WAIMĀNGARO

STORIES OF CONNECTION TO WAI

TE AO TŪROA

WAIMĀNGARO

STORIES OF CONNECTION TO WAI

SUSTAINABLE SEAS NATIONAL SCIENCE CHALLENGE

Te Ao Māori Synthesis Programme:
Tūhonohono

EDITORS

Kelly Ratana
Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Rangiwewehi

Waiaria Rameka
Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Raukawa

MĀTĀPUNA - CULTURAL ADVISORY GROUP

Teina Boasa-Dean - Ngāi Tūhoe, Ātiuan
Karl Leonard - Ngāti Rangiwewehi, Te Pahipoto, Ngāti Huri
Ruiha Ruwhiu – Te Whānau a Apanui, Ngāti Awa, Ngā Puhi
Reon Tuanau - Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Ranginui

Waimāngaro

Stories of connection to wai

FUNDER ACKNOWLDGEMENT

This work was supported in full by the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge, established by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise, New Zealand. Project no. C01X1901.

PUBLISHER:

Kopare Solutions
Tauranga, New Zealand
June 2024

DESIGNED BY:

Dixie Yates-Francis -
Te Aitanga-a-Mahaaki, Rongowhakaata, Te Arawa, Ngāti Maniapoto

Matangireia Yates-Francis -
Te Aitanga-a-Mahaaki, Rongowhakaata, Te Arawa, Ngāti Maniapoto

Ngā Rerenga Kōrero

Rangahia He Kete Kōrero

Tēnei au ka tūohu ki a koutou e aku rangatira

When sitting down to write this foreword, it started to sink in that this was an especially important job, and one for which I wasn't fully prepared. As I think on what an undertaking this has been with our whānau, I sit in admiration. Admiration of the bravery shown by each of our authors to put out into the world a story that is deeply personal and meaningful. Stories that call to mind the intimate parts of their upbringing and life lessons for the world to see. This is by no means an easy feat.

Our tūpuna were masterful and skilful at sharing narratives that wove together strands of creative storytelling with human experience, observed wisdom and intentional lessons. These kōrero tuku iho, waiata tawhito, pūrākau, karakia, toi and all forms of intergenerational storytelling contain the immense scientific wisdom, understanding and rigour of our tūpuna. As one of my mentors often says, they capture "the brilliance in our unique Māori technical sciences". We must remember this art of storytelling and not only the brilliance of our tūpuna, but the brilliance that lies within each of us.

Storytelling is immensely important. When we lose the ability to be our own storytellers, we lose our stories, and the clues left behind by our tūpuna are obscured or go temporarily astray. This collection of brave storytellers, with their chronicled accounts, are contributing to a surge of work that celebrates our narratives, told in our way.

He waka eke noa

When our Te Ao Māori synthesis team were thinking about pulling together a kete kōrero or collection of stories, we knew that we wanted to be intentional. We wanted to provide an opportunity that was different to our experiences of academic and scholarly writing, which have often felt in opposition to the tenets of storytelling that exists in Te Ao Māori.

Instead, we wanted to use this opportunity, which has been both beautiful and challenging, to bring together storytellers from across the Puna Kōrero (our Te Ao Māori research collective). Apprehension was palpable at the start. However, it has been a privilege and honour to watch each person evolve through the process, as they felt increasingly comfortable to be the author of their own story.

We consciously approached developing our kete kōrero in a way that felt natural to us as Māori, and as professionals who traverse the divine spaces of Māori cosmology, Māori technical science and Western empirical sciences. Not only were our multi-layered perspectives of the world permitted to be expressed in a diverse way, but the 'writing' was inclusive of the variety of unique ways to tell stories.

Our storytelling ranged from poetry to short stories and longer essays. We also provided spaces for kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) interactions to check in with each other and develop our ideas and narratives. During the writing process, we opened space for our whānau to share their stories in their own way, with cultural practitioners and whānau researchers writing over half our chapters.

Responding to the diverse range of authors, as a team we also offered multiple approaches to writing, including dictation and collaboration, as well as a customised review process.

All these factors enabled team members to work alongside fellow authors, creating a powerful, positive experience that was liberating, culturally compatible and unified.

Ko te wai te kaikawe o te ora, ko te wai te kaikawe o te mauri

— TeRerekohu Tuterangiwhiu me ōnā mātua

The binding that ties our chapters together is “stories of connection to wai (water)”. This kaupapa was chosen in collaboration with our cultural advisory group — our Mātāpuna. As with water that generates, carries and connects all life, we wanted to acknowledge the ability of water to bind us as people by exploring the many varied ways that we are connected to wai and by wai.

Our first chapter was contributed by Teina Boasa-Dean. Teina is an extraordinary practitioner and mātanga in many aspects of Te Ao Māori, including reo, tikanga, māra kai, karanga, and ngahere, as well as a member of our Mātāpuna. She writes about how as tāngata whenua we are inseparable in the most tangible and intangible ways from the power of our waters. She shares snippets of the knowledge that she keeps, spanning across generations and inviting us to think deeper about how we see wai.

The second chapter was contributed by Regan and Carmen Fairlie, who are a dynamic duo based in Uawa and are staunch Hāti Ngāti. Regan, Carmen and their whānau were some of the place-based whānau researchers involved in the Ngā Tohu and Pātaka Kōrero projects. Among their many talents, Regan and Carmen are photographers, videographers and poets who have led by example in raising a whānau of surfing and diving practitioners. Their story explores the themes of connection and disconnection to their moana spaces. They speak about how they have navigated the tides of change, of life, and of opportunity. Their story ends with a powerful and thought-provoking insight into the ‘Plight of the pāua’ along their stretch of coast.

The third chapter was contributed by Wayne Petera. Wayne is an ahi kā, knowledge holder, storyteller and practitioner of many things, including mahinga (gardens), ngahere and marae. Wayne was one of the key whānau researchers in the Ngā Tohu and Pātaka Kōrero projects based in Ngātaki. In this chapter, Wayne recalls the establishment of Te Waiora marae in Ngātaki and reflects on the naming of the marae. He identifies his many intimate affinities to the wai in his kāinga (home), and centres

wai as the heartbeat of his people, sharing memories that illuminate this connection.

The fourth chapter was contributed by Beth Tupara-Katene, who is the project lead for the research project Tangaroa Ararau – Tikanga Māori, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Marine Environment. Beth is a staunch advocate for her whānau, hapū, iwi and Ngāi Māori whānui as a practitioner of environmental policy, planning and legislation. Her chapter shares her journey riding the waves of life in service to her people. She gives description to the lessons of her career and reflects on how she has worked to influence policy, planning and legislation that better supports her people and the wai that raised her. This central thread is pulled throughout her work and forms the basis of the story she generously offers in this written collection.

The fifth chapter was contributed by Rangiroa Rongonui, an avid fisherman, authority in his tribal region and practitioner of the oceans and the rivers. Rangiroa was one of the principal practitioners and whānau research leaders of the Whakaika te Moana project. In his chapter, he shares some significant experiences that have caused him to reflect on the teachings of his elders, parents and the environment he connects with. His is the story of a lifetime practitioner of mahinga kai from freshwater and salt water.

The sixth chapter was contributed by Waiaria Rameka, the project leader for the Ngā Tohu project, a māmā and environmental researcher. Waiaria reflects on three personal experiences that shed new light and triggered a deeper understanding of wai over the course of the Ngā Tohu project. She shares the story of her renewed admiration for the power of wai, recalling moments in time where mātauranga was brought to life and integrated into her consciousness in a new way. Her story advocates for the rejuvenation of ancestral knowledge as one way to understand the wisdoms of water.

The seventh chapter was contributed by Tekiteora Rolleston-Gabel. Tekiteora is a raukura (graduate) of Te Aho Matua and an exciting young researcher who worked on the Scales and Ecosystem Based Management project. Her chapter explores the ways in which wai, whenua, and her upbringing grounded in Te Ao Māori have shaped her experience of the science sector, and in particular research. Tekiteora speaks of the mismatch she feels with the concept of contemporary scales when compared with those of her tūpuna, which were aligned with the movements of currents, fish and tides.

Our eighth and final chapter was contributed by Te Rerekohu Tuterangiwhiu. Te Rerekohu is a mātanga reo and tikanga practitioner, lead researcher of the Whakaika Te Moana project and Te Ao Tūroa synthesis activity, as well as a primary advisor to both Ngā Tohu and the Pātaka Kōrero projects. This chapter is a tribute to some of the special people who provided wisdom that continues to unfold and shape the way Te Rerekohu understands wai. He talks to intimate moments – quiet moments – with his tūpuna and the lessons that bind him and the mātauranga he shares to them. This chapter emphasises lessons from taiao, that demonstrate to us all, how to be a good tūpuna.

What is evident from each story is that wai is not only a quintessential element in te ao tūroa (the natural environment), but omnipresent in our lives from the minute we are conceived to the day we depart this world. These stories are a celebration of the diverse understanding of how we connect to wai, whether it is explicitly expressed, implicit in the work we do, or the place from which we draw identity, inspiration and healing.

Ka puta ki te whei ao, ki te ao tūroa, ki te ao marama

The Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge (the Challenge) set out in 2014 to conduct research with the objective of "enhancing utilisation of our marine resources within environmental and biological constraints".

As this programme of research draws to a close, the Challenge aims to create a lasting impact, focusing on both immediate and long-term outcomes. This kete kōrero serves as a contribution to that legacy.

All our authors were part of a collective that delivered kaupapa Māori research for the benefit of their communities, the whānau, hapū and iwi they worked alongside.

Within the Te Ao Māori Synthesis programme, we developed a Te Ao Tūroa framework (Figure 1). This framework brings together key elements

from work both completed in the Challenge research, as well as some key learnings developed alongside our Mātāpuna over the course of the synthesis programme. The framework is also the pou to which the key insights of the Te Ao Māori Synthesis programme are tied to, and it encompasses six core components.

FIGURE 1 TE AO TŪROA FRAMEWORK

The concepts and components within this framework are not 'new' ideas, but perhaps the way they sit together is different to how it has been expressed in other cultural frameworks.The inner components of Wao Atua, Wao Tūpuna and Wao Tāngata speak to domains of influence. They provide ways that we can perceive the interconnectedness of the world around us and understand our responsibility and obligations to it.

WAO ATUA looks at the natural and vast manifestations of our atua (divine elements) that make up the world that we live in, and emphasises that we are reliant on their ability to exist, and not the other way around.

WAO TŪPUNA looks at the intergenerational body of knowledge and understandings, both passed to us by our tūpuna (ancestors), and that we are actively contributing to for our mokopuna (descendants).

WAO TĀNGATA is the component of our framework that speaks to our ability as tāngata (human elements) to impact on Wao Atua, and both contribute to or learn from Wao Tūpuna. Wao Tāngata is the practical-based component of existing in te ao tūroa — the ways in which we interact and relate to our world.

We, as individuals, exist as an integral part of this ever-evolving, interwoven and fluid fabric of our world. When a person understands this, do they not develop a sense of responsibility and obligation?

The components of the outer circle are all encompassing and interacting. Mauri, whakapapa and mana, are core principles of te ao tūroa, and make up some of the integrity markers of our natural world.

If we return to the phrase — Ko te wai te kaikawe o te ora, ko te wai te kaikawe o te mauri — we begin to see clearly that wai is an integral component of te ao tūroa. It is the driving force and connector of fertility, vitality and life. While wai is not directly represented in the Te Ao Tūroa framework, as it is in nature, wai is universal in all components that make up te ao tūroa.

Ki te kōtahi te kākaho ka whati, ki te kāpuia e kore e whati

The collection of stories shared by our authors exemplify all the components of the Te Ao Tūroa Framework in their own unique ways.

In every chapter, we see the expression of Wao Atua and how it has shaped and crafted identity, practice, core values and beliefs. Each author

highlights elements of intergenerational understanding, evident as they discuss whakataukī (proverbs), waiata (songs), karakia (incantations) and kōrero tuku iho (intergenerational knowledge). Our authors also illuminate the lessons from experiential learning, often tied into kōrero tuku iho in many forms. Every author is a practitioner in their own right, and this depth of experience becomes clear as they discuss how they have moved — and continue to move — through the world.

Whether it is a practice of policy making, traditional fishing and cultivation, hapū leadership, teaching, research, or mātauranga Māori, there is a common thread. What ties all these stories together is the intention and deep desire of each author to respond to the collective responsibility we all share to wai and therefore to te ao tūroa.
In this collection of stories, our whānau share their experiences of journeys into adulthood. Each lays bare the multiple layers of lessons embedded in their journey and the many flows of wai that have carried them through the different stages and phases of life. Each author has their own rhythm and way of telling their stories, and each story is unique and māori ake nei (natural).

We hope that you enjoy and find the kura huna, or hidden gems of wisdom that exist within each of these chapters.

As I reflect on this kete kōrero, I am extremely proud. Proud to be Māori. Proud to have been a part of a monumental moment in time where Māori scholarship has expanded beyond the commonly accepted realms of science. Proud to have been able to bear witness to a time where we are embracing Māori technical knowledge as the missing piece to the full expression of our Māori world and all the taonga that abounds within it.

I am honoured to have been a small part of bringing more diversity to our conversations and understanding of how we connect to wai and te ao tūroa.

E mihi ana.

Nā Kelly Ratana
Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Rangiwewehi

Kōwai 1

Nō te ao kōhatu te wai, nō te ao wairua te wai

Nā Teina Boasa-Dean
Ngāi Tūhoe, Ātiuan

Nō te ao kōhatu te wai, Nō te ao wairua te wai

TEINA BOASA-DEAN

Kia ora mai rā tātau katoa,
Koutou ngā wai tapu ōnehe,
Koutou o te tawhito,
Koutou o te mano o te whenua
Ka parati haere te wai o tawhito
Ka waiewe, ka Wainuiātea
Mai i te korekore, ka puta te kukune
Īnā rā te hiringa o te mahara
Ka Pō, ka Āo, ka awatea, ko te Pū me te More,
kātahi nei a Rangi rāua ko Papa
E eke ai te kōrero, he atua, he tipua, he tangata,
Tīhei mauri ora ki te wheiao, ki te ao mārama. [1]

This chapter shares with you some fundamental and interwoven facets of an understanding of wai that spans across time and space to their beginnings. It draws on generations of knowledge gifted through time to share morsels of food for thought that will hopefully pique your curiosity and excite your soul. What I share is not the whole story, and nor is it complete; and that is on purpose. My intention is to invite you, the reader, to think deeply about how we understand wai, and be inspired to continue to dive in.

