

# RAUAWA



Healthy Families NZ  
Mātauranga Māori  
Impact Report



WHAKATAKA TE HAU KI TE URU,  
 WHAKATAKA TE HAU KI TE TONGA.  
 KIA MĀKINAKINA KI UTA,  
 KIA MĀTARATARA KI TAI.  
 E HĪ AKE ANA TE ATĀKURA,  
 HE TIO, HE HUKA, HE HAU HŪ.  
 TĪHEI MAURI ORA!

Let the winds be calm from the west,  
 Let the winds be gentle from the south.  
 Let the breeze blow over the land,  
 Let the breeze blow over the ocean.  
 May the dawn rise red-tipped,  
 A sharp frost, a touch of ice, a breath of life.  
 Behold, the vital essence of life!

This karakia acknowledges the environment's rhythms and energy, reinforcing the knowledge that our wellbeing is interconnected with the health of te taiao.

# MIHI ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tēnei te mihi ki ngā maunga whakahī, ngā awa tūpuna, me ngā moana e hora nei i tēnei whenua tapu o Aotearoa. Tēnei te mihi ki ngā tūpuna kua hīkoi i mua i a tātou, ngā pou herenga wairua i whakatakoto te ara e whāia nei e tātou. Nā rātou te mātauranga, nā rātou te kaupapa, hei kawē mā tātou ki te ao hou.

Ka huri te whakaaro ki ngā koroua, ngā kuia, ngā pou mātauranga kua tohatoha i ō rātou pūkenga, māramatanga, me te aroha. Nā koutou i hiki, i hāpai, i whakatīnana i ngā moemoeā, hei whāriki mā ngā uri whakaheke. Kua noho mai ngā pūrākau, ngā whakataukī, ngā karakia, ngā waiata, me ngā tohu i waenganui i a Rauawaawa hei pou tokomanawa, hei pou herenga tangata, hei ara whakapiki oranga mō tātou katoa.

E rere ana te mihi ki Te Tiriti o Waitangi, te taura here i waenganui i te iwi Māori me te Karauna, hei arataki i te huarahi tika, te huarahi taurite. Ka mihi hoki ki a Pae Ora, me ngā mahi mārohirohi kei mua i a tātou hei hanga i tētahi pūnaha hauora e taurite ana, e māmā ai te toro atu, e kotahi ai, e hāngai ana ki ngā hiahia o te iwi.

Nā te mōhio ki te ara o mua, ka taea te tuitui te ara mō ngā rā e tū mai nei. Ko ngā koeke, ngā kaumātua, ngā kuia ngā puna kōrero, ngā puna whakaaro—engari ko ngā rangatira mō āpōpō he taonga anō. Mā rātou e kawē, mā rātou e whakakaha te wairua o tēnei kaupapa.

Ehara nōhou te taiao, nō te taiao kē tātau. Me hoki tātou ki te whakarongo ki ngā tohu a Papatūānuku, ki ngā karanga a Ranginui. Me tiroiro ki ngā hurihanga o te rangi, o te marama, o ngā wai, hei tohu mō tō tātou hauora. Ki te pā te mate ki te taiao, ka pā anō hoki ki a tātou. Ki te pā te mate ki a tātou, ka pā hoki ki te taiao.

E ai ki ngā kupu o ngā mātua tūpuna: “He rangi tā matawhāiti, he rangi tā matawhānui.”  
Mā te titiro whānui, mā te whakaaro nui, ka kitea te huarahi tika.  
Mauri ora ki a tātou!

**He waka eke noa.**

We acknowledge the proud mountains, the ancestral rivers, and the vast oceans that embrace this sacred land of Aotearoa. We honour our ancestors, those who walked before us, laying the foundations for the paths we now follow. Their knowledge, their wisdom, and their vision guide us as we move forward together.

We turn our thoughts to our koroua, kuia, and knowledge holders who have so generously shared their wisdom, insight, and aroha. Through their guidance, the hopes and aspirations of our tūpuna are woven into the work we do today. Their stories, proverbs, karakia, waiata, and tohu live within Rauawaawa, binding us together and paving the way for a future where Māori well-being thrives.

We acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the enduring covenant that shapes the partnership between Māori and the Crown, ensuring a path towards justice and equity. We also acknowledge Pae Ora, and the courageous steps being taken to create a health system that is equitable, accessible, cohesive, and people-centred.

To move forward, we must first look back. By understanding the ways of our tūpuna, we can weave together the pathways of tomorrow. Our koeke, kaumātua and kuia are the wellspring of knowledge, but our future generations also carry the wisdom and strength needed to shape a thriving world.

The natural world is not something we own—it is something we belong to. We must return to listening to Papatūānuku, to Ranginui, to the rhythms of the environment. The shifts in the skies, the cycles of the moon, the health of our waters—they all reflect our own wellbeing. If our environment is unwell, we are unwell. If we are unwell, so too is our environment.

As our ancestors have said, “He rangi tā matawhāiti, he rangi tā matawhānui.” Those who see only a narrow view will miss the path ahead, but those who see with a broad perspective will find the way forward.

We honour the guidance of Pāpā Rereata Makiha, the tohunga, the rangatira, and the thought leaders who have uplifted and strengthened the movement of Healthy Families NZ. Your knowledge and insight have shaped the way we work as Māori practitioners, helping us reclaim our health systems, our mātauranga, and our futures.

Let us stand strong, let us be unwavering in our commitment to the health and wellbeing of our people and our world.

**We are all in this together.**



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# RAUAWAAWA

**Rauawaawa** means the waka with everyone inside, kaumātua, hapori, whānau, hapū, iwi and kaimahi sitting, paddling and moving forward together. Our tūpuna explored the most expansive oceans and had the ability to understand what was happening around us, while also navigating other levers in the waka to identify opportunities, overcome risks associated with our travels, and adapt as needed.

*Rauawaawa* also represents and reflects our whakakitenga (vision) for the future we hope for, where whānau are self-determining, empowered to be healthy, and where Māori systems and practices are the status quo, supporting and nurturing the wellbeing of our people and environments. *Rauawaawa* holds us to account in ensuring that whānau and hapori sit at the centre of decision-making and of our mahi.

Therefore, *Rauawaawa* is a call to action for impact across our health system. As champions of mātauranga Māori, maramataka, health prevention and innovation, we recognise that leaving a legacy worthy of our uri whakaheke (descendants) is of the utmost importance.

The stories of our Atua and ancestors guide our way through adventurous challenges and entice us to be creative, innovative and courageous. It is therefore no coincidence that such stories and attributes that are intertwined throughout Aotearoa, are the bones of this report.

Finally, we are sharing *Rauawaawa* to raise awareness of mātauranga Māori in the context of our Healthy Families NZ approach, but also how we utilise these systems of old to positively impact the health outcomes of our people.

*Rauawaawa* is a testament to our journey so far.





# TĪMATANGA INTRODUCTION

The resurgence of mātauranga (knowledge) Māori practices and philosophies signals the growing demand for alternative and holistic approaches to managing health and wellbeing. In the revitalisation of Māori ways of being and knowing, whānau and mātauranga Māori practitioners have begun walking alongside each other discovering the benefits of Māori perspectives in their everyday lives.

