development and a companion evaluation of overarching Reconnecting Northland outputs were conducted. These pieces are referred to within this evaluation report.

Te Mahi Tiaki Taiao Research Report⁴

This report was written primarily for Reconnecting Northland and its support organisations, to inform the ongoing trial and development of Te Kete Hononga. The report collates important insights from taiao leaders and members of the Waimamaku, Ōtaua and Hokianga communities. As such we hope that it will be a resource for both those communities and Reconnecting Northland to reflect on what has been achieved and ongoing opportunities to work together to protect and enhance the taiao. We also believe this report shares relevant insights for government and funding organisations on the benefits of investing in capability and capacity building for taiao groups and the need for integrative support systems that are responsive to the needs of taiao groups in different contexts and at different stages in their development.

Reconnecting Northland Dynamic Evaluation – Phase One Report⁵

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.

⁴ Barnes, M. 2023. Te Mahi Tiaki Taiao: A report on the trial of Te Kete Hononga for Reconnecting Northland

⁵ Reconnecting Northland Dynamic Evaluation: Phase One Report

Findings – KEQ.1

KEQ.1: How well and to what extent is Te Kete Hononga training and support connecting services and improving access for communities?

- a) *How well is delivery of tools, services, training and guides improving capabilities and meeting the needs of participating services?*
- b) *In what ways are resource flows being optimised?*
- c) *In what ways is TKH enhancing access to services?*

Improving Capabilities and Capacity

The key objective of Te Kete Hononga is improving organisational capabilities and capacity through targeted training elements. Kairaranga were positioned to engage trial groups in a range of training elements based on their unique understandings of their communities and needs. Through the Te Kete Hononga trial, 10 Kairaranga have been engaged to work with 16 groups on taiao projects. Trainings and services were delivered based on initial needs assessments carried out with the participating groups and achieved mixed outcomes in meeting the broad range of training needs. Given the trial context of this programme, there was purposeful scoping of delivery areas based on the level of resourcing available, prioritisation of training element needs and availability. This was acknowledged by most participants who openly shared their realistic expectations within this context, and what would be most useful to further meet their needs in future scaling of the programme.

Quality trainings

Feedback on the *quality* of training which was delivered is very positive, where attendees highlighted engaging facilitation, passionate and knowledgeable facilitators, a range of relevant training topics (incl. compliance certifications), and useful content to their roles and positions. A variety of community and organisational participation was engaged in Te Kete Hononga training elements (trial groups), with leaders expressing stronger understandings of their teams' strengths and needs, and kaimahi expressing a growing connection to the kaupapa and confidence in their abilities. Kaupapa partners across the board talked about Te Kete Hononga training elements as an alternative pathway to engage with the system and work towards the same aspirations, without diminishing mana motuhake.

"I didn't really know what I was getting myself into.. but the programme has been awesome. I've seen a lot of our workers getting trained up and the skills that we need." – trial group participant

"I came in a little bit late with Te Kete, however I feel like we've really kicked goals under this programme really quickly." – Kairaranga

"I went there sometimes green as, but came back with a lot of information that I can use in our mahi on the awa. Really useful stuff." – trial group participant

“The predator trapping course was one that we really needed – real taiao-based.” – trial group participant

“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 that nothing will go wrong.” – trial group participant

“You don’t want your peers to fail, you get this little bit of patience knowing some might take a little longer than others. And we have built a relationship with the trainer now too, he teaches us how we understand.” – trial group participant

“I sit in a different space to my kaitiaki, but these trainings allowed me to understand them a bit more and how they’re seeing things out there. Having that unity with them on these trainings actually helped me learn more about them.”

“Giving them these trainings is encouraging them to grow their strengths and escalate them into spaces they haven’t been before. We just want to see them be the people that they are at their very best and succeeding way up there – because that’s where they all deserve to be.” – Kairaranga

“It certainly met our training needs and exceeded what we would have done at a minimum.” – trial group participant

“We’ve got training now, we’ve got a long-term plan for our mokos, Te Kete Hononga has been a big part of that. We only had what we thought we knew, and now we know where we were right AND we have MORE tools.” – trial group participant

“I feel like I can do more now – as a whole I’m flourishing a bit more.” – trial group participant

A supportive and uplifting delivery approach with connections to Te Ao Māori was identified by participants across the trainings delivered, alongside significant enhancements along the way. In line with the trial nature of this programme, delivery pivots were informed by real-time participant feedback throughout the journey with the focus on authentically meeting community needs. Delivery pivots actioned along the journey which supported quality trainings include: service provider presentations at Hui Karere, extending key elements to 2-day trainings (such as project management workshop and marae stay), opting for formalised qualifications/micro-credentials where possible, organising local study groups where online training access became a barrier, travel assistance where travel costs became a barrier (car pools, petrol vouchers), and increased focus on whanaungatanga and sharing kai.

“People starting early to travel to training venue so don’t have time to prepare food... Sharing food creates opportunity to connect with other people in the training.” – TKH programme lead

“One of the challenges was the locations of the courses... that sometimes made it a bit hard for us to be able to attend. That’s sometimes a 5oclock ride – it’s a long day.” – trial group participant

“Started the sessions with karakia, whanaungatanga and kai... People come from variety of backgrounds so find out connections and reconnections with others.” – TKH programme lead

“People have extensive experience in plant and pest control but often no certification or formal training. [Course] was included in the training programme which offers people micro-credentials in 4 courses, which combined results in Conservation Field Skills Award.” – TKH programme lead

“They were also great in connecting Kairaranga with services that could support the rōpū I worked with. E.g. meeting [service] reps and finding out what kind of services they provide was great as they are able to help out rōpū to build their funding capabilities via a grant-writing workshops.” – Kairaranga

“[Facilitator] did a great job considering she was a team of one. And I saw throughout the program the vast improvement from where we were at the beginning to where we are now. I wish it was going for another 12 months.” – trial group participant

Connections to Te Ao Māori were recognised as a strength of delivery approach. It was suggested that exploring more mātauranga Māori and local history would enhance the quality and benefit of Te Kete Hononga trainings, which was supported by both Māori and non-Māori participants across community and organisational participation. This demonstrates the appetite for and effectiveness of mātauranga Māori-informed practices, particularly in the environmental protection/taiao field which encompasses deep connections to wairua (spirit/essence of all things) and acknowledges symbiotic relationships between tāngata (people) and whenua (land) for collective wellbeing. Delivery tools such as wānanga, taiao-based settings, and haukāinga or local leader-led knowledge sharing on mātauranga-Māori concepts can support this recommendation in future delivery.