1 **Translation by the author:**
Greetings to you all. You, the sanctified waters from the ancient ones
You, from ancient times, you, who have surged from the centre of the earth
As the primordial waters disperse
Birthing fluids rise and the parent of all waters cascade forth
From within the great void the universe is impregnated with potential
Indeed, emerging from this potential is energised thought, vigor and vitality
Nights become days and daybreak invigorate seed waters and fluids that cause growth
then earth mother and sky father are finally visible
It culminates that all living systems in nature are divinely sanctified, some are supernatural, some are part human and supernatural while others remain largely physical
We breathe in the energy of life which connects us in a holistic network to the world of light. Let us be filled with life!

Te Ōrokohanga o te Wai

From the moment the ancient sounds emitted from Te Āo Kōhatu or the point of origin of the Māori world, it evoked a primal memory into the great expanse of the nights, the days and all enduring life forms.

The tremendous breath of Io Matua Kore (the parentless one, also called Io) was conveyed through the medium of wai. This wai is sometimes referred to as Te Wai o Ruawhetū emanating from Te Mātāpuna o te Whakaaro Nui or Te Mātāpuna o te Aroha.

It is subsequently passed on to the earthly realms expressed in a multitude of ways for tāngata whenua of Aotearoa, but most significantly its critical role is to help invigorate life and enliven a zest for life.

Where there is wai there is life. Māori belief systems draw on a compelling whakapapa of human and non-human connections to support the long-held notion that all life is inextricably intertwined and therefore inseparable. Arguably, without wai the inseparability of all things is impossible and life itself shall not exist.

Te Pūrangiaho o ngā Tīpuna

How remarkable and exceptional are the understandings and purview of our tīpuna (ancestors) about the terrestrial and cosmological worlds? How far back is their reach in respect of this fundamental understanding of how all things interconnect, are interdependent and bound naturally to each other?

The most common and natural way Māori attempt to connect to each other through familial ties is not to ask ‘ko wai koe?’, translated to mean ‘whose waters are you?’, but more accurately to ask ‘nā wai koe?’, meaning ‘from whose waters do you come?’

‘Nā wai koe?’ is an ancient classical Māori form of acknowledging the divine waters of your mother’s womb, the womb from which you were born. It has been understood by Māori as far back as the beginning of time, that wai is the principal connector of the divine spaces to the spiritual world, to humans and then to the entire physical domain. As a result, the inquiry ‘nā wai koe?’ is a most beautiful Māori indigenous expression for recognising the primordial waters from which all living things derive and return to.

Ka Tūhono te Wai

Wai is the principal connector of all things; and, through its omnipresent quality, is a powerful invigorator of life.

All indigenous cultures have creation stories that affirm the indivisible link between wairua and tinana — the spiritual and somatic dimensions of ourselves.

Wai is the mediator that permits a coming together of these distinct worlds. Wai becomes crucial at some salient junctions in the life of Māori people. One is in the birth of a human being: similarly, the birth of our woven universes follows a trajectory where wai is again essential in the creation of time, space, space-time, gravity, motion, change, vibration, and the dimensions of past, present and future.

Te Ōrokohanga — as the place where the Māori creation story begins — is infused with the breath of Io. Within this breath was released a fine film of precipitation that stimulated the process of life. Io’s breath caused the inaugural stages of energy and motion through the power of thought

which was carried by this fine film of water referred to by some iwi as te waiewe or waikahu (life-giving waters).

He Kawa Ora

Te waiewe is distinct from Te Wai o Ruawhetū. It follows that from a general Māori perspective the release of Io's first breath invoked Te Mahara or primordial memory. Subconscious wisdom or hinengaro gave rise to Te Whakaaro or the seed-word which then triggered consciousness otherwise known as Te Whē. Te Wānanga, Te Mātau and Te Mōhio, as incremental phases towards wisdom, then took root. In these initial stages, nothing could be moved to ignite the phases of growth without te waiewe.

This flows on to accentuating a few simple facts about wai as expressed jointly by Tāmati Kruger, senior leader of Ngāi Tūhoe, and me, the author of this chapter. These facts are poignantly described below.

- Wai is omnipresent.
- Wai has a mauri, a potency and distinct life purpose.
- Wai has a natural allure and attraction. Wai is attracted to its own kind and therefore it is useful to wade in the waters of Tangaroa, Hinemōana and Te Wai Māori to regain your allure.
- Wai has a soul and an instinct; therefore the words 'wairua' and 'matawairua' emerge.
- Wai has a huge power in its physicality, is spiritually and emotionally powerful, and possesses an undeniable intellect. After all, it is the quintessential ingredient that houses the brain. The name given to the fluid invoked at the tāhūhū of a whare tīpuna and that which protects the primordial school of thought of your hapū is known by some as Te Wai o Ruawhetū.
- This fluid is imbued with a spirit and vibrational influence which becomes infused into the walls of your whare tīpuna. From this understanding, Māori are often heard speaking these words, 'me iri ngā kōrero ki ngā pakitara o te whare': suspend the decisions and conversations upon the walls of your ancestral house that they may

be carried and sanctified by the tīpuna.
- Wai, as with all parts of the natural world, carries a whakapapa, mana, mauri, tapu and noa.

Ko te tino kai a te Māori, ko te wai

The greatest food sustenance of the Māori, is water

Although not exhaustive, these quintessential facts about wai known in kōrero tuku iho are often found in the pūrākau (ancestral narratives) and terms we used to describe different types of wai. In addition, many interesting facts about wai are known by all peoples which align to these teachings. Below are descriptions of some of them.

- Where there is wai there is life and nothing can survive without water — a rather compelling argument in support of mauri and mana described by our tīpuna.
- The water molecule H2O is only second to hydrogen as the most common molecule in the universe, with 70% of the earth's surface covered in wai - undoubtedly an omnipresent element.
- Water is known to regulate earth's temperature — emphasising its presence and power.
- All water on the planet arrived on asteroids — Rangi rāua ko Papa — and the same volume of water exists today as it did from the beginning of the earth.
- There is more water in the atmosphere than on earth.
- 75% of each tree in Te Urewera forest is made of wai.
- Water is sticky, and attracted to its own kind, where lakes, rivers and streams flow into each other and eventually towards the sea — lending itself to the allure of water.

Similarly, when we look at the tinana (the human physical form), we know that:

- all natural foods we eat as tāngata is where we gain most of our wai from, with 60% of the human body being made up of water
- water helps circulate blood around the body and pulls it to the brain — Māori names for the brain are 'wairoro' and 'waitapu'.

Irrespective of the origins of a person's understanding, it is clear that our lives have an undeniable place for wai, both physically and metaphysically, and our tīpuna knew this intimately.

He Mana Motuhake te Wai

The significance of wai for Māori is immeasurable. Wai is such a salient part of Māori life, ritual and ceremony. Māori also believe that wai holds and conveys the notion of truth, peace and justice: te pono, te maungarongo me te whaitika. These are the quintessential components of Te Mana Motuhake o te iwi Māori.

Wai is the conductor of our thoughts, emotions, spiritual and political perspectives. It conveys our recount and recollection, and is therefore the sustained memory of Te Mana Motuhake as a distinct political society. This society pre-dates the arrival of colonial powers to these lands – a time of self-rule, abundance, prosperity, self-government, independence towards an interdependent nation state, liberty and freedom.

We retain the history of our ancestors being born free men and women. Our tīpuna, like us, are also a people conscious that the only credible proof of the purpose and desire of democracy is freedom and liberty, shared futures, and the ability to control and shape one's own destiny within the collective currency of the people. This memory is enduring because wairoro and waitapu give it a transcendence that shifts it through time, space, different realms and spheres, as well as different dimensions of existence.

Hineahuone

As we are born into this world, understanding the Māori creation stories is to understand the crucial role of wai in the instigation of life itself. Exploring the story of Hineahuone presents us with one of the earliest concepts of wai giving rise to the creation of the first earthbound woman. Hineahuone literally means the woman fashioned from the soil.

The general story of Hineahuone, in summary, is that she was conceived of the soil and the many anatomical parts of her body were engineered separately by the gods, deities, and the children of Rangi and Papa as directed by Tāne. Despite the separate engineering of each part, all deities had a conscious awareness that the parts belonged to a whole: if commandeered separately, they would fail. Each completed part was taken to the sacred waters of Tahunuiōrangi, also referred to by some as Te Wai o Rongo. Her limbs, head, torso, liver, heart, womb, life blood and flesh were taken to these waters comprising truth, peace and justice.

Moisture emanating from the land, according to Tūhoe elders, it carried a primordial truth or the first legal rights born of nature, while atmospheric waters carried peace and justice —

Ka piki te pono i te whenua, ka heke te tika i te rangi

Peace emanates from the land, justice rains from the sky

Therefore, Hineahuone was imbued with truth, peace and justice sanctified by the waters of Tahunuiōrangi and Rongo.

Hineahuone was also gifted by Io, not one, but two breaths of life or manawa ora. One breath was known as TE Ō; the other breath was known as TE Ā. Both breaths were consigned through the agency of wai.

TE Ō:
Was the first breath comprised primordial memory, foresight, contest, will, sensation, inner power, influence, and conscience.

TE Ā:
Was the second breath consisting of the human spirit, emotional fortitude, desire, drive, intention, resolve, endurance, courage and grace.

Te Whakapapa, te Mauri me te Mana

In the context of Hineahuone, wai was essential in cleansing and infusing her body with the divine waters of Tahunuiōrangi and Rongo. Wai has also played a pivotal role in channelling these Māori cultural imperatives through time and space: whakapapa, mauri and mana.

1. **Whakapapa** is arguably the most potent force in the universe. It is the inseparable connection with each other, with the natural world, and with the divine spaces. It sets out the scope, depth and breadth of our responsibilities from one to another. The point of whakapapa is to understand the kindred spirit between all things and what those terms are challenging us to live up to. It comes with boundaries and exchanges, and challenges us to uphold dignity as an indigenous people, iwi and hapū. Relationships are the most vital force in the universe because these connections and relationships raise reciprocity, obligations and, most critically, responsibilities.

2. **Mauri** is the commitment to truth, peace and justice, with peace being the greatest gift of the three - the building block of Nationhood. Mauri is an internal moral compass — an inspiration that causes a person to believe in and commit to what they believe in and then dedicate themselves to it. Mauri brings a person back on course and provides them with a sense of purpose, inspired with intangible qualities. Mauri is also motivational and provides a sense of self and collective identity.

3. **Mana** is the external expression and demonstration of how a person judges and evaluate their reputation in relation to the world they live in and themselves, their job, and their connection with others. This is the visual perception of ego. Mana can take a person into a space of arrogance, pride, jealousy, envy, coveting. It is mauri that brings a person back on track where mana then becomes an external and positive expression of power, influence and achievement. Mana is the product of Mauri. Without mauri there can be no mana.

Taking care of soil health, whenua welfare, taking care of Papatūānuku — of mother earth — all reinforce human connection with wai and with terra

firma. The moment any person uses their hands to reach and massage the soils (terra preta) and the wai within terra preta, they have agreed to come into union with truth, peace, justice and love.

People have agreed to protect and preserve the first laws of nature. So, the act of exchanging food — the fruits and spoils of Papatūānuku — is also an act of gifting wai with other communities, and with whole nations. The agreement to protect and preserve in truth, a gift where one nation has consciously and intentionally blessed another nation with truth, peace, justice and love carried via the medium of wai.

For all indigenous peoples across the world, this honouring of Rangi and Papa as well as Hineahuone is considered the highest accolade possible in the universe. To speak of wai carrying an omnipresent and omnipotent quality is to speak of its extraordinary capacity to carry, transfer and invigorate life from the firmament to the terra firma, from the heavens to the landscapes.

Ko ngā Wai o tōku Whare Tīpuna

This wai or fluid is all too familiar to Māori in that it is imbued with a spirit and vibrational influence which becomes infused into the walls of the whare tīpuna. In other words, wai forms an integral part of the function of wairua or spiritual presence. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Māori are often heard speaking the words 'kua iri ngā kōrero ki ngā pakitara o te whare': suspend the decisions and conversations upon the walls of your ancestral house that they may be carried and sanctified by the tīpuna.

The wai generating our thoughts and the wai laced within the conversations breathed forth is joined with the wai of the whare. These three wai converge to affirm the transfer of important kaupapa to te ao wairua, to te ao kohatu. Wai, as with all parts of the natural world, has a mana, mauri, tapu and noa.

Hei Whakakapi

To conclude, for centuries Māori have viewed wai as life-giving and life-transferrable, as the accelerant of the first breath that gave rise to dynamic cosmological existence. Wai was the quintessential ingredient that ignited Te Ōrokohanga, according to some iwi narratives. Wai brought forth the first non-human and human entities. Wai provided principal agency to the joining of spiritual and physical forms; that is, the fusing of te ira atua with te ira tangata. Wai was the medium through which Hineahuone came to life and then produced human life herself in her intimate connection with Tāne.