It is our privilege to capture and share their experiences through our multi-year journey as Healthy Families NZ. Mātauranga Māori provides the foundation and heart of this report.

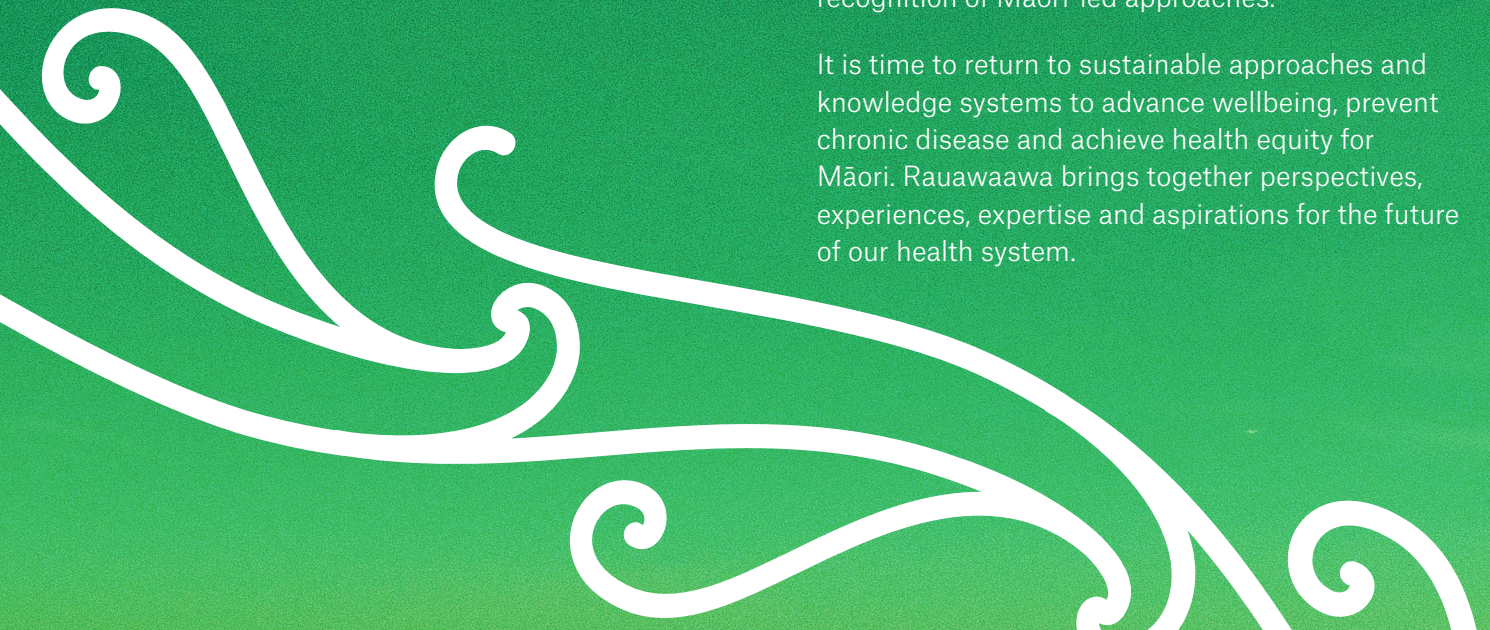
Healthy Families NZ has a decade of experience in working collaboratively to celebrate, champion and amplify Māori systems as prevention solutions. Our kaimahi utilise kaupapa Māori approaches and mātauranga Māori practices in their mahi and across communities to achieve equity of health for Māori.

Key to this is how we share power differently with whānau and communities, how we uphold the mana of Te Tiriti o Waitangi through the way we partner and collaborate at every level and how we activate healthier environments so that whānau are enabled to live well.

Further on in the report, we share stories from each of our teams demonstrating how we are amplifying Māori systems as prevention solutions. Each of these stories are a snapshot in time, and examples that are transforming how mātauranga and health prevention are understood, appreciated and grown in Aotearoa. Our stories are positioned under our Healthy Families NZ key focus areas, to demonstrate that mātauranga Māori transcends all areas of our lives.

We have highlighted only a few of the many initiatives led by communities across Aotearoa and supported by Healthy Families NZ. This includes stories that have created systemic shifts, and where opportunities for change at a government policy and practice level are occurring due to the value recognition of Māori-led approaches.

It is time to return to sustainable approaches and knowledge systems to advance wellbeing, prevent chronic disease and achieve health equity for Māori. Rauawaawa brings together perspectives, experiences, expertise and aspirations for the future of our health system.



## IMPACT STATEMENT

Whānau hold the answers to re-orienting the health system to improve wellbeing for all. Upholding mātauranga Māori and the integrity of our traditional systems is central to the Healthy Families NZ approach because we recognise that Te Ao Māori has the power to transform health outcomes for whānau and communities in the places we live, learn, work and play. Returning to Māori systems and the ways of our tupuna are fundamental to achieving Pae Ora.

Rauawaawa provides an opportunity for transformational change.

Inequities in health status and outcomes for Māori are prevalent and span multiple generations. It is well-documented that non-Māori experience lower incidence and mortality from chronic disease with evidence of the link between colonisation and a healthcare system that has reduced access to, and effectiveness of, health services and interventions for Māori<sup>1</sup>. In 2019, the Waitangi Tribunal released WAI2575, a report on Stage One of the Health Services and Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry which concluded that in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the primary healthcare system has failed to achieve equitable health outcomes for Māori<sup>2</sup>. Health status and preferences of Māori or kaupapa Māori approaches in healthcare policy and decision-making have been missing from our current health system.<sup>3</sup> If systemic factors such as policy and resource flows remain in this current state, our health system will struggle to create equity for Māori and reduce preventable chronic disease. Whereas the values of mana, rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga provide for authority to always be exercised in a manner that nurtures people and te taiao, existing systems lack this in-built protection. Central to achieving better and more equitable outcomes is how we share power differently with whānau and communities; creating healthier environments for whānau, and upholding the mana of Te Tiriti o Waitangi through the way we partner and collaborate at every level of the system.

We have intended to explore and demonstrate how mātauranga Māori systems, traditions and practices when contextualised in contemporary settings are still, today, prevention opportunities.

As Māori, we inherently believe that our systems, such as Maramataka:

- Support quality and authentic engagement with whānau most at risk of preventable chronic illness and disease.
- Encourage whānau to consider their health and wellbeing earlier, towards preventative practice.
- Amplify the importance of whakapapa (genealogy/connection), whanaungatanga (relationships) and connection to te taiao (environment) – our protective factors.

We acknowledge all the movements across Aotearoa that strive to acknowledge, embrace and embed mātauranga Māori. The ingoa (name) of this impact report, Rauawaawa, was gifted by our **Healthy Families NZ Te Kāhui Māori**, and inspired by our wayfinding roots.