“Sharing things that are really important to us is not easy for a lot of us. RN have an ethos to include Te Reo Māori in everything, bringing that concept is rejuvenating something that has been missing in our community.” – Kairaranga

“The Te Ao Māori part of this trial has been so good, they care about you as a person, it’s a really important part of working with our groups because most of them are Māori working on their own lands, that we (DoC) manage.” – Kairaranga

“Incorporating mātauranga into the environmental space has really only been in my sphere for 5-6 years, it’s not something that’s been embedded for a long time (in relation to govt orgs). Depending on the district and the team and local relationships with iwi – it’s kind of the makeup of the community. The approach of TKH is effective in progressing this.” – Kairaranga

“Cultural support was awesome. If anything, I’d love to see some more mātauranga stuff within te taiao for training, even some wānanga.” – trial group participant

Training attendance

Te Kete Hononga training elements were well attended by people from a range of community and organisational roles. 16 core training elements were delivered across four priority areas: business, environment, logistics and monitoring, alongside a range services and tools. Half of the training elements were NZQA certifications and the other half were specialised workshops, including topics such as health and safety, project management, fencing, pest control, forest protection, restoration planting, water management and outcomes monitoring.

Training participation: 1 Aug 2023 – 30 June 2024

| NZQA accredited course n=8 | Specialised workshop/course n=8 | Total training participation |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 92 | 81 | 173 |

Element delivery: 1 Aug 2023 – 30 June 2024

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Training elements | 85 |
| Service elements | 23 |
| Tools, guides, templates | 31 |
| Total elements delivered | 139 |

All participating trial groups reported some level of improvement in capability and capacity, however there were mixed outcomes around the extent. Two key factors impacted the attendance demographic: limited spots and communications around content/purpose.

Resourcing and the trial nature of this programme limited the number of spots available at each training. Efforts to meet the wide range of presenting needs resulted in a suite of 16 courses being tightly developed and delivered across the timeframe of the trial. In some cases, it was only trial group team leaders who could participate, and in other cases participation was rotated through organisation kaimahi so that everyone could get some benefit. It was important to be selective around who would attend the various offerings to attain the most benefit, which was managed by Kairaranga and trial group team leaders. Some more strongly resourced trial groups were able to follow up their most valuable Te Kete Hononga training elements with private training sessions for their whole teams, while other participants indicate that they would like the capacity of this programme to expand so their teams can learn and progress together. The level of resourcing for the trial certainly had an impact on individual capabilities, however continued resourcing for Te Kete Hononga would expand the impact for improving capacity across the rohe⁶.

“What’s been hard with the training is there’s a certain allocation of just a few people (from each group) and we have up to 35 people. So we sort of selected and then rotated to get them all through.” – trial group participant

Communications about the training elements also impacted attendance demographics. It was not always clear what the purpose or benefit of each training opportunity was, so although the trainings were well attended and all spots were filled, it was not always the person/people who would have gained the most benefit to the organisation. In some cases, it was decided that the Kairaranga or trial group team leader would attend to ‘test the water’, see what the opportunity was and how it could be most useful. Some participants expressed now that they know what each opportunity involves and who it would be useful for, they would have engaged different people from their community or organisation. This has particular significance to community organisations who are often supported by volunteers – the value of the opportunity needs to be clearly relevant for volunteers to dedicate their personal time.

“We learnt overall excellent skills with the training, however skills and training workshops needed more spaces available for participants and specific needs to each community.” – trial group participant

Other issues around communications include timing and language. Training dates were communicated well ahead of time, however details of the opportunity were communicated later and impacted organisational planning on who would be available to attend. Sometimes the language or way the opportunity was explained was too technical, so did not engage or encourage attendance from the people who would have benefited the most. Being a trial programme, it is expected for these kinds of learnings to enhance future delivery.

⁶ This connects to indicator 3b in the Reclaim Healthy Inflows and Outflows section of the Reconnecting Northland Dynamic Evaluation: Phase One Report.

“When I attended all the training sessions I couldn't bring five people along beside me, because they were they work full time, and I didn't have a lot of lead-in time to bring them along.” – Kairaranga

“It's good to know what those workshops were (after attending them) but now I'm relaying that information instead of the right people being in attendance. I almost want to run the workshops again with my people.” – Kairaranga

“They did a great job of giving the date early, but we were only told the allocations a week or two ahead, so we didn't know how many we were able to send which made it hard for planning.” – Kairaranga

“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.” – trial group participant

The trainings themselves were of high quality, well attended and well received. There is certainly appetite for more training opportunities and expanded attendance capacities. Engaging the most beneficial attendance can increase the impact of the trainings on improving capabilities and capacity. Te Kete Hononga is well positioned to achieve this in future delivery now that Kairaranga have experienced first-hand the types of opportunities on offer and have deeper understandings of purpose and needs⁷. This lends confidence to continued investment in Te Kete Hononga to maintain momentum and trajectory of capability growth.

To further enhance the benefit of targeted audiences to attend Te Kete Hononga training elements, it is recommended that communications are timelier, and redesigned to align key messages, explain content in plain language, and include the purpose and benefit of each opportunity.