Where there is wai there is life —
an exceptionally compelling argument for the presence of mauri which is imbued with:

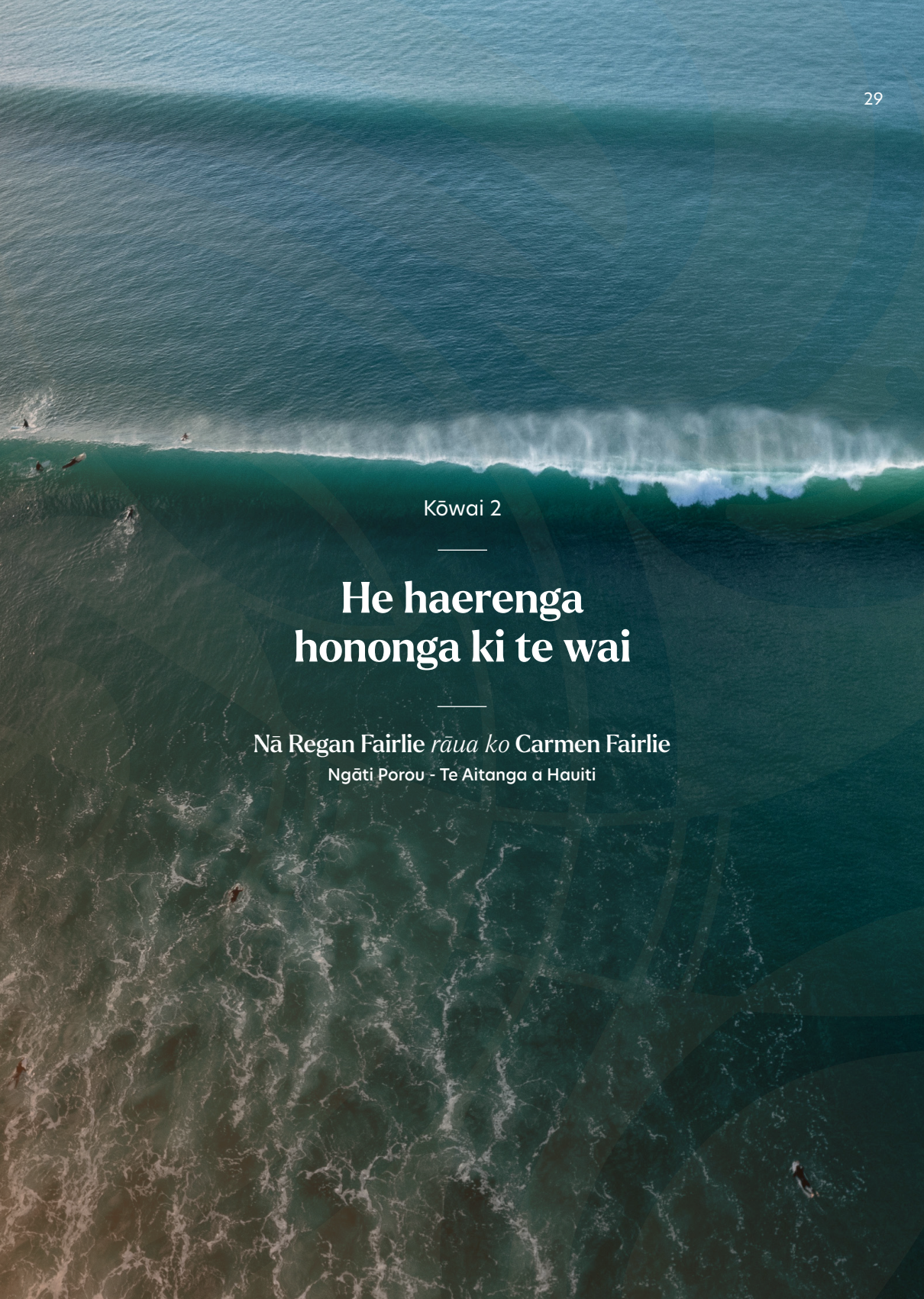
> **ihi** — the pleasure, joy, excitement and awe of life
> **wehi** — the feelings of gratitude and the wonderment of life and nature
> **wana** — the sense of euphoria, being intoxicated with delight, ecstasy and the rapture of life conveyed through wai.

Hei whakakapi atu i ēnei kupu kōrero ki te whakakitenga roa a ō tātau mātua tīpuna,

Ko te wai te toto o te whenua, ko te whenua te toto o te tāngata

Wai is the lifeblood of the whenua and the whenua becomes the lifeblood of the people


KURA MIHI RANGI



Kōwai 2

He haerenga hononga ki te wai

Nā Regan Fairlie *rāua ko* Carmen Fairlie
Ngāti Porou - Te Aitanga a Hauiti

He haerenga hononga ki te wai

REGAN FAIRLIE RĀUA KO CARMEN FAIRLIE

Nā Regan Fairlie

Ko Marotiri te maunga
Ko Mangahauini te awa
Ko Te Ariuru te marae
Ko Te Whānau-a-Ruataupare me Te Whānau-a-Te Aotāwarirangi ngā hapu
Ko Horouta te waka
Ko Ngāti Porou te iwi
Ko Regan Pahewa Fairlie tōku ingoa

1 He Haerenga Hononga ki te Wai

A Journey of Connection to Water

Colonialism has cast a shadow over many aspects of our Māori identity, leaving dormant connections and traditions waiting to be reignited. Our language, customs and ancestral ways have been obscured many times throughout our history. Yet, like scattered stars in the night sky, they wait to illuminate our path once more. For me, that guiding light has always been my bond with the moana (sea).

In the rawness of my 'Hāti Nāti (Hearty Ngāti)' upbringing, my connection to the moana began along the shores of Tokomaru Bay. There, everyday seaside play was transformed into a lifelong journey of exploration and discovery. As I share my journey, I urge you to reflect on the elements that ignite your wairua (spirit) and spark your mauri (life force). Consider what messages our tīpuna (ancestors) may have left us. What are they asking of us? And how might we use this mātauranga (knowledge) to build a brighter future?

"Te piko o te māhuri, tērā te tupu o te rākau"
~The way in which the young sapling is nurtured, determines how the tree will grow~

In the embrace of Ngāti Porou lies a coastal haven, cradled beneath the presence of Maunga Marotiri alongside the waters of Mangahauini. This place, with its original name Te Toka-a-Namu, not seen on road signs on State Highway 35, now thrives as a sanctuary for the descendants of Te Aotāwarirangi and Ruataupare. Here resides a community alongside their Pā; Te Ariuru, Waiparapara, Tuatini and Pākirikiri, bound by the resilience of their heritage and the richness of their cultural traditions — a community deeply rooted in its connection to the whenua (land) and moana. Locals know this place affectionately as the Ākau, Tokomaru Bay.

Growing up on the shores of Tokomaru Bay, my childhood was woven into the cycles of the moana. Our playground wasn't filled with slides and swings; it was filled with the golden sands along Ongarūrū, the safe waters of the Waiotu Stream and the challenges that lay at Kakepo. As kids, we found fun in exploring the seashore, swimming and creating adventures with our mates.

"Our playground wasn't filled with slides and swings; it was filled with the golden sands along Ongarūrū, the safe waters of the Waiotu Stream..."

As we grew older, our connection to the wai (waters) deepened. Venturing into the moana, navigating the rocks at Māwhai, our play evolved into diving, fishing and eeling. We rode our bikes around with boogie boards in tow, and crafted spears and gaffs from mānuka for our eeling expeditions. We inherited snorkels and masks from the older teens who were sent to boarding school. Unlike today, schools and clubs did not deliver formal lessons about the environment. Rather, we learnt by immersing ourselves in the world around us.

"Schools and clubs did not deliver formal lessons about the environment. Rather, we learnt by immersing ourselves in the world around us."

While our parents participated in sports like golf, tennis, rugby and netball, their socialising at sports clubs left us with the freedom to explore. Our adventures took us tramping, camping, and chasing the call of the waves. Nights were spent camping by the abandoned greenhouse at Waihoa, searching for the elusive wave at Tangoiro and discovering the tales of old cray fishermen luring kōura with a toe hanging out of a hole in an old sneaker. These were everlasting memories that cemented our bond to the moana, to the wai.

We would watch the older kids, and our cousins surfing at the Waiotu river mouth. They thought they were so 'cool' with their anti-establishment vibe, and we kind of thought they were cool too. We wanted to join them, with dreams of becoming radical surfers . Eventually hanging out with them, we found ourselves on surfing adventures as we piled into old cars for surf trips that marked our first ventures beyond the reef at Tokomaru Bay. Surfing became a vehicle propelling us to explore the world beyond our familiar shores, forging a connection to the environment that went beyond the sea and waves.

> "Surfing became a vehicle propelling us to explore the world beyond our familiar shores."

My family started to take me back to my mother's hometown of Te Araroa or "Kawakawa-mai-tawhiti" as my mum would say. At her hometown lay adventures on a whole new level — from kōura (crayfish) to kina, and the thrill of stunning mullet at the Orutua River. With my uncles guiding us, we dived into the Teaspoon at Horoera, experienced the excitement of catching kehe (marble fish) with nets, blind eels (hagfish) in tāruke (trap pots), and feasting on kai cooked over an open fire.

> "My mother's hometown of Te Araroa lay adventures on a whole new level, catching kehe with nets and feasting on kai cooked over an open fire"

The kehe is a creature rarely seen on modern dinner tables. However, in Te Araroa, it held a special place in the conversations and fishing traditions of the locals. Unlike other fish caught with baited lines, the kehe lurked among the seaweed in rocky channels. As kids, armed only with mānuka branches, we would strike the water's surface. Startled, the kehe would

dart from its hiding spot, racing through the channels where my uncles patiently waited with their nets. It was thrilling to say the least.

The tāruke, a unique hybrid pot trap resembling an elongated crayfish pot or eel hīnaki, was crafted from woven supplejack vines. Its design and construction were integral to its effectiveness in catching blind eels. I vividly recall the instructions passed down to us: to hold onto our mimi (urine) and wait until we were ready to set the tāruke traps. The mimi served as the bait, its scent acting as a lure for the blind eels. It was emphasised that no other traps should be used for catching these elusive creatures, as their slime would repel other potential catches. The sight of these slimy critters was enough to convince me to keep my distance from them and their traps.

"I vividly recall the instructions passed down to us: to hold onto our mimi (urine) and wait until we were ready to set the tāruke traps. The mimi served as the bait, its scent acting as a lure for the blind eels"

I would like to end this section by discussing our marae, which serve as the heart of our community and symbolise our cultural identity. In our community, we are fortunate to have four marae spread between the two hapū. Pākirikiri stands out as the newest and largest marae, built to honour our connection to Rarotonga. It is the venue for most major events, including birthdays, weddings, celebrations, prizegivings and dress rehearsals for kapa haka. Waiparapara, a whānau marae, holds my fond memories of fundraisers and kapa haka practices. It is also the home of a good friend who imparted invaluable knowledge about fishing, diving and surfing. Additionally, we cherish our two tīpuna whare at Tuatini, belonging to Te Whānau-a-Ruataupare, and at Te Ariuru, belonging to Te Whanau-a-Te Aotāwarirangi.

Matiaha Pahewa, my great-great-grandfather, played a significant role in our community's history. Born at the old pā site of Kairangi, he later co-established the Anglican parish at Tuatini Marae with Chief Henare Potae. His wife, Hera Morakau, hailed from Waima at the northern end of the bay, and her marae was Te Ariuru. Unfortunately, the story of Te Ariuru Marae is tinged with displacement. Once situated at the Kakepo taunga waka (canoe anchorage), it was relocated away from its prime harbour location using the Public Works Act of 1981. That Act authorised

the appropriation of land for the construction of a commercial wharf and accompanying facilities. This event marks one of many points of forced disconnect from our ancestral lands and seas.

> "The story of Te Ariuru Marae is tinged with displacement...it was relocated away from its prime harbour location using the Public Works Act of 1981."

2 Te Whei Ao

Journey into Adulthood and Deeper into the Moana

> "Kore te hoe, kore te taataa!"
> ~Without a paddle, without a bailer~ Referring to a lost canoe

Growing up on the "Coast", many of us were sent away to Māori boarding schools, with Te Aute College and Hukarere Girls College being the primary destinations. Despite being far from the familiar beaches and waves of home, Te Aute provided invaluable lessons in independence, resilience, hard work and discipline — and, most importantly, rugby. As a Māori boy navigating the contemporary world, I discovered my potential and learned to draw strength from my Māoritanga. While I may not have been the greatest Māori orator or the most skilled kaihaka, I found my niche in mathematics and science. Unexpectedly, I earned University Entrance in my 6th Form (year 12) and secured a university scholarship to study science and technology at the University of Waikato. Although my initial intention was to return home to Tokomaru Bay, I found myself immersed in a career in the corporate world.

> "Far from the familiar beaches and waves of home, Te Aute provided invaluable lessons in independence, resilience, hard work and discipline."

Through an internship at one of the world's largest locking companies, I quickly advanced to running a factory with over 150 staff. The pull of

China's manufacturing prowess eventually led to the closure of factories in New Zealand, prompting a move to Shenzhen, China. My short time in China left me feeling like an intruder on their land and a contributor to their environmental degradation. Witnessing the rapid transformation of Shenzhen from a simple fishing village to a bustling industrialised metropolis of millions made me realise the dangers of unchecked industrialisation. I couldn't bear the thought of Tokomaru Bay suffering a similar fate, so I decided to leave.

> "My short time in China left me feeling like an intruder on their land and a contributor to their environmental degradation."

Returning to the East Coast, I transitioned into the field of hauora (health). A friend, aware of my skills on the water, approached me with a request: to help reconnect our rangatahi (youth) to the moana. It was a wake-up call when I discovered that people were travelling for hours to visit our river, while our local youth seemed disconnected from the river. Schools from outside the area were using our campgrounds, fishing from our wharf, and surfing in our waters, while our young people were noticeably absent.

Our beaches were patrolled by lifeguards from elsewhere, safeguarding visitors swimming between the flags, while our community members felt alienated from these spaces. The extent of the changes I had witnessed in China made me realise that transformation was happening in our own backyard. We hadn't necessarily lost ourselves to industrialisation, but we had certainly become detached from our natural environment in this modern era.

> "We hadn't necessarily lost ourselves to industrialisation, but we had certainly become detached from our natural environment in this modern era."

With no formal training in hauora, I shared the simple lessons of my childhood — the joy of the moana and the thrill of surfing. Reconnecting through surfing became a vessel for wellbeing, an alternative to harmful habits. At the time, the aim wasn't to become a professional surfer; it was about fostering a healthy relationship with the moana. The journey expanded beyond surfing. Waka ama (outrigger canoes), tiaki tai (coastal

care), and ultimately waka hourua (offshore canoes), became avenues to reconnect to the moana, bridging the gap for our youth.

> "With no formal training in hauora, I shared the simple lessons of my childhood — the joy of the moana and the thrill of surfing."

Reconnecting wasn't only about teaching practical skills to our kids; it was about reactivating the mauri of adventure lost in a safe and sterile digital age. Getting people back on the river, back into the sea, and back adventuring and exploring — that's the essence of reconnecting to the moana, and rediscovering our genetic bond to wai that lies beyond screens and devices.

> "Reconnecting wasn't only about teaching practical skills; it was about reactivating the mauri of adventure lost in a safe and sterile digital age."