***“Ko tōna tikanga, ko ngā rauawaawa ngā kaihoe o te waka, ā, ko tatou katoa e hoe ana i tō tātou waka ki tōna Mātāhauriki!”***

*“All paddlers aboard the canoe are contributors to the movement and motion of the waka, let us move forward together, to its destined place, to a new horizon.”*

1. (National Library of Medicine, 2024)

2. (Int J Equity Health, 2024)

3. (Int J Equity Health, 2024)

# MĀTAURANGA MĀORI

As we engage with our communities, Healthy Families NZ kaimahi are hearing about the lived realities of Māori who feel disconnected from their mātauranga and identities. Revitalising mātauranga Māori is fundamental to upholding the traditional cultural practices that will restore the mana, health and wellbeing of our people and environments.

For many hundreds of years, long before European settlement of Aotearoa, Māori have exercised sophisticated systems for understanding and relating to the natural world.<sup>4</sup> Mātauranga is about whakapapa (ancestry), it is what connects us to our tūpuna (ancestors), to our taiao (environments), our mokopuna (descendants), our whānau, and each other.

Mātauranga refers to the deep sea of knowledge built by tangata whenua through generations of interaction with and observation of te taiao. It is not only the knowledge that has been inherited over generations but the important values and principles behind those taonga too.

Mātauranga Māori is adaptable and transformative, and remembered and expressed in literary and artistic forms such as whakatauki, whakatauāki, karakia, mōteatea, waiata, tā moko, whaikōrero, karanga and haka. It is intrinsically linked to our identity as Māori, and the conditions that impact the health and wellbeing of Māori and communities<sup>5</sup>.

Healthy Families NZ acknowledges that mātauranga Māori has the power to shift our wellbeing statistics so that they reflect communities that thrive in body, mind and spirit.

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4. (Mead HM, *Understanding Mātauranga Māori*, 2022)

5. (Durie, M, *He Kawa Oranga*, 2011)

6. Far North, Waitākere, South Auckland, Waikato, Rotorua, East Cape, Whanganui, Rangitikei Ruapehu, Hutt Valley, Christchurch and Invercargill.

# TE KĀHUI MĀORI

Healthy Families NZ's Te Kāhui Māori are a community of practitioners who have an explicit focus on improving equity and health outcomes for Māori. Te Kāhui Māori work strategically and collaboratively to ensure that all Healthy Families NZ locations:

- Are guided by frameworks and methodologies that both align with Te Tiriti and sit within a Māori worldview.
- Are activating initiatives across our communities that go beyond just remedying disadvantage and reducing inequities for Māori.
- Are kaupapa driven and people-centric.
- Are driving systems change at all levels of the health system.

The Healthy Families NZ Te Kāhui Māori have positioned themselves well to raise awareness and visibility of Māori driving positive change and demonstrating alternative solutions and pathways for addressing preventable chronic disease. They are in a unique position to influence the health and wellbeing of whole populations through elevating mātauranga Māori as a health prevention system.

Towards the conclusion of Phase 2 (2018-2022) of the Healthy Families NZ movement, and inspired by an evolving health system, we moved towards creating a Kaupapa Māori lead role in each of the 11 location teams. This role is strategically placed to inform the strategic direction for how each location will recognise and embed Te Tiriti and mātauranga Māori across the landscape of our movement and communities.

## RAUTAKI MĀORI/ KAUPAPA MĀORI LEAD

Our Rautaki Māori continue to support Te Kāhui Māori, drawing from the strengths passed down to them to make sense of complexity through whakapapa and knowledge of Māori systems and design thinking. Collectively, the Rautaki Māori are building the cultural capacity and capability of an innovative workforce and their communities.

Throughout Rauawaawa, you will find inspiring stories describing the impacts of Māori-led, whānau-led or partnership-based initiatives. Throughout Aotearoa, these initiatives are bringing people together, restoring te taiao and natural systems, increasing knowledge, feeding hapū and whānau, and providing facilities and natural spaces that engage and benefit the whole community.



# POU: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



## Healthy Families Waitākere

# ACTIVE WHAKAPAPA

In partnership with Te Kawerau a Maki, and Te Pou Theatre, Healthy Families Waitākere is recording and elevating the ancestral pūrākau of Te Wao Nui a Tirawa (West Auckland), enhancing connection to place and a sense of wellbeing through physical activity.

Active Whakapapa is an interactive experience connecting people with te taiao and te ao Māori according to mana whenua pūrākau. Through a mix of English, te reo Māori, and waiata, pūrākau are shared via Bluetooth headphones along walking trails, underscoring the deep connection between our physical, spiritual, and mental health and the health of the natural environment.

It is a site-specific, hyper-local experience highlighting locations of significance through kōrero tuku iho (stories of the past, oral traditions), which have been passed down through whakapapa.

Active Whakapapa is designed for both Māori and tauwi (non-Māori) to enjoy, inviting everyone to experience te ao Māori. It offers people in West Auckland a unique opportunity to connect with te taiao (the natural world) in the ways of our tupuna.

Originally available at Orangihina Park, the kaupapa has been scaled to Henderson Park, and along the Te Whau Pathway. Active Whakapapa has been enjoyed by thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds. By design, it aligns with the local histories curriculum, making it especially popular with schools. Events are often fully booked well in advance during school terms.

*“Active Whakapapa provides our students with an opportunity to learn the history of the whenua and connections to whakapapa. This supports current work we are doing around the new history curriculum and provides opportunities for our students to experience in real time meaningful activity which educates and supports tangata whenua.”*

- **Greg Roebuck**, Principal, New Lynn School

From the beginning, Healthy Families Waitākere saw themselves as temporary guardians of Active Whakapapa, with the long-term goal of eventually returning the initiative to Te Kawerau a Maki for their stewardship and further development. Active Whakapapa has now been officially handed back to Te Kawerau a Maki, who will continue to evolve and nurture this important connection between people and te taiao (the natural world) through their own cultural lens and leadership.

Healthy Families Waitākere is committed to continuing the momentum ensuring Māori and tauwi understand and appreciate whakapapa, especially that of te taiao. By acknowledging significant landmarks, historical events, and tikanga, the kaupapa also elevates the effective method of collaboration and care from the partnering organisations.

Healthy Families South Auckland

# JOURNEYS OF MANU

Healthy Families South Auckland brought technology, mātauranga Māori and physical activity together in an augmented reality app. Activated in 2017, the Journeys of Manu prototype was developed by Conical Interactive Studios during a celebration of the Puhinui Stream Challenge. The first of its kind for the region, the technology superimposes the charismatic, animated Māori youth, 'Manu'. Participants take part in the Māori storytelling platform and view their route on their device through the app - a concept developed by AUT's Research and Innovation team, Auckland Council's The Southern Initiative (TSI) and Healthy Families South Auckland. The challenge itself was a free, all-ages 6km 'fun walk' from Hayman Park to Totara Park that took a scavenger hunt approach, enticing tamariki and whānau to walk the route entertained by activities and events. Puhinui Stream was Manu's first 'journey', once a rich source of freshwater and kai (food) for many Iwi living around Manukau and surrounding South Auckland. Using augmented reality is an opportunity to use innovation that helps people move more. Similar to how games like Pokemon Go encourage people to get out and be active and explore their neighbourhoods. A tool that pairs Māori systems with innovation is not just systems change, but 'systems return'. That is, taking us back to our traditional ways of being where we rely on our environment as indicators of time, health and wellness.