Effectiveness for different groups

A range of organisations were engaged in Te Kete Hononga across the Northland rohe, ranging from initiating their journey to securely established in the taiao/environmental protection space. The overall *effectiveness* of the trainings in improving capabilities and capacity is analysed through the lens of tuākana and tēina status⁸. Those groups who are securely established, considered *tuākana* in the kaupapa, reported the **most effectiveness in improving** capabilities and capacity. Those groups who are initiating

⁷ This connects to the Individual Change mechanism insight in the Final Reflections section of the Reconnecting Northland Dynamic Evaluation: Phase One Report.

⁸ Tuākana–tēina relationships are a core concept within Te Ao Māori, originating from older-younger sibling relationships, and commonly describe reciprocal learning/knowledge-sharing from more experienced people around their lived experience/expertise.

their journeys, considered *tēina* in the kaupapa, reported **progress towards improving** capabilities and capacity.

“I think, to understand communities, you need to really do a more in depth needs assessment on exactly what that community needs and what status they're at. I found that my community was in a planning stage where (other groups) were in the doing stage, and others were a little bit in both. So we all had different needs.” – Kairaranga

Needs assessments were conducted with various communities and training elements were designed to address the most significant gaps across the rohe. Feedback suggests the key distinction between the differing experiences and outcomes is group ‘readiness’ to deliver. *Tēina* groups tended to be in the planning and ‘getting ready’ stage of their journeys, where most training learnings and outputs contributed to a knowledge bank to be utilised as their projects progressed. *Tuākana* groups tended to be in the ‘ready to deliver’ stage of their journeys, where learnings and outputs from trainings could be utilised directly and improved capabilities and capacity can be immediately felt. The scope and realistic expectation of a trial programme was acknowledged by participants, where a key insight to enhance future delivery is to consider the status of each group as part of the needs analysis and potentially design levelled trainings – ‘first steps’ for *tēina* groups and ‘next steps’ for *tuākana* groups.

“Some training opportunities were really great. It would be great to see more targeted high-level training for our groups that are already well established.” – trial group participant (Tuakana group)

“All in all, the courses that were provided were really good courses. They’d be really valuable for people ready to start the mahi.” – trial group participant (Teina group)

“Our groups are at different stages in their development and therefore the training programme and offerings needed to cater to the different needs.” – research finding

“A lot of the training was introduction stuff, foundational, which is where a lot of the groups are. So we need a next step up.” – trial group participant (Tuakana group)

“We needed the training fast-tracked, and Te Kete facilitated what we needed plus more that I hadn’t even thought about. It took off a massive amount of workload and administration off our shoulders.” – trial group participant (Tuakana group)

An area where many *tēina* groups identified strong benefits from training sessions is networking and knowledge sharing. The ability to connect, ask questions and learn outside of training content from *tuākana*/more established groups is identified as a key factor for improving capabilities and capacity.

Learning from others in the field is further discussed within ‘connecting services’ - the next section of this report.

“The highlight has been networking with each other and organically develop a tuakana/teina dimension where they can give their knowledge freely.” – trial group participant

It was also noted that trial groups’ workflows were impacted by participation in the programme. The time required to participate in the programme took personnel and resource away from the mahi, which impacted delivery outputs for some organisations. It was acknowledged that the benefit of participating in Te Kete Hononga far outweighed the initial pressure on delivery, however awareness and timely planning can reduce this impact. Future participants should be advised to consider and manage workflow impacts closely to ensure effectiveness and quality of opportunity is preserved. For example, resource allocation towards training and professional development should be considered within project design at both project level and funder level.

“The amount of time needed to commit has put significant pressure on capacity to deliver our contract to MFE, i.e. 100’s of hours of training and hui that was not planned for. BUT ultimately worth it and (our organisation) is stronger for it.” – trial group participant

A key feature of Te Kete Hononga is the Kairaranga role which weaves together the needs, skills and priorities of their groups to guide planning and coordination of collaborative ecological restoration projects. Growing capabilities to deliver effectively in this role is another focus of the training elements – such as project management and administration. It has been expressed that there was limited time to focus on this output, however the emerging progress which was achieved has been valuable – particularly the project management training. The central focus of Kairaranga within their limited FTE of this trial has been engaging and supporting capability and capacity growth of trial participants.

“Being a Kairaranga and having lots of opportunities to meet and korero with other Kairaranga was my most favourite aspect of this programme.” – Kairaranga

“I also loved the Project Management Wananga held at Aurere. It was awesome to have all rōpū together, working on project management skills and the venue was amazing.” – Kairaranga

The level of connection to their communities has been a key factor in how effectively capacity and capability among trial groups has grown – where whakapapa and established connections have been critical to engaging with tangata whenua and community groups. Those Kairaranga with strong connections have been able to support their communities the most effectively, and others received targeted support from Te Kete Hononga leads to more authentically connect with and support their communities. This highlights the importance of quality whakawhanaungatanga processes, strong community relationships and authentic understanding of need which is required to be an effective conduit for capacity building and collective impact.

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

“There are a lot of barriers when connecting rōpū to trainings and service providers. When working with hapū and community groups you have to be flexible and go the extra step to support rōpū to attend trainings and wananga. Rōpū need extra support e.g Logistics getting to trainings / wananga and availability - lots of rōpū work part time and take time off work to attend training and workshops.” – Kairaranga

“It’s always about our marae for us, all our kaitiaki and kaimahi we picked them specifically because they mahi at the marae. There’s always a focus on how we can help stand them up at the same time. Because within all of us – that’s a home to all of us. So we want to look after our home and we want everyone escalating at the same time. There’s always that knock-on opportunity to get wider.” – Kairaranga

“TKH programme was a great platform to bring Kairaranga together to share problems, solutions happening within each rōpū, but also allowed us to meet with other like-minded people within conservation management programmes through Northland.” – Kairaranga

Te Kete Hononga programme leads are thankful for the time that has been allocated towards this Kairaranga role through DoC and community leaders, and it has been suggested that the role can be more effective with an increased FTE.