Through the mahi with rangatahi, my connection to the wai deepened. I was drawn closer to friends that loved fishing, and who became mentors. Boat trips to hapuku grounds and tarakihi rocks were gateways to understanding the greater expanse of the moana. Diving for kina with scuba bottles added a new layer to our coastal explorations. Sailing waka began as one way to explore old traditions and new horizons.

> "Sailing waka began as one way to explore old traditions and new horizons."

To end this section, it's important to unravel some of the layers of disconnect that have become apparent. The 1980s and 1990s were characterised by a challenging environment, where alcohol, parties and limited parental supervision were commonplace. While it might seem like we missed out on a sheltered upbringing, looking back I've come to realise that this environment fostered qualities like self-reliance and a strong sense of adventure.

Despite the potential risks and lack of supervision, our upbringing encouraged us to explore and engage with the world around us. Rather than being overly protected, we were given the freedom to navigate challenges and discover our capabilities. This independence helped

shape our identities and instilled in us a deep connection to our taiao (environment).

In contrast, the current emphasis on safety, while well-intentioned, has inadvertently deprived today's children of valuable learning experiences out in the taiao. Many children are shielded from risk and adventure, missing out on the opportunity to develop essential skills and form meaningful connections with nature. As we reflect on these changes, it is clear that reclaiming a sense of adventure is essential for fostering resilience and a deeper connection to our surroundings.

> "The current emphasis on safety, while well-intentioned, has inadvertently deprived today's children of valuable learning experiences out in the taiao."

3 Te Ao Marama

A Journey of Reconnection: From Rough Seas into the Calm

> "He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka"
> ~Rough seas can be traversed by a canoe~

My voyage into reconnecting our rangatahi with the moana and the awa began with a realisation that, to reteach and reactivate our connection to the wai, our kids needed to be immersed in these spaces and places in a way that they could relate to. Waka ama and surf lifesaving emerged as avenues to revive this connection. Redesigning surf lifesaving for our community, we replaced Pākehā sports with culturally resonant activities like waka ama and stand-up paddling. We quickly realised that our kids needed many spaces to re-engage. I also realised my need to continue my search for that same sense of adventure.

> "Redesigning surf lifesaving for our community, we replaced Pākehā sports with culturally resonant activities."

My friend who invited me back to help with the rangatahi was a surf lifesaving instructor eager to revive the local club. Pākehā values had mostly driven the club, yet these values didn't entirely suit our rangatahi. Rather, they were a promising avenue, with some adjustments, to reconnect our youth with the sea. We enlisted expertise to guide the transition from a Pākehā-centric organisation to one that would better serve our community.

One initial challenge was the intimidating attire required for swimming, such as bibs, swim caps and speedos. We promptly discarded these requirements and incorporated rugby shorts and rash shirts into our swimming uniform. Additionally, we dismantled the 'members only' culture and embraced a more inclusive community-based ethos. Recognising the need for water sports to reflect Māori values, we replaced surf canoes with waka ama, swapped prone knee boards with stand-up paddleboards, and reintroduced surfing as a means for rangatahi to engage with the sea beyond club activities.

" Bibs, swim caps and speedos, we promptly discarded these requirements and incorporated rugby shorts and rash shirts into our swimming uniform."

However, perhaps the most significant change was renaming the club from Tolaga Bay Surf Life Saving Club to Uawa Tiaki Tai. The change in the club's name signalled a shift in perspective. It wasn't only a matter of translation; the change represented a new focus on caring for our coastal environment, ensuring the wellbeing of our people along the coastline, and reclaiming our rightful place in these spaces. The transformation aligned our efforts with the values and aspirations of our community. Did our mahi succeed? Without a doubt. Succeeding was the only possible outcome given that transformation resonated deeply with our community's identity and aspirations. Through these changes, we revitalised our connection to the moana and empowered our rangatahi to embrace their cultural heritage while engaging with the sea in a way that felt authentic and meaningful.

"The change in the club's name represented a new focus on caring for our coastal environment, ensuring the wellbeing of our people along the coastline."

The challenge of keeping our rangatahi engaged in water activities during the colder months prompted discussions about introducing sailing as an option. This seemed like a viable solution; sailing would allow us to remain on the water even in winter, providing an alternative to rugby which typically attracted our tamariki during that time.

Around the same time, our community was identified as a venue for celebrating Captain Cook's achievements related to the Transit of Venus. At a community hui at Hinetamatea Marae, Anaura Bay, I voiced my concerns about reinforcing Cook's narrative in a space where we were endeavouring to establish safe and culturally significant spaces for our people. I expressed that learning about Captain Cook's achievements could be done elsewhere, such as in libraries, books or documentaries, and didn't need emphasising in our community spaces.

> "I expressed that learning about Captain Cook's achievements could be done elsewhere."

Following the hui, a note was left for me on the back of a paper napkin. The note invited me to the next waka hourua wānanga in Tauranga Moana. At this point I began the next decade of my life, embarking on a journey of cultural exploration and reconnection through waka hourua. The invitation written on a napkin marked a pivotal moment, navigating me towards a path that is truly ours — Te Ara o ngā Tīpuna.

The waka hourua kaupapa was indeed a transformative chapter in my life, one for which I am immensely grateful. It provided a space around the sea that was authentically Polynesian, connecting us to our Pacific origins and tying together all our ocean-going knowledge as one cohesive whole. It was a reminder that we are people of the sea, with surfing linking us to our Hawaiian relations, and waka ama to our beloved Tahitian cousins. Waka hourua brought all these elements together, emphasising our deep connection to the sea and our shared heritage as oceanic peoples. It symbolises the journey that brought our ancestors to Aotearoa, and it marked the beginning of what makes us uniquely Māori. Through waka hourua, we can reclaim our heritage and identity in a way that is genuine and deeply ours.

"Waka hourua brought all these elements together, emphasising our deep connection to the sea and our shared heritage as oceanic peoples."

4 Te Ao Tūroa

Reconnecting with the Taiao: Mātauranga meets Science

"Toitū te marae a Tāne Mahuta, Toitū te marae a Tangaroa, Toitū te Tāngata"
~Uphold the realm of Tāne Mahuta and Tangaroa and it will sustain you~

My encounter with marine science students while training on the waka hourua sparked a curiosity about their daily activities, diving to monitor sea life in the marine reserve at Tuhua, Bay of Plenty. After the Waka Tapu voyage to Rapanui, I was determined to learn more about our marine environment, now viewing the moana as the realm of Māori. I decided to delve into marine sciences, and remain with the people of Tauranga Moana during my studies. During a lecture by Caine Taiapa from Mānaaki Te Awanui, he spoke about mauri and the impending dredging project in Tauranga Harbour. This resonated with the concept of Tiaki Tai, shifting from surf lifesaving to caring for our coastal spaces and people. I joined Mānaaki Te Awanui, focusing on studying the post-dredging effects on local pipi (surf clam) beds. My time there broadened my perspective from adventure and exploration to duty and care for our marine environment.

"During a lecture by Caine Taiapa from Mānaaki Te Awanui, he spoke about mauri."

Working within the Te Maunga o Mauao Mataitai Reserve, I witnessed the impacts of invasive species, habitat destruction from urbanisation, species depopulation from overharvesting, and contamination from industrial

outlets. These issues mirrored what I had seen in China, highlighting the urgency to address environmental degradation. I learned that local governments prioritise economic growth over environmental care, prompting a shift for us towards advocating for a change in the current state to one where the environment takes precedence over the economy. Our focus has transitioned from fostering adventure to disconnecting from the notion that the economy is paramount, emphasising the importance of environmental wellbeing.

My time at Mānaaki Te Awanui was abruptly cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting my return to Ngāti Porou and Tokomaru Bay. During my work at Mānaaki Te Awanui, I had the opportunity to engage with other indigenous cultures — particularly the Hawaiian community at Paepae o He'eia . Witnessing the efforts of this community to rebuild ancient fishponds using traditional methods left a lasting impression on me. Inspired by their determination to preserve ancestral practices, I returned home with a renewed sense of purpose.

> "Witnessing the efforts of this community [Paepae o He'eia in Hawai'i] to rebuild ancient fishponds using traditional methods left a lasting impression on me."

Back in Tokomaru Bay, we decided to detach from modern life and strived to live more sustainably off the land and sea. Living in a caravan and a cabin that we built with our friends, we relearned how to live more harmoniously with our environment. Returning home this time was different; many of our friends had already embraced this lifestyle, excelling in gardening, hunting, fishing and diving. We had much to learn from them. To the outside world we had become — kaitiaki.

> "Returning home this time was different; many of our friends had already embraced this lifestyle, excelling in gardening, hunting, fishing and diving."

Reflecting on our upbringing, kaitiaki weren't individuals; rather, they were embodied by atua and tipua — instilling a sense of respect and adherence to tikanga. Practising tikanga such as diving in designated areas, taking only what was needed, and sharing with others were ingrained in our way of life. We were guided by the wisdom of our ancestors and the watchful eyes of the aunties — the true guardians of our tikanga. Being kaitiaki

wasn't a title but a way of living, deeply rooted in our cultural heritage. Transitioning into this role, we began monitoring pāua from a maramataka perspective, only to face new challenges posed by extreme weather events (such as cyclones) as well as flooding. Cyclone Gabrielle left us isolated from essential supplies for weeks: we felt akin to the pāua, fighting for survival in the face of adversity. During these challenges we grappled with the swift changes in our environment, searching for understanding amid the chaos. In this whirlwind, we found ourselves in perpetual catch-up mode, striving to comprehend the shifts and adapt accordingly. I am now acutely aware of the lack of resources, funding and autonomy that our people have over their own lives. We find ourselves in a challenging situation where we are heavily reliant on external support while lacking the capacity to fully grasp the issues we confront — let alone a capacity to develop tailored solutions. Our dependency on external resources, funding and expertise hinders our ability to address the complex problems we encounter in our environment. Without the necessary support and resources, we struggle to navigate the chaos and uncertainty surrounding us.

"I am now acutely aware of the lack of resources, funding and autonomy that our people have over their own lives."

It is essential that we work towards building our capacity, both in terms of understanding our challenges and developing solutions grounded in our cultural heritage and local context. However, this endeavour requires not only financial resources but also the space and opportunity to cultivate indigenous knowledge and innovation. Until we can break free from this dependency and empower our communities to take charge of their own futures, we will continue to face significant obstacles in our journey towards environmental stewardship and sustainability.

5 Te Ao Hurihuri

Reconnecting with the Moana: Navigating Change in the New World

"He manako te kōura i kore ai"
~Wishing for crayfish won't bring it~
Referring to the work that must be done to make our wishes come to life

Reflecting on my youth, surrounded by rivers and seas, we were fully immersed in nature, instinctively learning the ways of the land and sea. At that time, we didn't perceive any disconnect; we simply lived in harmony with our environment. However, as I grew older, I began to realise that, long before my time, the forced disconnect had already taken place. Political strategies such as the Public Works Act 1981 had initiated the displacement of our people from key economic hubs like harbours and safe anchorage sites for maritime trade. In hindsight, I recognised that my freedom to explore and adventure was partly a result of this and my parents' entanglement in colonial sports and succumbing to the societal pressures of alcohol. Yet this entanglement was a blessing in disguise: it inadvertently allowed me the space and opportunity to reconnect with the land and sea in a deeper, more meaningful way.

Reflecting on the challenging yet adventurous environment of the 1980s and 1990s, it becomes evident that, despite the apparent lack of supervision, such an environment fostered qualities like self-reliance and a strong sense of adventure. This upbringing encouraged exploration and engagement with the world, shaping identities and fostering a deep connection to nature. In contrast, an emphasis on safety during the 2000s, while well-intentioned, has led to children being shielded from risk and adventure, depriving them of essential learning experiences. Reclaiming a sense of adventure is crucial for fostering resilience and a connection to our surroundings while continuing to recognise the importance of balancing safety with the opportunity for exploration and growth.

Initially, the process of reconnecting our rangatahi with the moana and the awa involved reintroducing them to these spaces in culturally resonant ways. We repackaged Pākehā-centric activities, making them

more culturally relevant, and encouraged participation in ocean-going activities from our Pacific relatives. This approach was transformative, revitalising our connection to the moana and empowering our rangatahi to embrace their cultural heritage. However, it was Waka Hourua that truly reconnected us to our oceanic heritage, reaffirming our identity as Māori and as sea navigators. Through these endeavours, we can reclaim our heritage and forge a path that is uniquely ours — Te Ara o ngā Tīpuna—the pathway of our ancestors.

In summary, our eventual return to Tokomaru Bay led us to embrace a more sustainable lifestyle, striving to live off the land and sea in harmony with our environment. However, we faced new challenges, such as extreme weather events and a lack of resources, which highlighted our dependency on external support. We recognised the need to build our capacity to understand and address these challenges, grounded in our cultural heritage and local context.

Breaking free from this dependency is crucial to empowering our communities to take charge of their own futures and overcome obstacles on our path towards environmental stewardship and sustainability.