Journeys of Manu continues to educate people about various landmarks in the South Auckland region and has since evolved to other apps that incorporate and educate through pūrākau around the Maramataka, with the installation of 12 pou as another lens to inform design and potential solutions to taiao development. The blending of physical art and digital AR, underpinned by pūrākau has provided mixed reality experiences that inspire imagination, bring whakapapa and history to life, and engages decision-makers to try traditional approaches to modern issues.



## Healthy Families Far North

# TE AMO PŪTORO

Te Amo Pūtoro is a kaupapa supported by Healthy Families Far North, led by rangatahi from Kerikeri High School who are co-designing a new māra hūpara (playspace of traditional Māori practices) at the Kerikeri Sports Complex. The project working group is part of a wider collective including representatives from Ngāti Rēhia (mana whenua), the Kerikeri Sports Complex, Far North District Council, Vision Consulting, and Healthy Families Far North. The group has come together to look to the area's rich history for inspiration for a new playground that utilises the natural landscape rather than man-made resources, creating a connection to the past and embracing te taiao.

Healthy Families Far North and the project team have given rangatahi a place in this kaupapa which would normally be held by adults. Six students were chosen to work with the project team and develop the play space by exploring storytelling components that bring a deeper meaning to activities and tākarō Māori (traditional Māori games). The value exchange of empowering rangatahi to lead this project has shifted the power dynamics, with students not only embracing the role of helping, but designing. The students have been running a series of workshops to help gather feedback from the wider community, gauging whakaaro and ideas for the outdoor space and its history, and how the community can incorporate them into the design. They've also held sessions

with the local kindergarten to re-tell these stories in their own unique way, and to test the best way to engage with other young people.

Healthy Families Far North and the project group have worked to ensure that pūrākau can inform design and systems change, placing value on mātauranga Māori, our physical environments and their ability to transform the way we live.



Healthy Families Far North

# TĀMOKOHIA TE WHENUA

Sport Northland and Healthy Families Far North are taking a united approach with local Kura to adopt the curious and inventive traits of Māui, by exploring new ways to increase physical activity that put our tamariki at the centre of decisions to enhance the spaces they play in. Tāmokohia te whenua is an adaptation of Sport Northland's Play on the Way, which aims to keep our tamariki active on the way to school. Tāmokohia te whenua shifts the conversation from an adult-led, games-based chalk drawing to a tamariki-led approach that draw from local pūrākau to design and produce play spaces that reflect their local stories.

With support from Healthy Families Far North, Sport Northland are working on a blueprint to help guide schools through the process of executing Tāmokohia te whenua, by taking a tuakana-teina approach that encourages capability and an increased adoption of tamariki-led innovation practices. The plan encourages schools to connect with mana whenua, local marae and to learn the history of their rohe through movement and games.

Healthy Families Far North has followed a process to ensure there is greater power sharing within the kaupapa through whakawhanaungatanga, wānanga, manaakitanga and kotahitanga - understanding that everyone is part of the process, and it is the community voice which is most important.

Both Healthy Families Far North and Sport Northland continue to utilise the opportunities in Tāmokohia te whenua for schools to rethink how spaces are used for play and storytelling.



## Healthy Families Ōtautahi

## KĪ O RAHI NATIONAL KOROWAI

Beginning in 2023, Healthy Families Ōtautahi has worked throughout the region to establish the Kī o Rahi National Korowai, an initiative to preserve, grow and strengthen the traditional Māori sport so that it is embedded into our lifestyles in Aotearoa. Led by Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, Kī o Rahi champions, organisations and community were brought together in its first phase to wānanga on the sport's future, understand the current state across different regions and pinpoint key opportunities to strengthen the regions' involvement in the sport.

Following the inaugural wānanga that took place throughout the year, the rōpu came up with a structure that places the community at the heart of its operations, giving them direct ownership and a stake in all aspects of the initiative.

Healthy Families Ōtautahi's involvement has been centred around whānau and community voice and prioritising a 'bottom up' approach that sees community champions, whānau, tamariki and rangatahi are heard and shaping the sports' future themselves. This has included organising, facilitating and hosting hui (online and ā kanohi) to broker connections across different regions; creating key documents alongside participants and whānau that capture their insights; working with

partners to unlock funding and resource support where needed, providing leadership and guidance to navigate complexities, and; identify strengths within the rōpu and support areas where gaps were identified.

The collaborative effort is a blueprint for how other communities can preserve and promote not only Kī o Rahi, but also set a precedent for integrating communities and new, transformative practices into modern governance structures that can transform the sporting landscape in Aotearoa New Zealand.



# POU: MĀTAURANGA MĀORI



Healthy Families Rotorua

# WAITAWA RESTORATION PROJECT

The Waitawa Restoration initiative is activating community leadership and responsiveness to transform the local water system and restore the mauri of one of the local streams and its surrounding whenua. The initiative is a collaboration between Healthy Families Rotorua, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Rotorua Lakes Council, local iwi Ngāti Hurunga te Rangi, Te Tatau Pounamu (the East Side Collective Impact Forum), a local Kura and Kōhanga reo, and taiao experts. Local tribal members remember Waitawa being an abundant source of freshwater koura, tuna, trout, and other delicacies like watercress and blackberries. It was also a place of recreation and play for the children of the local pā (village) who swam in the stream. In the 1960's, the construction of industrial buildings and new housing developments began in Rotorua's eastern suburbs. Over time, the stream underwent changes and eventually degraded into a stormwater drain. Even its original name - Waitawa - became lost to all but the local tribe. The project sees partnering organisations utilising the initiative to educate tamariki and communities on the importance of sustaining wai. The learning journey of restoring Waitawa Stream is not only accelerating the return to its former glory as a kai provider for the community, but it is also ensuring ongoing and intertwined relationships between future generations and the habitat.

The restoration began in December 2021, with Healthy Families Rotorua providing the supporting

infrastructure to coordinate and mobilise work amongst partners and helping to drive the initiative forward. To ensure mana whenua fulfilled their aspiration to rekindle and reactivate their kaitiakitanga responsibilities, Healthy Families Rotorua worked closely with hapū, Ngāti Hurunga te Rangi, as they built their confidence to lead the project. A key aspect of the initiative is ensuring strong and meaningful relationships with local hapū and iwi to support community engagement and maintain line-of-sight to elevating Māori aspirations, needs and realities.

Since the beginning, Healthy Families Rotorua has provided support in forming a rōpu manaaki (the Care Group), with three years of project funding secured by the collective, named the 'Puna Ora Care Group Agreement'.

The restoration project is underpinned by a Māori worldview, ensuring that kawa, tikanga, and the importance of understanding whakapapa and karakia have been upheld throughout each stage of the initiative. Healthy Families Rotorua continues to role model the invaluable contribution of community and whānau voice to create systemic change and ensure inclusion by decision-makers. The outcome has not only been a mindset shift by those that sit at a strategic level, but it has also resulted in solutions that utilise a Māori model of care with te taiao that sees increased health and wellbeing across communities.