Connecting Services

Northland is unique in many ways – the rohe is expansive and diverse, needs are localised, and resources are spread far⁹. These conditions cultivate the development of unique expertise, multifaceted use of resources and creative solutions to addressing needs and aspirations. Connecting services can facilitate the harnessing of potential efficiencies and the capacity for collective action.

Building relationships

Te Kete Hononga trial is demonstrating the importance and extent of focus required to build quality relationships between services/organisations, communities and government agencies. Relationships are being built between various groups through participating in Te Kete Hononga training elements together

⁹ Detailed analysis of Northland context can be found in the introduction of the companion evaluation: Reconnecting Northland Dynamic Evaluation: Phase One Report

and getting to know each other's kaupapa. This opens space to identify and map resources, priorities and areas of expertise that can be coordinated and shared across the wider taiao kaupapa.

“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 hapū 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 whakawhanaungatanga with our neighbouring hapū.” – trial group participant

“Strengths across the trial were the meaningful connections. Reconnecting Northland ARE reconnecting Northland – their name is doing what they say they are doing!” – trial group participant

Being led by an independent NGO, there is also an element of disconnecting the power dynamic between community and agencies which facilitates a neutral environment for honesty, authenticity and reciprocity¹⁰. Often, when these groups engage it is for the purposes of seeking funding, obtaining permissions/approvals, or negotiating challenges, which comes with clear power dynamics.

Te Kete Hononga has provided an environment in which these groups can engage and align with partners who share the same values and appreciation for the connection between taiao and tangata outside of these dynamics and build more authentic connections. This has been recognised as a significant strength by evaluation participants from both agencies (such as DoC) and community groups/organisations, and should be encouraged across the wider taiao kaupapa. Through this evaluation, Reconnecting Northland is positioned to lead and leverage the benefits of their role as a respected high-quality NGO in this field.

“A big strength is that the NGO (non-gov. org.) can bring people into a neutral space where we can work more equal – agencies and community groups.” – Kairaranga

“The biggest asset of the trial is the people. You want to work with them, they are so caring. For me this trial bought govt. agencies and community groups together in a place where we are all on the same side. Usually one of us wants something from the other, but in this place we could just be honest and open. Very valuable for us to hear the needs and aspirations of the communities.” – Kairaranga

¹⁰ This connects to indicator 4a in the Activate Next System's Purpose section of the Reconnecting Northland Dynamic Evaluation: Phase One Report.

The whakawhanaungatanga process within this programme can be further enhanced with targeted whanaungatanga/relationship building wānanga, mapping sessions, and tuākana-tēina relationships alongside other Reconnecting Northland strategies¹¹ such as ‘Tapere’ and ‘Connectivity Partnership’.

Sharing knowledge

A major outcome of connecting services has been the extent of knowledge sharing and learning from others through programme participation. This has occurred organically through the connections being facilitated as part of Te Kete Hononga training attendance, where participants are exploring learnings from others’ successes, challenges, solutions and pathways in a self-directed way. Knowledge sharing has been particularly valuable to tēina groups where they are able to use real-life learnings from a range of diverse settings and in-house expertise to navigate potential challenges and accelerate their processes for project planning and delivery. This demonstrates the importance of early focus and investment in building strong relationships around a shared kaupapa - where trust and reciprocity are established, authentic interactions can be shared. Knowledge sharing can be further encouraged at trainings as an intentional output of whakawhanaungatanga practices and connected RN strategies, as described above.

“Connecting with very knowledgeable people – there’s a wealth of knowledge across these different agencies and communities. That’s the richness of this programme is that knowledge-sharing.” – Kairaranga

“Can I speak as a pākehā? Nearly everyone taking part in the courses were Māori – that brought a really nice feel to the trainings. It was fantastic. We’ve been able to build connections with a local marae group and learn heaps from them, share our rabbit traps and water testers and support their efforts too.” – trial group participant

“In the spaces of the wānanga it was really good to hear other people’s ways of doing things in our groups. There was a good mix of new groups and more established groups for knowledge-sharing.” – trial group participant

Optimising Resource Flows

Through upskilling and connecting the collective capabilities and capacities of participating communities and services/trial groups, it is expected that community-led efforts can be supported through better enabled and streamlined regional services. Efficiencies across services, resources, investment and information are expected to optimise resource flows across the overall kaupapa.

Within this trial period, strides have been made towards improving capabilities/capacity and connecting services. Current progress is encouraging and as connections and knowledge sharing continue to grow then optimised resource flows can be supported. Further success across these outcomes will contribute

¹¹ See companion evaluation: Reconnecting Northland Dynamic Evaluation: Phase One Report

to a) identifying existing resource pools and b) optimising how resources can be utilised across connected services.

The exploration of established resources/services in the rohe was actioned during this trial as part of training content development. One key lesson that was expressed is the approach required to successfully engage related agencies in the kaupapa. Barriers were experienced around gaining understanding of collective impact and how this programme could support the specific outcomes that each agency is aiming to achieve. There was some hesitance to engage with Te Kete Hononga as the benefits to organisational priorities of meeting various KPI's was not always clear. A suggested approach is to research the outputs and outcomes of the agency and make linkages between the two programmes prior to initial engagement. This programme and the wider Reconnecting Northland strategies would benefit from a dedicated relationship manager or collective impact lead.

Emerging outcomes for optimising resource flows are localised and being reported specifically in optimising funding and information flows.