6 The Plight of the Pāua

Lingering Stench of the Coloniser

Nā Carmen Fairlie

Ko Titirangi te maunga
Ko Ūawanui-a-Ruamatua te awa
Ko Puketāwai te marae
Ko Te Whānau-o-te-Rangi-pure-ora te hapū
Ko Horouta te waka
Ko Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti te iwi
Ko Carmen Fairlie tōku ingoa

THE PLIGHT OF THE PĀUA

Lingering stench of the coloniser

Growing up our parents and grandparents
Proudly used old pāua shells as ashtrays
Something so beautiful used for something so disgusting
Kai turned killer

Lingering stench of the coloniser

Gift shops, souvenir shops, duty free shops
All used as an outlet to exploit pāua
Adorning tourists, travellers and our own
With polished pieces of pāua
Added to silver or gold to attract the eye, the coin
So many pieces bought from an overseas owner
Unbeknown to us

Lingering stench of the coloniser

Creamed pāua
A delicacy consumed at birthdays and funerals and every other occasion in between
A delicacy should be just that
Enough for a taste, not consumed in a fashion as if you're dispensing rice from bulk barn
A learnt behaviour to splurge, to take, to annihilate everything
Once used for the highest celebrations
Now used to celebrate one's mana
A false sense of achievement
The more the better — sharing of kai has now become
Sharing on social media platforms
Getting the best photo for the gram

Lingering stench of the coloniser

We hear stories from our kaumatua time and time again
Where they only needed to walk knee deep to get a feed of pāua
Now you need a boat to get to them
But only if you are lucky enough

Lingering stench of the coloniser

The further from land you go, the more you hear, the noisy silence of Tangaroa's realm
A bit like a transistor radio, grey noise but less scratchy
The closer to the pāua you get
A picturesque scene unfolds, clear glass waters
Just under the curtains of seaweed
There they are, revealed
Even your breathing is too loud
Disrupting this beautiful silence
You pause, you breathe, you be, you observe
If you watch them long enough
See how long they grow, what they endure to still be here
To sustain us while we suffocate them
With logs, mud, silt and pollution

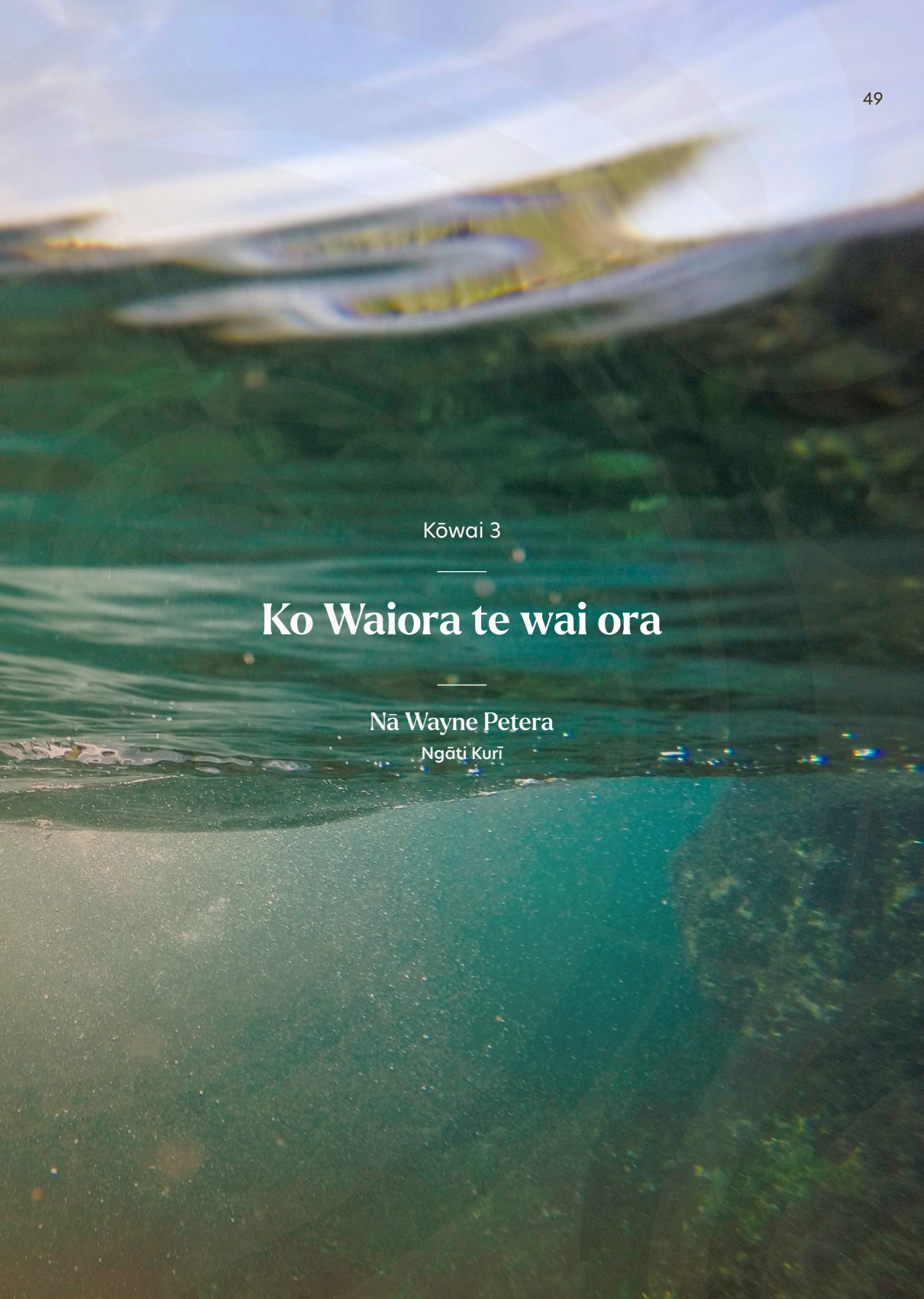
Lingering stench of the coloniser

Even when you only take what you need
You can't help but have that sinking feeling
Have I done enough to let it take back its mana?
I feel sad to eat them
Small shells scattered across the shores, discarded by the consumer
I can't help but make parallels between the pāua and us
An indigenous peoples cast to the side,
Just when we get strong enough to survive, to lead
We are stunted before we have even matured

Lingering stench of the coloniser

The plight of the pāua serves as a reminder of the enduring legacy of colonialism and the need to protect our natural resources for future generations. As we navigate the challenges of the modern world, let's listen to the words of our tīpuna and strive for a future where "He Oranga taiao, he oranga tāngata" — a healthy environment, a healthy people — remains our guiding principle.

Tihei Mauriora!



Kōwai 3

Ko Waiora te wai ora

Nā Wayne Petera
Ngāti Kurī

Ko Waiora te wai ora

WAYNE PĒTERA

Ko Wayne Pētera tōku ingoa. He uri ahau nō Ngātakinga o Mokohōrea. He uri anō hoki nō Ngāti Kurī, i heke mai i a Te Ngake. Heke mai anō ki Maieke, nō reira tōku matua a Hare. He uri whakatupu nō Tai Kōria, nō mua mai i a Te Ngake. I konei anō mātou mai rānō. I remember my mother once saying to me, "Ngāti Kurī are an old people" when referring to the people of my father. Although she married in, she had a reverence for my father's people and the place they held in our lives. Historically our people resided across Te Hiku o Te Ika, with particular note to Te Mōkaikai, Takapou Kura, Ka Rere Waka, Kapo Wairua and, most recently, Te Hāpua. I live at an old kāinga of Ngāti Kurī that stretches back to the times of Te Ngake, ko Ngāhue tona ingoa tūturu.

With dwindling populations, not over a few years but hundreds of years, and the economic pressures imposed by a 'modern way of life', our people became destitute on their own whenua. They became landless. During the 1930s and 1940s as we emerged landless in our own lands, my father's people had to look for an economic basis from which to gain a living and a foothold in their rohe. One place known to us was Ngātaki, an old kāinga of our people that had been well lived in, and provided an abundance of land, water and ocean spaces. Farms were established here, and some of our families relocated from Te Hāpua. It is in Ngātaki that my story unfolds in the nurturing embrace of our whenua, wai and whānau.

Ko Hare, ko Tia ōku mātāpuna

Two key people who nurtured me and firmly grounded me in place were my parents, Hare and Tia. When I reflect on my matua, my memories of him depended on what he was doing and where he was. He was a thoughtful, analytical, reflective person, yet also someone who liked to innovate and tutu. He would see a need and make something to fill it. He was always doing something, whether that was making his own windmill or a tumbling container to polish stones. While a deeply practical man, his reflective nature meant he constantly analysed what was good for our family, the marae, and his people: he always sought ways to better himself and others. I think this inner drive emerged because he came from nothing, and experienced a fairly harsh early life. He recalled his siblings with clarity, but his loving mother in particular. He often recalled what she knew, the resource that she was for everyone around her, her creativity and, above all, her protectiveness of her whānau and their spaces. It was from his whaea that he learnt many things. As a young man, my matua went into the Territorials and then fought overseas with the 28th Māori Battalion. After returning home, the horrors of war tormented him. Despite this, his drive to find success often led him to work long and hard.

My mother on the other hand was a quiet woman, who was creative in her approach to all aspects of our lives, from cooking to home keeping, to gathering and growing food. She was from an inland people, Ngāti Hine and Ngā Puhi, and so her world was a freshwater world. She adapted to the wai tai, and was very good in that space. Indeed, as children we observed that she was better than our father in the moana. She was at home in water, in freshwater and in saltwater. She knew her freshwater spaces intimately, how to go and get tuna, kēwai and all of that, but she adapted very well to the wai tai and kai tai.

My whaea had many skills in gathering, harvesting and growing kai of all kinds. She had a wealth of general knowledge, as well as practical applied knowledge about the environment. She was a prolific gardener with a ‘green thumb’ who could grow anything. She was a quick learner, teaching herself raranga, and an avid cook who was always experimenting with things like homemade pasta, preserving relishes, chutneys and pickles. We were never left wanting.

I think this combination of māreikura practicality with whatukura innovation and drive converged in my parents' union, leading us to be successful as a whānau. Along the way they also instilled in us a joy and exuberance for our connection to our whenua and particularly the quintessential value of wai. Our early life in Ngātaki set us up with a deep abiding love for who we were and where we were from.

Hononga ki ngā wai o te kainga

I can remember when dad took me to clean our puna. This puna is called Rākau Pūkana and was the main source of drinking water for us. One day he said "Well, I'm going down to clean the puna out now", which implied I was coming with him. When we arrived, he bucketed the beautifully clean and clear water out of the puna, and then climbed into the puna that had been partially secured with wooden sides. Using nothing but his pocket knife, he began to trim all the puna's edges — about 2 metres long and 1 metre wide. The next day, he said to me, "Go down and check the puna out for us, and you will see a tuna there". My curiosity silently questioned whether a tuna could possibly be in the puna, but when I got there I saw the puna had re-filled and was excited to see that inside there was indeed a tuna! I was amazed, and the experience demonstrated my dad's intimate relationship not only with the ebbs and flows of this puna but also what our responsibility to manaaki this place looked and felt like. Thinking back, this experience also highlighted one way our dad taught us about where we were from, passing on knowledge through experiences that shocked and enlivened us.

One of the places of home that brings the fondest memories is Rarawa, a stunning white sandy beach only a few minutes from where we lived in Ngātaki. Rarawa was where we went as children and one of the many places that provided an unbridled opportunity to know our whenua, our wai and our moana. It was an intimate space for us and our cousins. We rode horses there, we camped there, we took freshwater there, we gathered kai moana or kai tai from there, we swam there in freshwater and saltwater, we fished there, we eeled there — our life was there. We spent much of our childhood at Rarawa, sometimes with and sometimes

without our parents, growing our connection to place and, in the process, our life skills. On the weeks when we would camp at Rarawa, we would stay up late around a fire telling ghost stories and 'tough out' the cool evenings with only a sleeping bag and our fire to keep us warm. When camping we knew intimately where and how to get water. Our father would bring some water down in a cream can from the farm, but we also knew where to dig a hole in the ground to draw out freshwater and knew it was safe to do so. The stream there, which used to provide us with flounder and snapper that we no longer see today, was also the place we learned to swim when the tide was in. Waking up and hearing the sea beating upon the beach, just across the way, peering across the creek and sand into the little waves lapping ashore only a few hundred metres away from our dead campfire, we would rise in the morning and wonder what the day was going to bring. Rarawa was a wonderous and almost magical playground, teacher, and provider.

While I have many fond memories of Rarawa, I also grew up in Pukenui with my great aunt who taught me practical knowledge and skills like how to fish, to use a boat, and to net. We also had Te Oneroa-a-Tōhē where we would go for ngohi, tuatua and toheroa on horseback. Otaipango and Tohoraha were two other places we spent time at, but the whole East Coast was a big space for us and we used it well. The space wasn't used like we use it today — to visit and sunbathe. Our connections to these places always had a purpose. We used them mostly for a change in our diet because each place was specific for different kai, and we knew the best place to find each kai. We always had a bit of time for recreation, but the purpose was to collect kai. It was these times that anchored and connected us to the land and waterscapes and the many forms of physical wai ora, of our home, of Ngātaki.

Te orokohanga o Waiora marae

My childhood centred around Ngātaki, and in particular the farm on which our father raised us. In my younger days, we didn't have a marae as we did in Te Hāpua. In those times as an iwi, subjugation was rife upon us,

not only from the ongoing economic pressures or government agencies but also from neighbouring local iwi. The behaviour was flagrant, to the point that on the birth certificates of Ngāti Kurī children, we were called Te Aupōuri – a neighbouring iwi group. This behaviour and many other tools, including the courts, were used to subjugate us in an attempt to keep us landless and in debt. Our iwi wrote letters to the government, the Prime Minister, the Governor General, the Minister of Māori Affairs, and the King of England, but to no avail. During this period, and in the face of this suppression of our Ngāti Kurī identity, we were lucky we had whānau who nurtured our strong connection to our places, to our wai, to our whenua and our moana, so that we would never forget who we are — Ngāti Kurī.

Growing up in Ngātaki, we were 'Māori' in our community, but we weren't living our values. We were merely functioning 'in the zone', day to day, trying our best to make ends meet. My dad was a dairy farmer who worked hard to grow his land holdings over the years. Like many other young people and children of the time, we helped dad keep the farm running. Dad knew that the reward for his hard work was us becoming landowners and not tenants on our land. We were fortunate that we had a father who did what he did, as were some of our cousins. Our fathers made the conscious choice to settle us upon our whenua, although through the Pākehā land ownership model. It was this act that allowed us to remain on our whenua today.

Despite the strong historical importance of Ngātaki as a kāinga for our iwi, and the growing reconnection of our people there since the relocation, an element was still missing. I vividly remember a whānau tangihanga held in the local community hall. The hall was 'rustic' to put it kindly, and we realised that it did not serve our purpose. This situation highlighted that not only did we lack a place to appropriately hold tangihanga; we also had no place to bury our whānau who had passed. Te Kao and Houhora were the closest urupā to us. Our dad didn't want us to be buried there as we had settled and reestablished our ahi kā; we were from Ngātaki. At the tangihanga of my niece, dad had had enough. He called us back home and said, "The last of the koha that has been given to us. Do you think we can use it to start a marae?" He spoke to others in the community about building a marae in Ngātaki. Although it would be a contemporary marae, it would cement our return home as a people to our kāinga in Ngātaki.