# RECLAIMING WELLBEING THROUGH THE MARAMATAKA

Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei Ruapehu have been working for several years with kaupapa partners and Maramataka practitioners to elevate Maramataka - the traditional measure of time used by our tupuna utilising the lunar phases. It incorporates a sensory understanding of our environment and differs from rohe to rohe, depending on the environmental factors and signs that each area presents. By observing and developing a connection with the marama (moon), we can ensure that as individuals we are best placed to tackle the things life may throw at us. This allows us to start to become our best selves and then contribute to the improved health and wellbeing of our whānau, hapu, iwi, and communities. In the revitalisation of local Maramataka, whānau and mātauranga Māori practitioners have begun walking alongside each other discovering the benefits of a Maramataka perspective in their everyday lives, captured and shared through the multi-year journey of Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei Ruapehu.

The intention of the kaupapa was to explore and demonstrate how mātauranga Māori systems, traditions and practices when contextualised in contemporary settings are still, today, prevention opportunities. Māori inherently believe that our systems, such as Maramataka: increases the

access and quality engagement with whānau most at risk of preventable chronic illness and disease; encourages whānau to consider their health and wellbeing earlier, towards preventative practice, and; amplifies the importance of whakapapa (genealogy/connection), whanaungatanga (relationships) and connection to te taiao - our protective factors. Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu have been exploring the use of Maramataka for analysing mental health crisis data. This has included collating and mapping 5 years of admissions to the acute psychiatric inpatient unit, seclusion, police family harm incidents, and suicides. When identifying the regional priorities for improved service delivery in mental health and addictions, the research has highlighted the importance of a te ao Māori perspective for shaping systems change. To date, the team have had over 162 stakeholders visit the Maramataka patterns walk-through, including iwi, Māori researchers, central government, mātauranga Māori knowledge holders, mental health experts, and health clinicians. The response has been positive, with many stakeholders and the team continuing to utilise this inclusive frame for shifting the system from a clinically-led model to a more people-centred continuum of care, to disrupt the mental health crisis trajectory.



Healthy Families Te Ngira

# NOW AND BEYOND

“Now and Beyond” was the title of the national Healthy Families NZ wānanga held in 2023 at Tūrangawaewae Marae, with locations and kaimahi coming together to collectively pave the way for a thriving future. At the end of April, close to 70 kaimahi from the eleven Healthy Families NZ locations, and the Healthy Families NZ national team (Health NZ Te Whatu Ora), were invited to Tūrangawaewae Marae in Ngāruawāhia, hosted by the Te Ngira team, to connect kanohi ki te kanohi and build our movement, develop our capabilities individually and collectively, whakawhanaungatanga, and, of course, share kōrero and kai. Healthy Families Te Ngira hosted all 11 Healthy Families NZ location teams, with kaimahi from across the motu, gathering on the majestic banks of the mighty Waikato River. It is in this transformative space where Te Ngira provided the opportunity for everyone to embark on a collective journey, igniting the flame of passion and commitment towards the Healthy Families NZ kaupapa.

Day Two was the big day of growth and development for our kaimahi - following a fishbowl exercise to discuss questions and issues in both the Kai and mātauranga Māori spaces, and a series of “unconferences” were held with fifteen quick-fire topics up for discussion, debate, and

shared learning. Topics were set on the day to reflect Healthy Families NZ’s current situation and included: what does rapid innovation look like (and how to do it), how to integrate mātauranga Māori into Built Environments, how can we use Communications to better tell our stories, and how to use the Evaluation Report to further enhance our mahi.

Healthy Families Te Ngira was able to bring to the forefront what is central to Healthy Families NZ: a true community up approach to health and wellbeing, and proof that if we give voice to communities and value lived experience, we can work together to achieve a collective impact that allows communities to thrive.

The coming together of Healthy Families NZ locations also demonstrates the power of community-driven initiatives, the importance of being led by Māori values and tikanga, and the significance of incorporating cultural wisdom into our endeavours. By honouring Māori knowledge and approaches, we can address health inequities and usher in sustainable change.



Healthy Families Hutt Valley

# TE WHAKARURUHAU

In 2021, Healthy Families Hutt Valley created Te Whakaruruhau from five foundational pou, Tikanga, Hauora, Reo, Whenua and mātauranga, to strengthen the cultural capability of kaimahi and support authentic engagement with Māori communities.

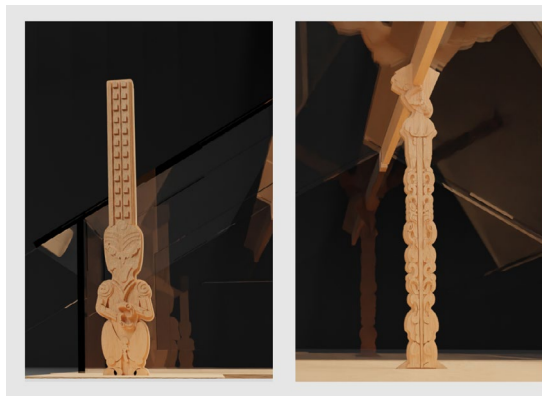
Te Whakaruruhau is a whare concept that translates to shelter, protector and refuge, aiming to grow kaimahi understanding of te ao Māori. Ultimately influencing how the team engages with key influencers, decision-makers, communities, and environments. Te Whakaruruhau aims to improve understanding of a Māori worldview and ensures cultural integrity and holistic wellbeing by maintaining balance across the pou, which guide the approach to all of Healthy Families Hutt Valley's kaupapa.

Te Whakaruruhau continues to inform and shape Healthy Families Hutt Valley's approach to preventing chronic disease by ensuring that Māori perspectives and views remain at the centre:

- Te Whakaruruhau supported Hutt City Council's first-ever Māori Strategy, Te Herenga Kairangi. Through a partnership between Healthy Families Hutt Valley's Kaiārahi Māori and Council's Te Tira Māori policy advisor, aspects of Te Whakaruruhau were included in the strategy.
- Conducting a survey within the local rugby league community to gain valuable insights into

the experiences, challenges and aspirations of players and their whānau, helping to shape future initiatives that promote active and healthy communities through sports codes.

- Installing new storyboards at Walter Nash Park, emphasising the concept of "collabor-action." This project, grounded in kaupapa Māori, involved collaboration between community members and local schools to create spaces that reflect Māori values and narratives such as Ngake & Whātaimai. The community acts as kaitiaki (guardians) of these storyboards, with the authority to adapt and modify the stories as they see fit.
- Facilitating workshops focusing on co-design, design thinking and systems thinking from a te ao Māori perspective. These sessions aimed to build capability among staff and community, enabling them to apply Māori worldviews in problem-solving and project development.





Healthy Families Invercargill

# HINE ATUA

Utilising the Atua Matua framework, a group of māmā and their daughters are strengthening connections by building their knowledge of the taiao and how to use natural resources. Hine Atua Karapu is a full immersion extracurricular programme for young Māori kōhine (girls) which is establishing living relationships with Atua Māori. Hine Atua Karapu was conceived by Healthy Families Invercargill Rautaki Māori, Amelia Clark. It is a joint venture with Ārahi Wāhine Māori Toko i te Ora – Māori Women's Welfare League, and Te Wharekura O Arowhenua.