“I found the biggest issue for a lot of the groups is knowing where to go to get the training, which agencies, what funding is available. Te Kete did a lot of the legwork – making navigation easier.” – Kairaranga

“TKH was a great programme that helped open my eyes to all the different services, funding opportunities and training providers. I will definitely be using my connecting found via this programme to help my rōpū progress with their conservation mahi.” – trial group participant

“As a result of that plan which included our entire community we have been offered a grant for our community of \$450k to do our projects.” – trial group participant

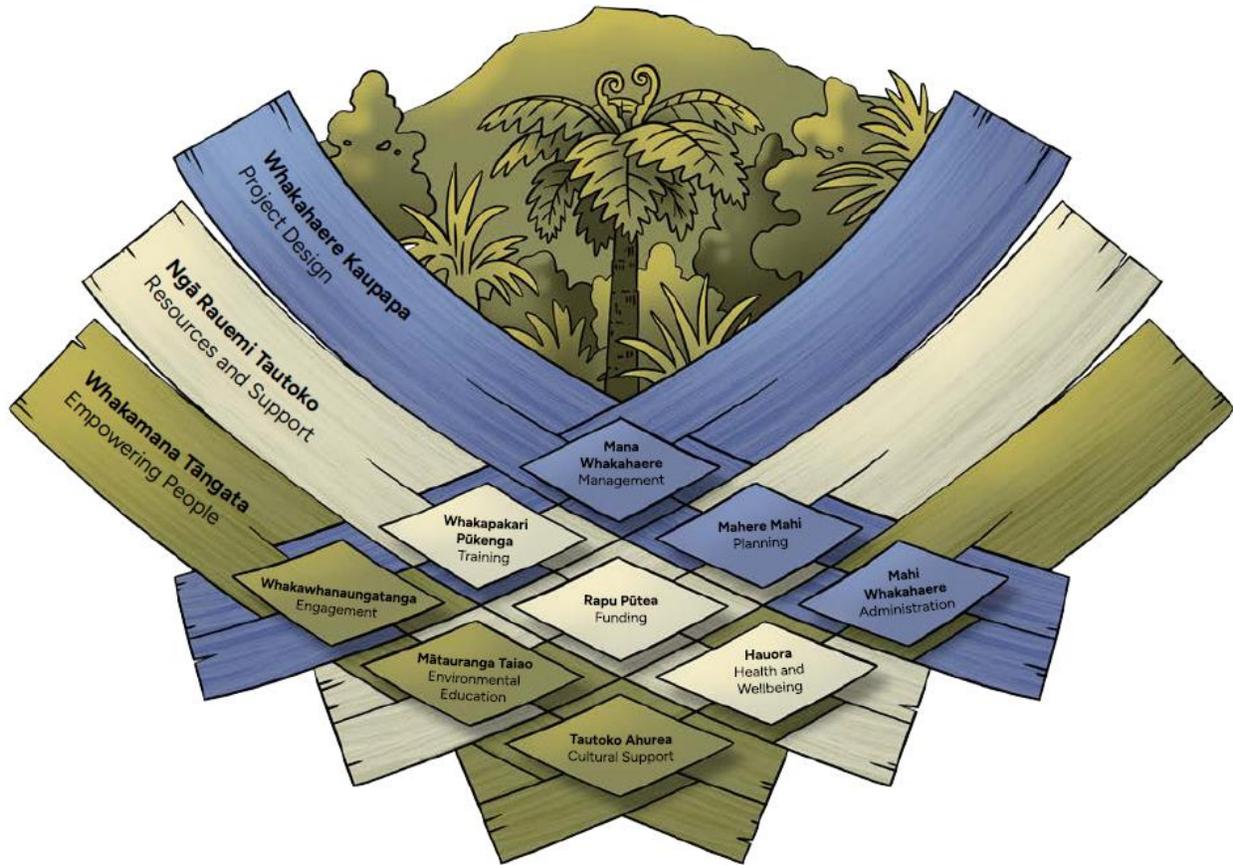
Recommend: “Funding options for groups who need support to see ideas come to fruition.” – Kairaranga

Recommend: “Navigation support for training and incorporating existing options within the community.” – Kairaranga

Increasing accessibility and promotion of templates and tools (such as GEM portal) are a key focus for the next period. It is recommended that wider community resources are mapped as they are explored or used by participating groups (such as local drivers licencing opportunities provided by MSD), and coordination and communications are built around resource flows to ensure active accessibility.

Meeting Needs

A **community support framework** derived from an earlier piece of research¹² has been utilised as part of this evaluation to assess how well the programme has met these needs across the trial. This piece of research, Te Mahi Tiaki Taiao Research Report, was commissioned early in the trial to understand trial progress and the needs of the trial groups participating in Te Kete Hononga. Through this process, nine themes were identified in the support services and resources needed by taiao groups to pursue their restoration goals and uphold the dreams and aspirations of their communities:



In this evaluation, each whenu/strand within this framework has been given a rating on the 'Whakatō Kākano scale' and is analysed for quality and success in the context of the trial.

Whakahaere Kaupapa – Project Design

The programme design of Te Kete Hononga included management, planning and administration support to enable groups to successfully develop and deliver restoration projects, through the creation of the Kairaranga role. Kairaranga have variable skills and experience in these areas, so collectives can increase

¹² Barnes, M. 2023. Te Mahi Tiaki Taiao: A report on the trial of Te Kete Hononga for Reconnecting Northland

capability by putting systems in place that decrease the load for community groups and help them grow their skills.

Induction of Kairaranga into the programme was staggered as various role appointments were made through DoC and community organisations. Where personnel shift occurred, there was sometimes an internal handover as opposed to a fresh induction for new kaimahi. The effectiveness of this process was heavily reliant on cohesive understanding of the kaupapa and commitment of DoC operations managers. This was not consistently established and resulted in varying levels of role comprehension among Kairaranga including overall purpose/benefit and who could be considered to participate. This challenge can be mitigated with clear communications, ongoing relationship building with agencies, and rangatira ki te rangatira interactions.