Waiora came into existence in the late 1970s with the spark from that tangihanga, and by 1984 it was a fully-fledged marae. The name Waiora

was chosen because of an event that occurred when our whānau resettled in Ngātaki in the 1930s and 1940s. Our whānau were put in camps and lived in small huts on the whenua from where they went onto local farms to find employment. One camp in Ngātaki had a puna from which our whānau used old kerosene cans to get their water. They would go to the puna several times during the day to fill the cans and lug them back to their huts. With the changes occurring around them and the arrival of technology in the form of a windmill, a water pump soon stood atop the puna. At the first gurgling of water from the pump, one kōtiro exclaimed "Ah, he wai ora!". This exclamation was full of hope at a fresh start in Ngātaki, even without a marae at the time. This same feeling was carried into the naming of the marae that we made a stand for and established in our time. Waiora marae felt like a fresh start. Just as that first gurgling of water represented to our tūpuna not only a huge reduction in labour but the water of life, people who remembered the exclamation when Waiora marae was established felt the marae was to be our wai ora in Ngātaki. Ngā wai ora ka rere i a Waiora

Just like wai ora in te ao tūroa (the natural world), Waiora marae flowed into many aspects of our life in Ngātaki. The establishment of the marae begat a conscious raising of who we were as an iwi in the rohe, reestablishing tikanga in our place. Although a slow journey, we began to retell our narratives around who our tūpuna were. Their deeds and places they traversed came to life and were commemorated in the naming of the buildings of the marae. Once again, this breathed renewed life into our connection to them. We started to grow again our awareness of who we were locally, planting our feet into our whenua tupu, and establishing our urupā, Urutekawa, to return home to when it was time. With this came the retelling of our stories, kōrero tuku iho, and the whakapapa ties to our kāinga. This regrowth of awareness also altered the way our pā began to share with us kids. He became more intentional with ensuring we knew how to read the library of our kāinga. This included resurrecting the name of Ngātakinga o Mokohōrea — the full name of Ngātaki, and the name of our tūpuna Mokohōrea — and, in the process, rekindling the ahikā of a lost connection to the whenua and wai that surrounded us. Waiora has been and continues to be one of the focal points for our people's reclamation —of land, of knowledge, of practice, and of values encompassing water, land, and culture.

As well as reclaiming the array of stories of our place, I consider the practices that followed, such as my father establishing community gardens. Thinking back, this initiative required available freshwater and

ensuring an intact knowledge associated with maramataka remained. It required knowing the right times to prepare whenua, plant, grow, fish, and harvest kai - as well as the right time to tell stories that imparted knowledge. This was the koha my dad gave us through his practice. Although we were still pōhara, we were able to feed our people, and we became more assertive in our space as tangata whenua.

When I reflect on what Waiora marae showed us, I look at the unifying need for wai ora and the metaphor that the name given to our marae represented for us not only as a whānau but as an iwi. Waiora marae supported Ngāti Kurī in developing cohesion and connection again between Te Hāpua and Ngātaki as home bases for our iwi. Where we were once two separate communities of Ngāti Kurī people in the rohe, we began to operate as one community. With the retelling of our stories, and the re-grounding into te ao tūroa, we were able to bind together again as a unified iwi within the rohe.

Waiora marae continues to unite and bring us home today, calling out to our uri who moved further afield — calling them to identify, calling them to contribute, and calling them back home to Ngātaki. Waiora has been a huge part of the wai ora flowing through our uri, whānau and iwi — a gathering place where we now know more intimately our histories, places and spaces. Not only that, but from the 'kick in the pants' of having no space for our tūpāpaku to come back to, Waiora has become a collective space for both hui mate and hui ora. It remains a bastion for all our uri. This is the koha that dad's foresight gave us all.

He matemate-ā-one

As our connections to our tūpuna and our places changed over the years, so too did our relationship to the whenua and wai. As a dairy farmer, our pā spent years clearing and knocking back the scrub the kahikātoa and kānuka, and draining the swamps to make room for the farm. One day when sitting with my pā (by then in his seventies), he said, "Yes, I've spent nearly all my life cutting this damn stuff down and he comes home and

he starts planting it again!". Then he added, "but I do think that's a good thing". He knew then what I know now, that wai — both wai māori and wai tai — was the heartbeat of our community, and both the life of our wai and the life within the wai were in a state of degradation. So I took to the mahi of replanting our whenua as he watched on.

Despite the planting and restoration that has occurred to support wai, we continue to face issues today. I suppose when we're looking at the value of wai this is no more apparent than when looking at the huge orchards now on this whenua and what they are taking away. Where we once had a huge forest, we now have huge avocado orchards. This change has brought a sharp awareness of the need for clean, accessible freshwater and its value now. But that value isn't the value that we, as tāngata whenua, have for wai ora. Rather, it is the economic value placed on water by others, to provide for commercial benefit. This situation remains a concern for our people today.

Ngā tohu o te ao

The Ngā Tohu o te Ao project (Ngā Tohu) was an opportunity for us to reacquaint ourselves with those values for wai that I learned from my parents from a young age. The opportunity would bring the intrinsic and cultural values of water closer to us again, and continue to evolve the way we respected and were responsible for wai (drawing on our tūpuna perspectives). It allowed us space to uncover and rediscover natural rhythms and cycles in te ao tūroa, and our relationship to its seasons, tracked by our maramataka. It opened our minds to the wisdoms often held in the tacit knowledge of our parents, but rarely referred to as maramataka. Mā and pā were knowledgeable in taiao; they knew its moods and the marama, the tai. It dictated our gardening, types of crops and sequences of preparation, planting and harvest. Without naming it, we lived by the maramataka — all with a deep understanding that, especially on our dairy farm, water was an essential element in all our lives. Ngā Tohu was a reminder of these rhythms and flows, and reminder of the absolute importance of wai.

Waiora marae was the kāinga, the whare whakaruruhau for Ngā Tohu. I can remember a sense of excitement when our Ngā Tohu journey began, when we agreed to be a part of the research. Yet this sense was coupled with a feeling of fear, not only for me but for the teachers at our local kura who I had invited to get involved. I remember thinking, "What the hell are we getting into? What does this mean? What are the expectations? Are we good enough? What even is maramataka?" These feelings of trepidation slowly subsided to curiosity, and throughout the project even evolved into wonder. Every opportunity to meet with the team, whether in Ngātaki or Tauranga, became an expression of the renewal that Waiora represents for us, knowing something new would emerge to add to our kete.

I remember sitting in the whare kai at Waiora marae when the team came to one of our final wānanga, and they started to stick large sheets of words and pictures on the wall. As poster after poster unfolded, what became strikingly apparent was the sheer amount of mahi that we had completed together. It was a moment when I believe a couple of things happened. First, it was a turnaround for our teachers: they saw the representation of our monthly pūmahara in an engaging format, and saw the potential of maramataka come to life as resources for our mokopuna. Second, the moment gave our rōpū rangahau (group of researchers) a chance to reflect and find confidence in ourselves as we continued with our mahi. This moment was a specific time where we came out the other side of the research and realised that we are damn well good enough!

I puta mātou i te wheiao, ki te ao mārama

The sheer exuberance of the experience is a lasting memory for us — so much so that our kura continue to embed and utilise maramataka to guide everything they do.

Kei hea te anamata?

If we are looking at the analogy of Wai Ora me ōna rere (and all its flows), we find no better stream than that of mokopuna. As I think of our Ngāti Kurī whakapapa, I know that my pā made an intentional effort to ensure that we knew, not only with our minds but with our hands and hearts, those places that made us Ngāti Kurī.

> Ko Hare te tūpuna nānā i matakite te anamata o te marae o Waiora
> Ko tāku kia tōtō mai i te wai mai i taua puna, kia rere anō ai ki ngā mokopuna
>
> Ko Waiora te papa i muia e ngā wai ora o ngā puna o te kāinga nei,
> Kia ruia, kia opea, kia whiria, kia tahia anō ai te iwi.

My pā knew the importance of intentional and considered transfer of knowledge, and Ngā Tohu allowed me to make a link with our local kura to ensure that the flow of understanding and knowledge of our places and people was able to reach the next generation of mokopuna. As our teachers reflect on the impacts of Ngā Tohu in the kura space, they have identified positive impacts kura-wide, from kaiako to tamariki and to curriculum, and with our whānau. Indeed, many of our whānau are learning at the same time through their tamariki.

The mahi we did in Ngā Tohu is permeating everything we do in our kura, and our teachers are working hard to ensure opportunities are available for maramataka to be a part of each day. Maramataka is not only a calendar; it is a way for tamariki to observe the ao tūroa and know they are part of it. In the words of the teachers:

> It has been a process of embodiment, learning that grows in time, deepening awareness and sensitivity to the natural world around us. It has allowed us as kaiako and our tamariki to understand better the energies at play and employ strategies that support daily kura life. We have purposefully developed the competency of our tamariki to tell time through maramataka - mārama (moon phases), whetū (stars), Tamanuiterā (the sun), Hinetakurua and Hineraumati (summer and winter changes). Ultimately we want to continue to develop this awareness and sensitivity towards collaboration and co-constructing our shared vision through a Te Ao Māori lens.

Ngā Tohu helped to plant, through maramataka, a seed of sensitivity to our surroundings, including our emotions, tinana, hinengaro as well as where we find ourselves in the environment. Our tamariki are learning to read the language of what they are seeing and they are natural leaders, and a puna of natural knowledge for other tamariki, kaiako and their whānau.

Through the Ngā Tohu project I have been able to reach back into my puna of experience, knowledge and practice and share those understandings with not only our teachers but, through them, with the mokopuna of our kāinga. We are collectively growing a greater awareness and understanding of the connections to our whenua and wai, utilising both the kōrero of our tūpuna and other knowledge systems.

One of the beautiful parts of Ngā Tohu was the acknowledgement that we know our wai. We have always known this intuitively: we know when wai is well and when it isn't, we know where puna are and where they flow, and we know how wai has changed through time. We also know the pressures of economic values, and how impacted our spaces are given the growing list of threats from things like biosecurity incursions of invasive caulerpa seaweed and toxic algae blooms. We know those negative impacts are occurring. So, when I think about the future, I wonder what measures we are taking to reassert our rangatiratanga over making decisions and taking action. Ngā Tohu and Waiora marae have both played a pivotal role in our growing understanding about the water spaces of our rohe, but also about ourselves and our connection to place. I hope for a future where our rangatiratanga is recognised – a future where we are not only self-delivering but able to maintain our own capacity in those spaces. This future will require bringing our people home, but also building this understanding and capacity in our mokopuna.

Te ōhakī o ngā tūpuna

During the Ngā Tohu project, we were tasked with composing something to leave to our mokopuna. This titonga (composition) was written when reflecting on our research journey within Ngā Tohu, into the depths of our

memories, kōrero tuku iho and meanderings of the mind, to rediscover and unearth the wisdoms of our tūpuna.

E rērere	Let us rise aloft to fly and soar
Ka ruia ki te ihu o Hine Raumati	To seek and search, in the times of Raumati
Ka ruia ki te ihu o Hine Takurua	and in the times of Takurua
He āhua aha ēnei mātau?	What is this thing called mātauranga
Ko whitiwhiti	To know
Ko whitiwhiti	To make known
Ko marama	To understand
Ko marama	and to be understood
He mātau e mārangaranga nei e	Knowledge that rises up and encompasses
I ahu mai i hea?	Where does it come from?
He manu hahautanga ki te whenua	It is like a bird that is akin to the land
He manu o tai	It is like a bird that is akin to the tides
E ahu tonu ana mai i ō mātou tūpuna	It strives to reach the peak
Te kāhui tara	To be sourced and
Te tere pūmahara	to reveal, to know
Mārama mai te mauri nuku	Let this essence be brought from Papatuanuku
Mārama mai te mauri rangi	Let this source be derived from Ranginui
Ko te mātau e raranga nei	It is this tapestry that is woven to be constant.
Ruia Ruia	Spreading out, scattering,
Opea Opea	then gathering,
Whiria Whiria	and reforming,
Tahia Tahia	becoming as one again.

The final lines of this composition were words borrowed from our tūpuna Tumatahina who was the hoa rangatira of Tangirere, a māreikura whose illustrious name was taken on by the whare tūpuna at Waiora marae. Tumatahina was a visionary. It was he who first spoke the mataara well known to Ngāti Kurī today: "Ruia, Ruia, Opea, Opea, Whiria, Whiria, Tahia, Tahia". This mataara is one of the many ways Ngāti Kurī continues to affirm who we are from Te Kari times to now. The same fabric woven into this tūpuna whakaaro was front of mind when our people journeyed here from Te Hāpua to seek out a life and begin anew, well apart from the abject poverty and destitution they had known. It was again present with the gurgling forth of water from the puna in Ngātaki, and at the establishment and naming of our marae Waiora, reminding us of the

natural rhythms of life. This mataara from our tūpuna Tumatahina has guided us as a people as we have spread out, scattered and explored, reformed and bound back together again as one, over and over. When we weave, when we plait, when we enact this observation, one of the things that remains important is that we are still excited to find ways where we can thrive collectively.

Waiora marae has been the kāinga where we have reformed and reshaped ourselves, binding together as one again as we look to the future. It was the gathering place and focal point of our mahi in Ngā Tohu. It centres, in its very name, the idea that wai brings forth health and wellbeing; and just as it undeniably binds everything together in te ao tūroa, so too does it bind us to our world and each other. Waiora itself also holds a unique space in our cultural landscape because our coasts, our wai tai and wai māori are the rhythm of who we are as a people. We are bound by it on both sides, and Waiora marae sits in the centre, reminding us that we are wai people, that Ngāti Kurī are wai people. The hugeness of the Tai Tamawahine (east coast) and Tai Tamatāne (west coast) that surround us, nourish us, feed us and bind us to this whenua of ours is inescapable. Nō reira, me mau ki te ōhaki o ngā mātua tūpuna kia ārahi tonu i a tātou.

Ruia, Ruia
Opea, Opea
Whiria, Whiria
Tahia, Tahia
Kia hemo ake te ka koakoa
Kia herea mai ki te kawau koroki
Kia tataki mai
Ki tana pukoro whai koro
He kuaka marangaranga
Kotahi te manu i tau atu ki te tahuna
Tau atu
Tau atu
Tau atu e!