Through the building of these relationships kōhine are using the Atua Matua framework to engage with the taiao (natural environment). While tamariki are mainly aged 9–11 years old, there is a mix of ages, including some as young as five. Māmā (mothers) also attend and participate alongside their tamāhine (daughters). Kōhine were encouraged to observe the changing seasons and learn the signs (tohu) of their environment to gain a deeper understanding of the land, alongside learning to forage for and process plants to create rongoā and everyday products such as natural soaps, skincare items, tonics, balms, and whakamārie (calming) serums.

The Hine Atua group was inspired by a group of mothers who shared a common goal: to impart lessons to their daughters they themselves had only learned later in life. The wahine wanted their daughters to acquire this knowledge sooner,

helping them to recognise and manage their emotions while aligning with the values of their ancestors.

To bring this vision to life, funding was sought to develop and pilot a programme. In early 2024, under the umbrella of Ārahi Wāhine Māori Toko i te Ora – Māori Women's Welfare League, the group successfully secured funding from the Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa Fund (administered by Active Southland on behalf of Sport New Zealand) to launch the programme.



Hine Atua activities included:

- A tour of the Kura grounds, to catalogue the plants and trees around the property, which included kai and medicinal species.
- Māmā were given the task to introduce a pūrākau to their kōhine. One such pūrākau is about Hineahuone, the first human.
- Scrap booking: A label maker was introduced so kōhine could write phrases for their scrapbooks. Without prompting they were all writing Māori proverbs, with one participant writing 'Tōku reo tōku ohoohe', meaning in English, "My language is my awakening or my special taonga".

Comments from those in the group expressed Hine Atua Karapu's positive impact on relationships, learning and perspective:

- "I'm so glad I made the commitment to come because it's a special time and activity for me to do with my girls, something I am not doing at home."
- "I didn't realise I was going to have as much fun as the girls."
- "I've walked around this school a million times and have actually seen it today from a different perspective after learning all the beautiful medicinal plants we have. It gives the place a different feel, one of nurture."

One of the key whānau outcomes of Hine Atua Karapu include the growth in confidence and commitment to the kaupapa from māmā participants. Healthy Families Invercargill has observed positive growth and a shift in mindset, attitude and interaction from māmā and tamāhine, leading to a greater sense of connection to taiao and atua and participation in the kaupapa.



# POU: REDUCING THE HARM FROM SMOKING AND ALCOHOL





Healthy Families Rotorua

# RŪRŪ PARIRAU

## **Rūrū parirau kei mate i te ua**

*Shake the raindrops from your wings in case you catch a chill*

Rūrū Parirau is a line from the oriori Tihore Mai Te Rangi composed by Hirini Melbourne. The children's song is about a kōtare (kingfisher) and earthworm taking shelter from the rain. Adapted from a karakia the oriori speaks to the desire to 'bring us back into harmony with the natural and spirit world'. Rūrū Parirau depicts the kōtare shaking morning dew from its back and serves as an analogy in this initiative for Māori to do the same with alcohol harm. The idea of 'leaning in' to our pūrākau (tribal stories), whakapapa, karakia and waiata as a principle of wānanga and discussion, is to strike a connection with audiences who already have an ear for kaupapa Māori or a yearning to learn more, and to build on it.

Over several years, various collaborators of Rūrū Parirau partners including Te Arawa Whānau Ora, Toi Te Ora, Hāpai Te Hauora, Lakes District Health Board, Arataua Media, Te Puia NZMACI and marae leaders have shared the goal of wanting to have more open discussion about Māori, whānau and alcohol.

An early initiative focused on capturing insights from marae leaders and kaumātua. A video series of rangatira interviews with good historical knowledge and understanding of how marae tikanga and practice has evolved, explored the topic of 'Alcohol on the marae: does it have a place there?'

Kaupapa partners were able to identify patterns, trends and ways alcohol had impacted marae and whānau and how leaders responded. Using what was learnt, the rūpu continued to have wānanga with the community and explore how alcohol gains entry into almost any setting or occasion.

Through intentional advertising and multi-media, the voice of the alcohol industry has become powerful. Rūrū Parirau aspires to build a counter-narrative that promotes tikanga Māori as the main source of healthy messaging for Māori with a view to discrediting the persistent messaging from the industry that promotes drinking alcohol as normal and fun in all areas of the community, and at any time.

The latest kaupapa focuses on uniting community leaders; the Council, local iwi, marae and urupā trustees to lead conversations around the growing prevalence of alcohol in urupā (burial places). Through research, surveys and data gathering, the team uncovered a diverse range of kaitiaki and governance structures that exist over urupā across the region. Insights show that the extent of authority (mana whakahaere) that koeke (kaumātua) now exert over sacred areas varies and, in many instances, it has not been enough to ensure that an alcohol-free tikanga associated with urupā is widely known and practised.

Using a systems approach to tackle this complex and sensitive issue, kaupapa partners held wānanga with the leadership of a local marae to discuss how best to tackle the issue of alcohol in 'our' urupā. During the co-design-our-way-forward phase, observations of the influence of tikanga and marae values on koeke decision-making were made.

Casting the net wider to capture other voices, the team also had positive and engaging community responses to an online survey, confirming that this was a topic that many marae communities' thought was important, confusing or worthy of further discussion and clarification. The initial assumptions were confirmed:

- There has been a big shift in beliefs and tikanga understanding about alcohol and the urupā over the decades, and that new beliefs and practices were clashing with traditionally held ways of being.
- Attitudes have changed. Sometimes it's more about individual preferences than collective understandings and agreement.
- There are big gaps in the process that traditionally saw knowledge / mātauranga handed down generationally through whānau teachings or wānanga. Now people were going by what they had observed, what they thought to be right or acceptable.
- People don't always know who to ask; if you do ask there are a mix of messages, and it gets confusing.





Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei Ruapehu

# SMOKEFREE FUTURES

In 2021, Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei Ruapehu began a journey supported by Te Oranganui, Te Whatu Ora and the Tobacco Advisory Group to better understand whānau lived experiences, ideas and aspirations for a smokefree future. Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei Ruapehu were curious about the role communities can play in Whanganui becoming a smokefree rohe. The Smokefree Village was made up of current smokers, ex-smokers, and their whānau, health professionals, and quit smoking coaches. The Villagers were able to explore the journey of initiation into smoking as well as envisioning what a smokefree future would look like.

The Smokefree Future 2030 Insights Report was released in 2022, and provided a culmination of 18 months of kōrero and design with the Village, resulting in a set of key insights and recommendations for the health system. The report highlights the importance of iwi and whānau being actively engaged as partners in designing any future solutions – for Māori, by Māori, with Māori. Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei Ruapehu have shared how whakawhanaungatanga and wānanga have been powerful when working with whānau, particularly whānau most affected by health inequities. Creating a safe space for whānau to be vulnerable has also strengthened relationships on the learning journey, with

participants sharing lived experiences and intergenerational stories. The team used pūrakau to set the scene, providing an alternative perspective, that is, a te ao Māori worldview and dove into history so the whakapapa of collective journeys shared a wider context.

One of the key approaches adopted was the sharing of pūrakau and tikanga, which gave whānau a new way to look at things. The te ao Māori worldview and the way our tupuna thought and looked at the world, their ingenuity and how they did things is more positive, and productive, a testament to whānau sharing their experiences and life changes as a result of being in wananga. Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei Ruapehu continue to work with whānau towards being a smokefree rohe, prioritising the health and wellbeing of citizens and environments across Whanganui.