“I wasn’t able to engage community groups in the trial because of a communication breakdown on our end (DoC) and we didn’t have enough information to choose the right community groups. Now that (kaimahi) is back it’s like oh wow that’s what we were supposed to do! We would have gone about it differently if we knew what we know now.” – Kairaranga

For Kairaranga to be most effective in this conduit role, initial supports need to be wrapped around their own strengths and capabilities to see the bigger picture of the kaupapa and enhance management, planning and administration skills. These areas were only somewhat addressed, as the priority during the first 12 months was capability growth among the trial groups. Some progress in capacity growth among Kairaranga was made within this timeframe – particularly in the project management elements.

Ratings for project design ranged from germinating to sprouting, with varying effectiveness based on level of established community relationships/networks initially bought into the role and types of supports required by each community. With further resource, the capability and capacity growth of Kairaranga can be a key focus in the next period.

Project design in the context of a trial programme is rated at an average of Tinakutanga - **germinating**.



Ngā Rauemi Tautoko – Resources and Support

Training of kaimahi and volunteers was identified as a high priority to ensure groups have the local capability, capacity and qualifications to deliver their taiao projects. Sustainable funding is also needed to enable groups to employ and retain skilled kaimahi and progress long-term restoration plans. Groups need to ensure that kaimahi and volunteers are supported in all areas of health and wellbeing if they are to attract and retain people in these roles.

The overall quality of training was effective, where some level of capability and capacity growth was established across all trial groups. There is a universal desire for training to continue and build on the progress established through this trial. A notable outcome is that participants say they can now see a strategic pathway to achieving their aspirations.

“Coming to the end of this process, all of the work, training, engagement, networking, we can actually see a strategic pathway emerging. ‘New futures emerging’ is the key that says we have lifted up to that highest level.” – trial group participant

Funding support has achieved great outcomes for some groups, and positive progress beyond the trial period is expected for others.

“They’ve helped umbrella us for funding and enabled us to take it on board ourselves.” – trial group participant

“Weaving in this connectivity that we have has definitely helped us with (funding) applications, and the funding used to support us as kairaranga has been invaluable. We wouldn’t have gotten to the point that we have been able to in my community without that.” – Kairaranga

Feedback on hauora/wellbeing support was rated as ‘highly effective’ – particularly around nurturing of relationships, care and support of training facilitators and programme leads, and deepened recognition and attention to removing stressors/barriers (such as providing kai, transport and study groups).

Resources and support in the context of a trial programme is rated at Tupu Kerekere – **growing strong**.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Training | WHAKATŌ KĀKANO <i>seeds planted</i> | TINAKUTANGA <i>germinating</i> | TUPU <i>sprouting</i> | TUPU KEREKERE <i>growing strong</i> | PĀPUA <i>mature</i> |
| Funding | WHAKATŌ KĀKANO <i>seeds planted</i> | TINAKUTANGA <i>germinating</i> | TUPU <i>sprouting</i> | TUPU KEREKERE <i>growing strong</i> | PĀPUA <i>mature</i> |
| Health/ Wellbeing | WHAKATŌ KĀKANO <i>seeds planted</i> | TINAKUTANGA <i>germinating</i> | TUPU <i>sprouting</i> | TUPU KEREKERE <i>growing strong</i> | PĀPUA <i>mature</i> |
| Resources and Support | WHAKATŌ KĀKANO <i>seeds planted</i> Potential to activate - opportunities for growth present | TINAKUTANGA <i>germinating</i> Activating – seeds are opening, growth is evident | TUPU <i>sprouting</i> Developing effectiveness – growth is positive | TUPU KEREKERE <i>growing strong</i> Effective – seeds are demonstrating their strengths and impact for change | PĀPUA <i>mature</i> Highly effective – seeds are impactful and new systems are evident, new futures emerging |

Whakamana Tāngata - Empowering People

Groups highlighted that restoration initiatives need to be a good fit for the community if they are to improve outcomes for local people and the environment. Kairaranga recognised the need for good relationships and desired support in developing engagement strategies appropriate for their local context. Groups also saw a need for greater access to environmental education and support to incorporate education in community restoration activities. This includes recognising the extensive mātauranga that

tūpuna held and opportunities for kaumātua and local experts to share their knowledge. Cultural support is essential for taiao work, including an understanding of local history, places, and cultural protocols and relationships with haukāinga.

Empowering people is the ngākau of this programme – where participants are empowered through upskilling, connection and coordination to collectively achieve the environmental aspirations of their communities and wider rohe. Engagement was rated as effective, where feedback from Kairaranga indicates they are now better prepared to engage with government partners and access the supports they and their communities need – there is a developing understanding of what needs to be done to achieve their aspirations. Further feedback specifically from DoC Kairaranga report they had better community engagement than they normally achieve as DoC rangers. Some DoC Kairaranga received targeted support around authentically connecting with communities and this programme was credited as helping to improve their confidence and effectiveness when working with communities, supporting improved approaches and decision-making, including within the parameters of their agency.

“We’re plugged into the community now. There are people from outside organisations that meet our community, but when you are plugged in you get so much more done.” – Kairaranga

“[TKH programme leads] being open and available at all times was really helpful. If I had a query, I knew [they] were just a quick email or phone call away.” – Kairaranga

“They (TKH programme leads) were the heart of this programme and I appreciate that they were approachable and always willing to be available to Kairaranga at any time.” – Kairaranga

Some issues were experienced around engagement and relate to meeting community needs, where communications around trainings were not always effective in engaging participants who would gain the most benefit. The purpose of the needs assessment, to inform the priority trainings to be made available, was also misunderstood in some communities resulting in some specific needs to be initially overlooked. Recommendations have been made to improve communications in the upcoming period (see ‘training attendance’ section), and in the context of the trial, most participants rated this area as effective but with ‘room for improvement’ in the future.