Kōwai 4

Ngā purapura o Ruatanuika – The ancestral seeds of knowledge

Nā Beth Tupara-Katene
Ngāti Oneone, Whānau ā Kai, Te Aitanga a Hauiti,
Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Ngāi Tāmanuhiri

Ngā purapura o Ruatanuika – The ancestral seeds of knowledge

BETH TUPARA-KATENE

As I embark on writing this chapter about my 'research journey', I find myself reflecting deeply on my upbringing and the path my career has taken me so far to get me to this place of being a 'researcher'. Unlike many researchers, I do not come from an academic background. My expertise is in environmental policy development, where I have been a staunch advocate for ensuring that these policies effectively consider a Te Ao Māori perspective and honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The ocean has always held a special place in my life and professional journey. While I never consciously set out to work within the marine domain, my whakapapa and upbringing have instilled in me a deep connection to it.

Early in my career, I worked for a range of government departments. I also had the privilege of working for an organisation dedicated to advancing Māori rights and interests in fisheries. This experience provided invaluable insights into the complexities of marine governance and the challenges faced by Māori communities in asserting our rights and interests.
The sum of these experiences has ultimately guided me to the research project I am currently immersed in – crafting marine governance models deeply rooted in tikanga Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

This chapter navigates through my journey to date. It traverses my upbringing, my professional trajectory within government, and working for my people, and culminates in the insights gleaned from my recent research

voyage. My aspiration is that my narrative strikes a chord with readers, sparking valuable learning opportunities for them and others along the way.

Ko Tōku Ao

My tipuna Maia brought with him the seeds of the hue and of ancestral knowledge from Hawaiiki and founded Ruatanuika - his whare wananga dedicated to cultivation. In delving into my journey, I draw inspiration from the moteatea "Maia":

"Maia te Tipua, Maia te Rawea, Maia te Kahui o ngā Ariki
Tēnei te rākau a Waihieroa, a Rata
Tēnei te rākau, o Tane Whakapipiri"

These are the opening words of the moteatea. This moteatea recounts the voyage of Maia, who voyaged from Hawaiki to Aotearoa, anchoring at the foothills of my sacred mountain - Titirangi. It is at this pivotal point that my narrative begins.

Nurtured in the heartland of Puhi Kai Iti – the landing place of Māia, I fostered a strong connection with my origins and the place in which I was brought up. Surrounded by the affection and support of my whānau and the nurturing atmosphere of our marae, a deep sense of belonging from the outset was instilled in me. From my earliest days, I wasn't simply a child raised by my immediate family; I was an integral part of a cohesive unit, akin to a kete muka intricately woven with the fibres of family, culture and love.

My nan, a wise matriarch, was the heart of our family. Her leadership and strength were constants that echoed through our household, in pursuit of a better life for each member of our whānau. Her protection, resilience and courage were traits to be admired, as was her unbreakable bond.
My mum, uncles and aunty each played a unique role in shaping my character. Mum, being the protector, provided the foundation of love and

care. My uncles, who lived away during my early years, role-modelled to me that a bigger world existed out there, that the pursuit of knowledge could help you become self-sustaining and self-determining, and that education would open the door to many opportunities. Aunty, with her gentle guidance, instilled in me a sense of compassion and understanding that extended beyond our immediate family.

Beyond the walls of our home, our extended family became an integral part of my upbringing. Cousins were not only playmates but companions on my journey of self-discovery. An aunty or uncle was always present to offer a comforting word or playful jest. The interconnectedness of our family web was a safety net — a source of support and encouragement.

Our marae — Te Poho o Rawiri, standing proud against the backdrop of Titirangi/Kaiti Hill, was my second home and a place where our families would congregate to 'keep the home fires burning'. I was always excited to be at the marae, as I knew I would be with my cousins. Finding cardboard boxes so that we could slide down the back of the hill, playing bullrush in front of the marae and 'getting a growling' were part of my childhood. Our marae taught me the value of support and reciprocity, and the importance of contributing to the collective wellbeing.

Expectations, especially those set by my nan, formed the compass guiding my journey. She instilled in me a sense of responsibility to do well for myself but also to uplift the entire whānau. Education was more than a means to personal success; education was a pathway to contribute meaningfully to our whānau and the community. The weight of these expectations was a driving force rather than a burden, propelling me forward with a sense of purpose.

Te Ao Māori was the heartbeat of my upbringing. While not raised with our language, every other aspect of my life was grounded in the rich soil of our culture.

One fundamental principle ingrained in me was the concept of commitment. If I chose to undertake a task, I was taught to 'see it through' with unwavering dedication. This commitment was a lesson in accountability and integrity — values that shaped my character from a young age.

Yet, amid this abundance of love and support were moments when I felt a unique sense of responsibility and obligation. I carried out not only

my dreams but the aspirations of generations before me. The weight of tradition rested gently on my shoulders, reminding me of the legacy I was a part of.

As I reflect on my childhood, I am grateful for the foundation laid by the collective wisdom of my nan, mum, uncles, aunty and extended whānau. Their love and guidance provided the fertile ground for me to blossom into the person I am today. The values of whānau, commitment and Māoritanga continue to shape my decisions and actions, serving as a compass to navigate the complexities of life.

Ko te Mahi a te Kāwanatanga

Whakapipiri te tau ihu o te waka, e korihi nei ki roto o Tangaroa
Tangaroa a te toi e, Tangaroa a te meha
Kaua e taupokihia te waka a Maia
Kaua e taupokihia te Ikanui a Rauru
Tukuna kia korihi ki nga ara whakakau a Paikea.

Like Maia from the moteatea, venturing on his voyage from Hawaiki to Aotearoa, my journey working with the government has been marked by turbulent periods, moments of enlightenment, and opportunities for nurturing resilience.

Embarking on a career in the governmental realm, fresh from completing my Master's degree in environmental policy, marked the beginning of a decade-long journey that would be transformative, challenging and enlightening.

My initial entry into the machinery of government was fuelled by the excitement of securing a position aligned with my academic pursuits. However, the reality of the work and the complexities involved were far beyond the scope of my academic preparation. Over the course of 10 years, I would navigate the intricacies of policy analysis, grapple with

the nuances of ministerial decision-making, and learn invaluable lessons about courage, influence and leadership.

One of the earliest and enduring lessons I gleaned from my tenure working for government was the need to be brave and courageous, especially as a policy analyst dealing with issues related to Māori rights and interests. The decisions in this domain often required Ministers to be bold in acknowledging, recognising and providing for these rights. This courage was essential because such decisions could potentially run counter to the expectations of the constituents who had elected these ministers into power. A delicate balance was required, and making decisions in favour of Māori rights sometimes meant facing backlash from other segments of the population who felt their power was being diminished.

For me, as a Māori staff member within the machinery of government, this presented a unique set of challenges. In some moments the weight of responsibility felt particularly heavy, as decisions made by ministers had far-reaching implications for the wellbeing of our people. Ministers shying away from tough choices would make me feel disheartened as a sense of failure crept in. The internal struggle between loyalty to one's people and the institutional constraints of government made for a complex emotional landscape. Yet it was through these challenges that I learned the importance of resilience, perseverance and the unwavering commitment to advocate for Māori rights — even in the face of adversity.

Crucially, I learned about the power of influence within the bureaucratic structures of government. Regardless of my position, whether as a frontline policy analyst or in a leadership role, I realised that my ability to shape outcomes depended on relationships, a deep understanding of the system, and the skilful crafting of advice through briefing notes and cabinet papers. I understood that influence, in the realm of policy development, wasn't about wielding authority but rather about leveraging knowledge, expertise and strategic alliances to drive positive change. This lesson underscored the notion that every role, no matter how seemingly insignificant, played a part in the broader process of shaping policies that impacted the lives of individuals and communities.

Throughout this journey, I acquired a deep appreciation for the crucial role of effective leadership, which laid the groundwork for propelling policies forward to improve outcomes for Māori communities. When leaders exhibited strength and clarity, and embraced innovation while viewing legislation as a catalyst for surpassing minimum standards, remarkable

progress was achieved. With their adept skills and collaborative approach, leaders across all levels were able to navigate challenges of uncertainty, ambiguity, and political risk, guiding both government agencies and Māori communities towards collective success.

In politics, timing holds immense significance. The skill to manoeuvre through challenges and capitalise on openings emerged as a vital facet of leadership. I observed that leaders required a sharp awareness of the socio-political terrain, knowing when to stand resolute against opposition, when to adjust to evolving situations, and when to take charge from the front. This adaptability was more than a professional attribute; it was a fundamental skill for leaders to navigate the intricate network relationships within and outside government.

My 10-year journey working for government was a profound and transformative experience. The lessons I learned have been invaluable — from my naivety when first stepping into the machinery of government to my later nuanced understanding of the complexities involved. Courage, influence and leadership have emerged as pillars that shaped not only my professional journey but contributed to the broader narrative of Māori representation and advocacy within the government system.

As I reflect on this chapter of my life, I carry forward a deep sense of responsibility and a commitment to being a positive force for change within both government and wider Māori communities.

Transitioning from Government to Serving My People

Tukuna kia korihi ki ngā whakakau a Paikea
Whakatekateka ana mai ngā tai
He tai karangaranga, he toi whakairotanga
O te po, o te ao
Tokihi te waka, tokihi te waka nei e

Just as Maia traversed the vast oceans on his journey to Aotearoa, it was imperative that he heed every sign - whether in the darkness of night or the light of day - guiding his canoe swiftly along its course.

Like Māia, recognising and honouring the signs, I found it crucial to listen to the whispers of my heart and transition away from my role within government. This decision was essential for my own journey to continue, enabling my canoe to dart along, steadfastly seeking my destined shores. My journey from working within the confines of government to serving our people was a significant shift in perspective, one born from both frustration and determination.

During my tenure in government, I gained invaluable insights into the intricacies of the machinery of government and policy-making. I understood the complexities of decision-making processes, the nuances of bureaucracy, and the challenges of enacting meaningful change within that system. However, I soon perceived that true transformation often eluded us despite the wealth of knowledge and expertise within the halls of government. No matter how sound the advice or how well-crafted the policies, the courage to implement radical change — the kind of change that could truly uplift our people — often seemed lacking.

This realisation prompted me to follow my heart and transition from working for the government to working for our people directly. I understood that while the machinery of government played a crucial role in shaping policies and programmes, a lot of change could happen at the grassroots level.

My decision to work directly with my people was rooted in a deep sense of responsibility and solidarity. I wanted to share the knowledge and insights I had gained in government — not as an imposition on my people, but rather as a resource to be harnessed in service of our collective goals. I believed that, by empowering our people with the tools and information I had learned, I could help catalyse a wave of positive change that would ripple through generations to come.

Looking back on my experience serving my people, I've had the chance to work with a pan-iwi organisation, an iwi that concluded their Treaty settlement early on, and with my own people.

Working for a pan- iwi organisation was a pivotal moment in my career. I was exposed to a diverse array of experiences as I travelled from the

northern tip of Te Hiku o te Ika to the southern reaches of Te Waipounamu, forging connections with Māori communities throughout the journey. This depth of engagement was an invaluable privilege that enriched my appreciation of the diversity and resilience within our people.

Exposure to such experiences offered me the opportunity to work more directly with our people and make a tangible impact on the ground. It was a chance to bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation, and to engage with our whānau in a more meaningful and culturally responsive way.

While we were able to achieve some small victories and make modest gains, the pace of change was frustratingly slow. The entrenched nature of systemic barriers meant that significant transformational change remained elusive despite the urgent need for action.

I also had the opportunity to work for one of the first iwi to complete their Treaty settlement process. Drawing up two decades of experience, I witnessed the evolution of systems and processes, the development of governance structures, and the cultivation of strong relationships with whānau and the Crown. It was a masterclass in effective leadership and stewardship, as I learned firsthand the importance of humility, collaboration, diplomacy and perseverance in advancing the collective aspirations of our people. I had the opportunity to enhance my skillset and broaden my perspective, by immersing myself in different contexts and environments. It was a safe space to learn and grow, free from the perceived biases of whānau affiliation, and I am grateful for the mentorship and guidance that I received along the way.

By the time I returned home to serve my people I felt somewhat prepared. In the pan-iwi entity, I had gained exposure to a wide spectrum of iwi structures, governance models, systems, processes and capacities. Then I had transitioned to the work at an iwi level.

Yet I was unprepared for the limited resources, capacity and capabilities available to expedite progress for our whānau. Many of these challenges stemmed from inadequate structures, systems and processes.

My reflection on this part of my life echoes that of Maia's voyage across the vast oceans to Aotearoa, guided by background and experiences and the signs along the way. Recognising the importance of grassroots empowerment, I chose to work directly with our people. Despite

encountering challenges, including slow progress and limited resources, my commitment to serving our people remains unwavering. However, transitioning back home brought unexpected challenges that highlighted the need for expedited progress amid inadequate structures and systems. Despite these obstacles, I remained committed to our people and guided by a sense of responsibility.

Te Haerenga o Tāku Rangahau

As I embarked on my research journey, all that has gone before shapes my approach. When entering this space, I encountered the daunting prospect of navigating unfamiliar academic terrain. Yet the prospect of contributing to research with direct implications for environmental policy, and the opportunity to address practical challenges faced by Māori operating within a system not designed for us, beckoned me forward.

Despite the risks inherent in venturing into uncharted waters, I felt compelled to take the leap. However, before committing to this endeavour, I recognised the importance of seeking support from like-minded people with relevant skills, ensuring that we could collectively work towards achieving the goals of the research project. This collaborative approach, rooted in shared values and expertise, laid the foundation for our journey ahead.

Upon agreeing to take on this project, our initial task was to reassess the overarching research question initially posed. Drawing on our practical background in policy and law, our research team swiftly recognised that the original objectives and questions failed to align with the barriers and challenges that we were noticing as practitioners. As a result, amending the research objectives, questions and approach was imperative to ensure that our journey would yield long-term positive impacts. This process of revision was not merely about realigning the project with our team's expertise; it was about ensuring that our efforts would effectively address the pressing issues at hand and pave the way for meaningful change. Through collaborative discussions and careful consideration, we

embarked on this crucial step towards charting a course that would truly make a difference.

As we immersed ourselves in the research system, I found striking similarities to my experiences within government organisations. These parallels manifested in various challenges, where we grappled as lone voices in opposing certain approaches, grappled with the intricacies of communicating our positions amid differing perspectives, and contended with tensions arising from the clash between Western scientific methodologies and tikanga Māori. Further, the ongoing challenge of acknowledging and honouring indigenous rights, such as Māori self-determination and sovereignty over knowledge and resources, was evident in both government and scientific circles.