# POU: KAI




 A photograph of three women in a forest setting. The woman in the foreground, wearing a striped shirt, holds a large fern frond. Behind her, another woman in a black jacket also holds a fern. A third woman is visible in the background, smiling. The scene is outdoors with many trees.
 

Healthy Families Rotorua

# REVITALISING OUR KAI MĀORI LEGACY

Healthy Families Rotorua have been working collectively and collaboratively throughout the rohe with organisations, iwi experts and kai champions to revitalise mātauranga Māori and celebrate Māori kai. The trust and reciprocity that is required between partners because of the kaupapa and experiences that take place through kai and the sharing of kai, has led to the deep transferring of knowledge and lived experiences.

Healthy Families Rotorua recently co-facilitated the Rongoā Waitawhara: E Kai! wānanga, bringing together whānau and community members for a hands-on experience in integrating rongoā Māori and traditional Māori cooking. Led by chef Joe McLeod and his dedicated team from E Kai Māori, the three-day wānanga at Kearoa Marae focused on revitalising food sovereignty approaches, encouraging participants to reclaim their culinary heritage. For Healthy Families Rotorua, the wānanga was an opportunity to create lasting, positive change within our food systems as we recognise that food is more than just

sustenance; it embodies our identity, heritage, and the knowledge passed down through generations. By embracing traditional practices, Waitawhara: E Kai! demonstrated that we can empower our communities to reconnect with their roots and promote a healthier, more sustainable future for all.





The collective work by those who led the wānanga also demonstrated the superiority of kai sovereignty approaches to kai security and the importance of returning to Māori systems to create sustainable approaches to health prevention for our people. Translating this into the wānanga was done by enabling participants to forage for kai, identify various rongoā, and enjoy practical demonstrations of ancient cooking methods, learning skills passed down through generations. Chef Joe McLeod highlighted the importance of reconnecting to our mātauranga Māori cooking legacy, who shared that the disconnection from mātauranga has been incredibly brutal. Many whānau today have little awareness of their traditional food culture and this particular wānanga showed how simple the reconnect was. The wānanga aimed to strengthen community ties through kai and reconnect with cultural heritage. As participants gathered and prepared food together, they discovered the strong link between food and identity.

The desire to return to our Māori roots and stand firm in who we are, underpins how vital wānanga like this are. While only one part of the bigger picture, kai has always been at the heart of unifying our people. As the wānanga concluded, attendees left with new cooking skills and a renewed sense of pride in their culture.

The kaupapa continues to serve as a testament to the resilience and importance of preserving and celebrating mātauranga Māori and Māori kai. The Rongoā Waitawhara: E Kai! wānanga has sparked a movement to embrace and celebrate traditional Māori food practices, paving the way for future generations.

Healthy Families Far North

# BUILDING A FOOD SECURE AND RESILIENT ROHE WITH KAUMĀTUA AND KUIA OF WHANGAROA

Kaumātua and kuia of Whangaroa have come together to share mātauranga from their upbringing, to better understand how we can support food security and resilience in the wider rohe. The various kai wānanga were held as part of a project in collaboration with Whangaroa Health Services Trust (WHST), Mahitahi, Ōnuku and Te Rūnanga o Whangaroa (TROW), to build a resilient Whangaroa.

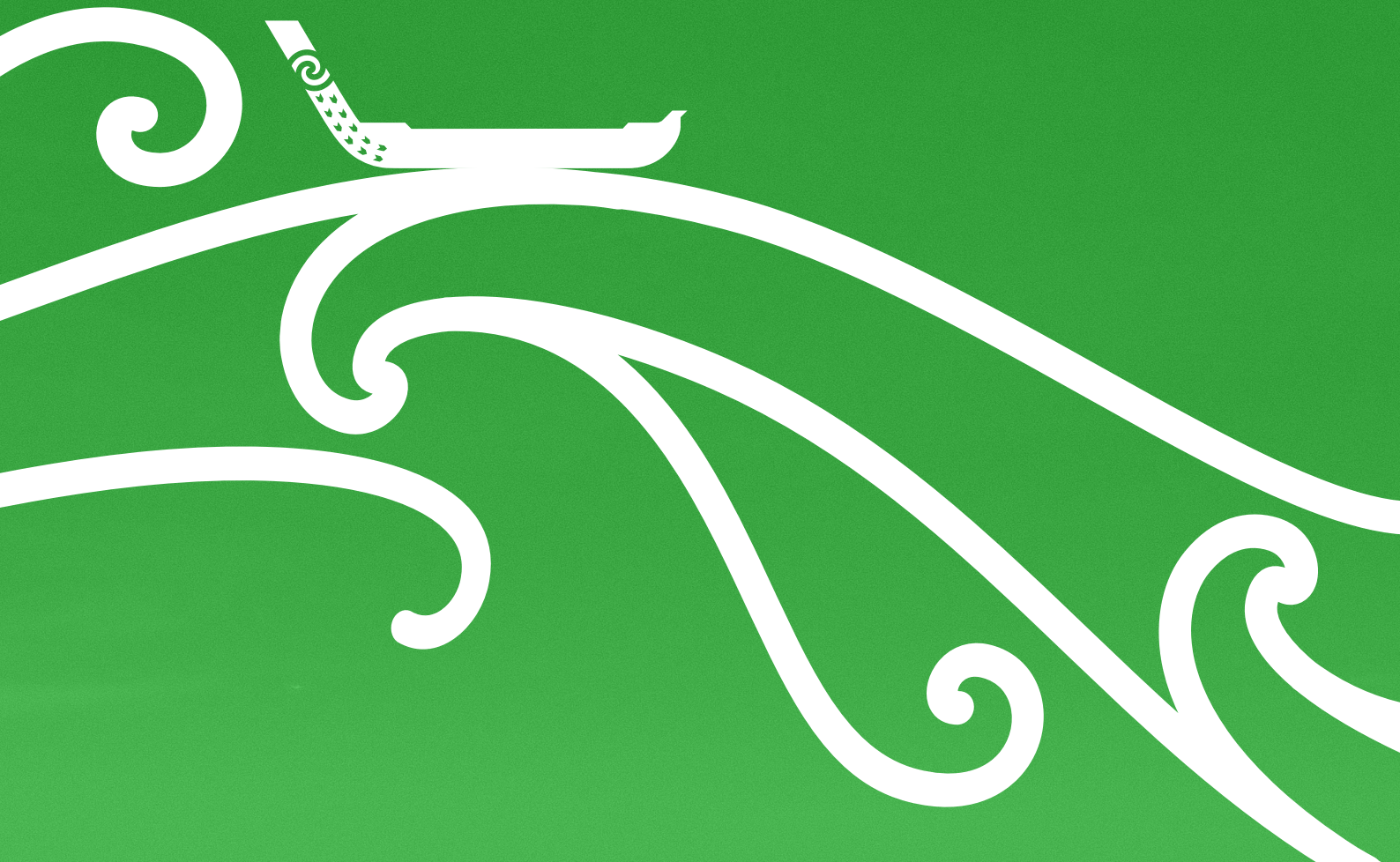
The exchange of value and knowledge from kaumātua and kuia recognises that our tūpuna had incredible skills, values and practices that enabled them to be food secure and resilient, and local kaumātua and kuia are holders of much of that knowledge. Healthy Families Far North are also advocating for both whānau living and growing kai to be a part of the project, speaking with communities to understand their unique perspectives and experiences on food security.