“We did needs assessments, but I just don't think that we fed enough information into that. So that's on our part. We didn't understand what their needs assessment was actually gonna do. So if we had understood at that point that this was going to design the training programme - I know the community needs, te mea, te mea, te mea, I'm gonna put all that in there.” – Kairaranga

“I think it has been good in the areas that the trial was able to focus. I would have liked to see custom courses specific to my community’s needs, but understand the limitations of the TRIAL.” – Kairaranga

Environmental education was seen as a key feature of Te Kete Hononga training elements and delivery was ‘highly effective’ in meeting participant needs – particularly around upskilling volunteers, alignment with local aspirations, and support to engage the wider community such as schools.

“I found that in the group that I’m now working with I’m able to answer questions that come up – particularly with the new people. It’s given me confidence to share what I have learnt.” – trial group participant

Cultural support was seen as **growing strong** and was rated as effective in the context of the trial but with ‘room for improvement’ in the future. Inclusion of Te Reo Māori, whakawhanaungatanga processes and tikanga Māori were identified as strengths in Te Kete Hononga delivery, alongside some knowledge-sharing of participating haukāinga. Suggested enhancements include specific training elements on local history, significant places and cultural approaches to environmental protection/restoration (such as decision making around rāhui). These elements should be led by haukāinga with a focus on knowledge sharing and tuākana-tēina relationships.

Empowering people in the context of a trial programme is rated at Tupu Kerekere – **growing strong**.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| Engagement | WHAKATŌ KĀKANO <i>seeds planted</i> | TINAKUTANGA <i>germinating</i> | TUPU <i>sprouting</i> | TUPU KEREKERE <i>growing strong</i> | PĀPUA <i>mature</i> |
| Environmental Education | WHAKATŌ KĀKANO <i>seeds planted</i> | TINAKUTANGA <i>germinating</i> | TUPU <i>sprouting</i> | TUPU KEREKERE <i>growing strong</i> | PĀPUA <i>mature</i> |
| Cultural Support | WHAKATŌ KĀKANO <i>seeds planted</i> | TINAKUTANGA <i>germinating</i> | TUPU <i>sprouting</i> | TUPU KEREKERE <i>growing strong</i> | PĀPUA <i>mature</i> |
| Empowering People | WHAKATŌ KĀKANO <i>seeds planted</i> Potential to activate - opportunities for growth present | TINAKUTANGA <i>germinating</i> Activating – seeds are opening, growth is evident | TUPU <i>sprouting</i> Developing effectiveness – growth is positive | TUPU KEREKERE <i>growing strong</i> Effective – seeds are demonstrating their strengths and impact for change | PĀPUA <i>mature</i> Highly effective – seeds are impactful and new systems are evident, new futures emerging |

KEQ.1 Summary

KEQ.1: How well and to what extent is Te Kete Hononga training and support connecting services and improving access for communities?

Overall, there have been significant lessons throughout this trial which have positioned Te Kete Hononga to deliver quality training elements and effectively meet a range of presenting needs. This pātai in the context of a trial programme is rated as Tupu Kerekere – **growing strong**.



Improving capabilities and capacity of participating trial groups was the key focus of this trial, where some level of growth was established across all trial groups, tuākana groups reported the most effectiveness and tēina groups reported significant progress.

Tuākana-tēina relationships facilitated organic knowledge sharing which was identified as a key benefit of the programme. Participants could authentically explore lessons from others’ successes, challenges, solutions and pathways, where they are able to use real-life lessons from a range of diverse settings and in-house expertise to navigate potential challenges and accelerate their successes. This was supported by quality facilitation with a focus on whakawhanaungatanga/relationship building, shared values and a collective kaupapa.

The unique Kairaranga role proved to be essential in the effectiveness of this programme. Initial energies were focused on engaging and supporting capability and capacity growth of trial participants, and supports were beginning to be wrapped around Kairaranga for their own capability and capacity growth as coordinators of ecological restoration projects and conduits for collective impact. The level of community connection and quality of induction for each Kairaranga had a direct impact on the effectiveness of this programme for their participating trial groups.

Te Kete Hononga has been effective in meeting the overall needs of participating trial groups, with some groups benefiting sooner than others. Various factors have contributed to mixed outcomes in this area, including group status or readiness to deliver, Kairaranga or team leader understanding of the content and benefit of individual training opportunities (as determined by quality of communications), participant availability and spaces available.

Optimisation of resource flows is an ongoing output of this programme, where connections are being established as part of the trial to support future mapping and consolidation of resources.

Findings – KEQ.2

KEQ.2: To what extent is Te Kete Hononga enabling collective impact towards whenua ora, wai ora and tangata ora (socio-ecological outcomes)?

- a) *In what ways are strategies and efforts being aligned through collaborative partnerships?*
- b) *In what ways are communities, services/businesses and agencies benefiting?*

Collaborative Partnerships

Growing collaborative partnerships for efficient resource use and enhanced collective impact is the long-term objective of Te Kete Hononga. This trial has laid the groundwork to support this outcome through building strategic relationships across the rohe and facilitating knowledge sharing between partners.

The organic nature of networking, knowledge-sharing and learning from local experiences which has occurred throughout this trial is encouraging and indicates that the need and desire for collaborative partnerships is present. Effectively removing power dynamics for authentic relationship building through the successful approach of this programme has also positioned Te Kete Hononga to support strong outcomes in collaborative partnership in the further delivery.

Progress has been achieved towards aligning efforts and strategies between some trial groups, as demonstrated through completion of local action plans, successful funding grants, growth of community initiatives and sharing of tools/gear between community groups. Further progress can be supported by continued upskilling for collective action, identifying remaining gaps, and further mapping of local services and resources.

“It was the networking that I really learnt a lot from. Understanding other people’s projects and how they operated. That’s where I got my gains from the programme. What are you doing on your project? How did you do it? Who did you get funding from? If you go back to ‘connectivity catalyst’ – that’s exactly what it’s like.” – trial group participant

“The networking relationship between [trial groups] has opened up attendance to other hui and connections.” – Kairaranga

“Our group and our area have a limited capacity and access to resources that is not proportional to the conservation need in [our community]. The collab support from Reconnecting Northland has been critical to our establishment and will remain necessary to assist with capacity building.” – trial group participant

“Our current state of environment needs active people on the ground managing pests plants, pests animals and other detrimental environmental environment issues in each catchment area over Te Tai Tokerau and Aotearoa. Reconnection Northland are playing a pivotal role in helping organisations like [mine] with limited funding, capacity and capability. Without Reconnecting Northland our aspirations and goals for a healthier thriving eco system and environment are much harder to achieve.” – trial group participant

Outputs of Te Kete Hononga enable collaboration for the advancement of wider Reconnecting Northland strategies such as designing solutions and planning for collective impact. A key area where the trial is starting to have an impact is simplifying resource sharing and distribution to enable collaborative partnerships. As connections between partners continue to grow, resource mapping should remain a focus to facilitate strong collaboration.

Collective Impact Model

Co-designing an effective collective impact model among communities, organisations and agencies is an overarching strategy which Te Kete Hononga outputs contribute towards. It is expected that lessons from the delivery of this programme will strengthen the quality and success of a localised collective impact model for Te Tai Tokerau. Te Kete Hononga lays the groundwork for effective model design as capability and capacity gaps are closed through training elements and knowledge sharing, collaborative partnerships are grown through alignment of efforts and Kairaranga support, and resources are streamlined for the biggest impact.

“Before we were a little group working in the bush on our own, not with other people around. My vision that’s come out of this programme is that we are all working together looking towards the future. Working as a group, pooling all of our ideas together.” – trial group participant

Key lessons from the trial period which can support collective impact model design include:

- The value of sufficient timeframes and resource around whakawhanaungatanga for authentic and reciprocal relationships.
- The value of addressing existing power dynamics between communities and agencies for more effective relationship building.
- More effective approaches for recruiting agency support, such as understanding priority KPI’s and communicating clear links and benefits between the two programmes.
- There is significant appetite for mātauranga Māori-based practices among both Māori and non-Māori organisations, and local knowledge-sharing is highly respected and considered a taonga.

- Communications should be clear around purpose and benefit, with consistent messaging and plain language options across outputs.

KEQ.2 Summary

KEQ.2: To what extent is Te Kete Hononga enabling collective impact towards whenua ora, wai ora and tangata ora?

Overall, Te Kete Hononga trial is laying the groundwork to enable collective impact for te taiao. This trial has seen a variety of lessons which will help inform the evolution of the programme and contribute to wider RN strategies.

As capability and capacity gaps are closed through training elements and knowledge sharing, collaborative partnerships are grown through alignment of efforts and Kairaranga support, and resources are streamlined for the biggest impact. Kaupapa partners are well positioned to effectively collaborate and design the best solutions for their interconnected whenua, wai and tangata to flourish.

Recommendations for Te Kete Hononga

Overall, this programme has made good progress during the trial period, with effective changes along the way. Recommendations to enhance further delivery of Te Kete Hononga include:

- Consider the status of each group as part of the needs analysis and potentially design levelled trainings – ‘first steps’ for tēina groups and ‘next steps’ for tuākana groups.
- Explore more mātauranga Māori, local history, significant places and cultural approaches to environmental protection/restoration to enhance the quality and benefit of Te Kete Hononga trainings. Delivery tools such as wānanga, taiao-based settings, and haukāinga-led knowledge sharing on mātauranga-Māori concepts can support this recommendation in future delivery.
- To further enhance the impact of who is attending Te Kete Hononga training elements, it is recommended that communications are delivered in a timely manner, and redesigned to align key messages, explain content in plain language, and include the purpose and benefit of each training opportunity. A dedicated communications lead would greatly support targeted attendance, improve programme reach and overall impact.
- Kairaranga with local whakapapa or strong community connections have been able to support their communities the most effectively. This highlights the importance of quality whakawhanaungatanga processes, strong community relationships and authentic understanding of need which is required to be an effective conduit for capacity building and collective impact. Increased FTE for the Kairaranga role could be considered, alongside a dedicated relationships manager or collective impact lead.
- The whakawhanaungatanga process within this programme can be further enhanced with targeted whanaungatanga/relationship building wānanga, relationship and resource mapping sessions, and encouragement of tuākana-tēina relationships.
- Support for capability and capacity growth among Kairaranga should remain a focus for the next period - initial supports need to be wrapped around their own strengths and capabilities to see the bigger picture of the kaupapa and enhance management, planning and administration skills.
- Increasing accessibility and promotion of existing templates and tools can be actioned alongside coordination and targeted communications for resource flows.
- Future participants should be advised to consider and manage workflow impacts closely to ensure effectiveness and quality of opportunity is preserved.

- Ongoing relationship building that prioritises output alignment and rangatira ki te rangatira interactions is recommended between organisations and agencies. As mentioned above, a specific relationships manager role would strongly support critical outcomes in this area.
- The level of resourcing for the trial has had an impact on individual capabilities, and continued resourcing for Te Kete Hononga would expand the impact for improving capacity across the rohe.

“What I’ve heard is really reassuring – the challenges I’ve heard are not unsolvable. They were considered in the design phase and played out through the restrictions of being a trial programme. When we scale (the programme) we can enhance resourcing, communications and tailoring for individual community needs.” – TKH Project Manager

Kohikohi ngā kākano, whakaritea te pārekereke, kia puāwai ngā hua.
Gather the seeds, prepare the seedbed carefully, and you will be gifted with abundance of food.