The collective knowledge and insights from the community have helped shape the Building a Food Secure and Resilient Whangaroa Report released by WHST, which provides insight into

the challenges and strengths of those living in Whangaroa. The report is a starting point to transform an unused building, the Koru Centre, into a Food Hub and to reframe how a food hub might operate, what role it can play to further support food security, to think differently about the ways we can support our food system in Whangaroa and how we might draw on the innate strengths and wisdom of our community.



# POU: RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING





Healthy Families East Cape

# KAUPAPA WELLBEING

**“Ko a mātou wāhine te kuaha ki o rātou whānau”**  
*“Our women are the doorway into their whānau”*

In 2022, Healthy Families East Cape began a partnership with Te Rōpū Wāhine Toko i te Ora Tairāwhiti (Māori Women’s Welfare League Tairāwhiti). The strategic intent of the partnership was a “by wāhine Māori, for wāhine Māori” approach, driven by the desire to increase wahine Māori wellbeing in the Tairāwhiti region.

The approach taken by Healthy Families East Cape was to prioritise wānanga, engagement and relationship building between partners, meeting with the wāhine in their own communities and environments to discuss what wellbeing looks like for them and their whānau, using Mason Durie’s Te Whare Tapa Whā as the underpinning framework. The wahine shared deep insights, and similar values and aspirations for caring for their whānau and community. Central to the process of gathering insights were principles embedded in te ao Māori including manaakitanga and whanaungatanga. Each woman was welcomed into the whare or space where the workshop was being held, with kai and time prioritised to build whanaungatanga.

Healthy Families East Cape collaborated with Te Rōpū Wāhine Toko i te Ora Tairāwhiti for a further 18 months co-designing tools based on the Whare

Tapa Whā framework, highlighting the need for our whānau and community to be involved in and leading approaches which seek to transform their wellbeing opportunities. The ‘tapa whā’ approach meant women were creating their own whare of four walls and creating a whole house built on their wellbeing aspirations – each wall and part of the roof related to one of the four taha. The intent through the ‘tapa whā’ process was also about connection to te ao Māori, and providing and innovative, safe and engaging way for our wahine participants to engage in an activity that brought them closer to te ao Māori and with a close-knit group of women whom they could share their thoughts with as well.

The insights and learnings from the evaluations and workshops are contributing to not only shifting systems, informed by wahine, that impact on their health and wellbeing. But, are also contributing to the growth and development of whānau in our communities through the lived experiences and voice of wahine who participated.



Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei Ruapehu

# HAPŪ MĀMĀ VILLAGE

Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu aim to promote the health and wellbeing of all individuals and whānau across Aotearoa, including Hapū Māmā and their whānau within our rohe. The team has been dedicated to addressing the unique needs and perspectives of Hapū Māmā to foster a holistic approach to maternal care. The approach adopted by Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu utilised a village model concept the “Hapū Māmā Village” which was made up of māmā, pāpā and whānau (rural and urban), whilst also embracing mātauranga Māori practices of karakia, whakawhanaungatanga and pūrākau.

In 2023, the years of partnering with Hapū Māmā, and gathering their lived realities through the Village led to the ‘Hapū Māmā Village Insights and Recommendations Report’. The Report offers a comprehensive analysis of shared lived experiences of Hapū Māmā while accessing maternity healthcare during pregnancy and the first 2000 days, and explores ideas and aspirations to improve service, meaningful engagement and better health outcomes. The report highlights challenges and barriers faced during their maternity journey, shedding light on cultural, social, and systemic factors that influence their well-being. Key findings in the report speak to the need for culturally sensitive and inclusive healthcare services, recognising the importance of traditional

practices and support systems within the Hapū Māmā village. It emphasises the significance of community involvement and empowerment to address the unique health disparities faced by Hapū Māmā.

Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu shared that the greatest consistency in maternal healthcare is in the inconsistency of experience, which was amplified during COVID-19. Māmā also shared that finding a midwife and a midwife that was the right fit for whānau was hard, causing frustration and increased anxiety. Whānau want to see more villages established in communities where peer-to-peer support, Māori healthcare and mātauranga Māori options are available for Māmā and Pāpā.

In 2023, Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu had the privilege of bringing the core design team alongside Te Whatu Ora Whanganui to share the Hapū Māmā Village Insights and Recommendations report and to celebrate their contribution. This collaboration has resulted in the Hapū Māmā Village becoming the designers of the new birthing village in Whanganui. Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei Ruapehu continue to work alongside the Hapū Māmā Village and stakeholders to ensure a holistic and māmā-led approach to maternal care in Whanganui.

# CALL TO ACTION

**It is time to return to approaches and knowledge systems that are sustainable, to advance wellbeing, prevent chronic illnesses, and achieve health equity for Māori.** Rauawaawa brings together perspectives, experiences, expertise and aspirations for the future of our health system. They are shared to stimulate dialogue with the hope that they catalyse collaboration among community, system leaders and partners who seek to create healthy, equitable outcomes for all. Rauawaawa also demonstrates the current movement that is growing across our country - a movement that is ready for strategic support, policy change and substantial investment to deliver positive and intergenerational systemic change.

**Now is the time to make bold, courageous and tenacious shifts within our health system.** It is time to be aspirational and positive in thinking about our role as Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti in influencing the future of our mokopuna. Knowing that our health and wellbeing is determined by complex social and physical environments means the opportunity to shift our approaches towards mātauranga Māori and health prevention, is too great to pass us by.

**It is time to be willing and able to change our own ways of thinking and behaving.** It is time to prioritise this mahi to future-proof our environments for generations to come. Aotearoa has the resources and collective intelligence to organise, motivate and implement the knowledge of tangata whenua to bring about systems change and make pae ora a reality for all in Aotearoa.



# HEALTHY FAMILIES NZ

Healthy Families NZ is committed to obtaining better health outcomes for Māori. We are a large-scale prevention initiative that aims to create a healthier Aotearoa by addressing the systems and environments that impact our health and wellbeing.

Healthy Families NZ is in eleven locations across Aotearoa<sup>6</sup>, embedded in a range of lead providers including Iwi, Whānau Ora, Local Government, Regional Sports Trusts and Pacific-led Social Change organisations. We acknowledge that the most effective and sustainable solutions to our health and wellbeing challenges are best driven by the people who are most affected. We believe that Māori and community-led approaches are transformative, and sit at the very heart of what will create positive, systemic change across Aotearoa.

[www.healthyfamiliesnz.org](http://www.healthyfamiliesnz.org)

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6. Far North, Waitākere, South Auckland, Waikato, Rotorua, East Cape, Whanganui, Rangitikei Ruapehu, Hutt Valley, Christchurch and Invercargill.

# RAUAWAAWA

Healthy Families NZ Mātauranga Māori Impact Report  
February 2025