Despite the inevitable challenges that come with any endeavour, it is crucial to proactively seek solutions. Doing so is particularly relevant when supported by individuals who, although possibly unfamiliar with how to assist and uphold aspirations rooted in tikanga Māori, are willing to navigate this journey together. Fortunately, my recent research journey has allowed me to garner support from people entrenched in the science system.

The journey has not always been smooth sailing. Yet engaging in robust debates and discussions aimed at problem-solving rather than personal conflict has instilled in me a sense of optimism for a changing system — one more open to embracing an approach to research centred on tikanga Māori and Te Tiriti.

Whakakapi

In conclusion, as I reflect on my journey from childhood to my tenure working for the government and now transitioning back to serving my people directly, I am reminded of the influence of my upbringing and the invaluable lessons learned along the way. The collective wisdom of my nan, mum, uncles and aunty, my own and extended whānau provides the

foundation upon which I continue. Their love and guidance, the values of whānau, as well as tikanga Māori, continue to shape my decisions and actions.

My 10-year journey within the government system was transformative, leading to a deeper understanding of courage, influence and leadership within the context of Māori representation and advocacy.

Despite the challenges encountered, I remain optimistic about the future, particularly as I navigate my recent research journey. Garnering support from those closely associated with the science system has provided hope for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to research — one that embraces tikanga Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. As I continue along this path, I am committed to proactively seeking solutions and engaging in robust discussions aimed at driving positive change for our people and our communities.

Drawing parallels to Maia's voyage, I finish with the final words of the moteatea, as he traversed Te Moana Nui a Kiwa, transporting the seeds of treasured knowledge to not only new shores, but to new generations. As his uri, I am not only a recipient of those seeds; I am one.

Te Ara Tauwhainga rā
Hoea te waka a Rauru kī tahi
Kia tangi te winiwini e, kia tangi te wanawana rā
Ka manini te waka, kia teretere te waka
Tēnei te āwhiowhio o Taiwhirimātea
E whakariporipo nei auē!

Like the path of Tauwhainga
Row the canoe of Rauru ki Tahi
Into the winds
Let the canoe slide, let the canoe be swift
In the whirlwinds of Tawhirimatea.

Kōwai 5

He toka tuu moana

Nā Rangiroa Rongonui

Ngāti Ruanui, Tangahoe and Ngā Ruahine Iwi,
Ngāti Tamahuroa and Ngāti Tanewai Hapū

He Toka Tuu Moana

RANGIROA RONGONUI

“Tuu toka ki uta, tuu toka ki tai, ko teenaa te poo ko taatou te ao, tihei mauri ora.”

The rock that stands inland, the rock that stands seaward, that is those who have passed on into the night, to us the living, let there be life.

Nā Rongopai Broughton of the Ngaa Rauru Iwi at Ohawe, Taranaki 1990

It was a moderately cool morning, and the sky was overcast as I walked down to the sea.

There was an outgoing tide and the water was cool enough for me to want to put on my wetsuit.

With my wheat sack in hand, and snorkel and goggles in position, I started out towards the reef from which I had chosen to gather mātaitai.

The water was murky and shallow closer to the shore. However, there was enough water for me to pull my floating body along the seabed out to where I wanted to go to clear, deeper water. I was only in the water for

thirty seconds when I felt a tremendous jolt, and an excruciating pain in my left arm. The sensation felt like I was locked in the jaws of a shark with no way out. I thought there and then that my life was about to end.

Naturally, I wanted to find out what had taken hold of my arm. I stood up and raised my arm to see what was going on. I saw what I thought was a piece of red seaweed dangling from my arm. Instead, it was blood squirting out. I suddenly realised I needed to stop the bleeding. So, I placed my hand over the area where the blood was coming from and applied pressure.

I had noticed two young Māori men out on the reef before I got injured and turned to them for help. As I called them, I could see a ripple on top of the water, and I recognised what I thought could be a large stingray. At first the young men were slow to respond to my call for help. However, I called repeatedly, and they responded promptly. They later said they were slow to respond because they thought I was excited about something, and perhaps had picked up a crayfish.

I told the men I needed to stop the loss of blood by applying a tourniquet. One of the men removed the cord from his shorts and tied it above the wound. This action stopped the loss of blood. At this stage I realised that I was about to pass out. I asked the men to keep talking to me, to try and help me stay conscious. It was amazing! I walked off the beach with their help. I must have been in shock, but instinctively I asked them to take me home first, which was only a short distance away.

My eldest son took me to Accident and Emergency where my wound was dressed. The bruising was quite extensive for a small sting from the barb of a stingray. Later that day I found a barb lodged in the mesh of my wheat sack. It was only then that I confirmed I'd encountered a stingray.

I worked out later that my sack had brushed over the stingray's back. The stingray in turn whipped its tail around, and thrust its barb through the wheat sack, through my wetsuit and into my arm. When the stingray pulled away, it tore at my flesh and lost its barb to the wheat sack. We were both unfortunate, me with my wound and the stingray without its weapon.

The following day I was travelling on a bus, taking some high school students to whale watch in Kaikōura. It took months for me to get over what had happened. The fear of getting back into water played on my

mind, but I knew I needed to get back in if I was to continue diving. Today I make sure to let the tipua know whose home I am in by splashing the water as I enter.

Ko te poo e te iwi te kai hari i te raa
Ko te mate te kai hari i te oranga e au

The night O people is the bringer of the day
Death is the bringer of life I am

From a haka verse for Te Whiti O Rongomai

The next time I saw a stingray was when I was with my wife on Fitzroy Island, off the coast of Queensland in Australia. The stingray was light brown with aqua- blue spots. When my wife and I were snorkelling she noticed the stingray and she moved close to me. I told her to stay calm and not make any erratic movements. It turned out the stingray was not interested in us and quickly swam away.

Over time I learnt to pay a great deal of respect towards Tangaroa. The stingray I encountered while diving is a kaitiaki. My conscience was pricked by this incident, I knew I was doing something that was not right. In this narrative, I put the incident down to me taking too much and not giving back to Tangaroa.

From my childhood I remember my father taking mātaitai to our elders, who were too old to get to the beach to gather kai. As I grew into an adult I remember those elders. I practised the same tikanga, and continued to take mātaitai to the same people my father had visited.

These elders reciprocated in a way that I did not expect. They talked about the things they had done as children and while growing into adults. Te Reo Māori, whakapapa, waiata were some things the elders shared with me. Sometimes they explained ways of preparing mātaitai, ways unfamiliar to me. I was interested in everything they shared, and made the time to become more familiar with the customs and language of the Iwi.

I remember asking one of my kuia about baptising one of my daughters. She told me to take my daughter to a particular stream. What I know of this stream is that the flow is constant or steady and rarely at a low flow. The stream is small and flows into a major river. Baptising my daughter in this stream led me to believe that the relationship between the stream and our whānau and hapū was enduring and important.

Over time, my memories of the stream continued to grow. I remember my father spearing eels with a piece of number eight wire. As one of his bag boys, I had to place the eels into a sack when my father threw them up onto the banks of the stream. Another memory was when my oldest daughter fell into the stream when it was in flood. I truly thought I was going to lose her. Fortunately, I was able to snatch her from the fast-flowing current. This stream is where I caught my first tuna heke and freshwater crayfish. Recently the same stream was contaminated with ammonia from a beef processing plant, which killed thousands, possibly tens of thousands, of fish and eels down a long reach of the stream.

The bonds formed and relationships forged with a small number of streams, rivers and springs are a result of dedicating my time to visit them regularly. The same applies to the coastal areas, special places I have returned to over my life.

I have fished or gathered kai from different places throughout most of my life. People who I respect have told me not to go alone. I have not always followed this advice and, on occasions, endangered my life. People like me in the Māori world are known as tē rongo, someone who doesn't listen and has no ears. So I know I have only myself to blame if I am lost in a body of water while on my own. I am very truthful about this. For instance, I have been alone on a boat when a wave turned it over. I think my life has been threatened about three times.

I honestly believe that I have a protector who wants me to do specific things before my life ends. It is for me to find out what I need to do. At this time in my life, I am self-employed: this is a new experience for me, and requires some discipline which I am not very good at. However, being self-employed has enabled me to write an account of things that have influenced my life over time.

As a child, going to get watercress or mushrooms in a paddock, or pinecones in a pine forest to heat our home, are memorable and meaningful experiences that speak to survival and the ability to adapt.

This task was not solely my job and became a regular chore. My father supplemented our diet with food gathered from the bush, the rivers and the sea. My fathers actions were carried on by his sons and daughters. How could they not be?

For years I have had other people teach me how to capture, prepare and cook various delicacies from the aquatic environment, delicacies such as piharau, tuna heke, pāua, kina, kahawai, koiro, inanga, mangō, and kōtoretore. I have even gained some skills through my own efforts, and searching more globally (such as from YouTube) for other ways of preparing these foods.

Gill netting has fed my family and I for many years. I set my net on a low tide, and return on the next low tide. My catch is most often mangō (Mustelus Antarcticus). This shark likes to feed on red crab but will eat paddle crab as well. The shark will bite the tail of a crayfish set on a hook. I have grown to respect this shark as well as the pāua, a shellfish that I have gathered more than any other. Pāua may become the next endangered species of aquatic life given the current rates of harvesting commercially and recreationally.

I am beginning to understand that current trends for harvesting aquatic animals should be in line with their breeding times. I think that doing this would contribute to the sustainability of all aquatic life. The most important factor for all aquatic life is the quality of the water they live in. The quality of that water should be the same as the water which people drink.

One of my uncles, a leader among my tribe, advised me to focus on the quality of the water in the catchment when speaking with various authorities at local, regional or central government. The mouri (life principle) in the water was to be maintained and looked after; if not, the mouri would leave. The water would move from waiora to waimate, which means that most (if not all) living organisms would not be able to live in it. The focus and attention must be given to the water before the flora and fauna.

Through the powers of deduction, I learned that my father was very territorial. He would remain in the areas from where he harvested eels or mātaitai and not venture to another place. Keeping to a single harvesting territory was something that his elders had taught him. One elder who I had the privilege of spending time with, shared his experience of

poaching the fishing weirs belonging to another hapuu. This action was frowned upon, and wider family networks were told that this practice was unacceptable and needed to cease.

So it is, like father like son, as the intergenerational exchange takes place. For the last 40 years I have made it my goal to keep to this practice of old, but I am one in every 1000 people who carry out such practice. To the detriment of my hapū the places I frequent have become depleted, to the point where a rāhui has been applied to ensure the sustainability of various species of fish and shellfish.

I see the logic in staying in one place for a long time. A person can see and understand how the patterns in nature change over time. After a while, a person likely becomes an authority and is able to speak for that place from their frequency and observations made over time. The focus for elders was well being and survival, to have a healthy and sustainable resource in their vicinity. Many battles were fought about the pillaging of other tribe's resources.

I live on the boundary of Taranaki and Ngā Ruahine. These two iwi boundaries have shifted over centuries, with many battles taking place between the boundaries. The two iwi share common ancestors through the intermarriage of ariki lines throughout the centuries. So, alliances have formed that have cemented both tribes. I, like many of my whanaunga, are the progeny of these alliances that continue to intermarry between two iwi.

I cannot stress enough the fervour that my ancestors displayed in battle for the possession and protection of the takutai moana in pre-European times. This fervour manifests in different ways today when compared to two to three hundred years ago. People's lives were taken when entering into another iwi area to harvest mātaitai. Those of us brought up to know the boundary lines of another iwi continue to practice in a similar way to our ancestors, without the loss of life.

Over the last year, the Taranaki iwi have committed to placing a rāhui over their pūkawa, stretching out to about 70 km of coastline. This restricts all people from taking mātaitai and rimurimu from within the Taranaki tribal boundary. I would like to see us resurrect rāhui of this kind along our hapū boundaries, and among the neighbouring hapū of the Ngā Ruahine Iwi. I say this because over the last 30-40 years I have watched the gradual decline of mātaitai on the reefs close to where I live, and I can hear the

neighbours speaking of the same problems. I cannot express enough the urgency for a review of how resources are managed in the area and, more importantly, that restoring water quality in freshwater and saltwater within the domain of Tangaroa is essential for the future.

The Ngā Ruahine Iwi coastline is 39km long and home to ten tauranga waka (fishing stations or boat landing places). These are currently Māori reserves that have remained unsold since our iwi petitioned the government in the 1870's for their return. The tauranga waka have been essential for the livelihood of our people for a very long time. The West Coast Royal Commission of the 1880s granted the tauranga waka back to our people, after having confiscated the whole of Taranaki in 1863. The confiscation was enacted through an Act of Parliament to quote because of the 'rebellious' nature of the Taranaki Māori towards the settler government and Queen Victoria.

After the return of the tauranga waka to the hapū of the Ngā Ruahine Iwi, the people returned to launch their boats to go out fishing; they continue to launch from these places today. Over the last 100 years we have built sheds to shelter our boats. The sheds are built on the high water mark, next to old channels that our ancestors created hundreds of years ago. Today two hapū are in the process of renovating two tauranga waka in our coastal area.

The inclusion of my children in my work in the freshwater and saltwater has been less than I consider adequate. I wish I had included them more. I really could have taken a page out of my father's lessons by making a point of waking my children early in the morning to retrieve a net off the reef, or taking them to every tide when harvesting mātaitai. However, I did manage to get them out some of the time at a very early age. I will have to do this with my mokopuna.

I recall a time when I took four of my six children out of school for the day to go whitebaiting. My cousin had passed away, and I wanted to gather some kai for the hākari at her tangi, being held at a marae. We were at a river that I knew reasonably well. We stayed away from the people closer to the river mouth, out of sight of other fisher people. I had three nets, and my children were helping me when a Fisheries Officer from the Department of Conservation came to the bank of the river where we were fishing. He stepped into the river and turned my nets upside down and proceeded to charge me for having more than one net, and for being more than 10 metres from my nets. Because I would not allow him to take my nets, he

also charged me for obstructing an officer. I told him that he could take a picture of me with the nets, which he did.

At the time I didn't know that a fellow fisherman from whom I had learnt to gill net and whitebait, had been charged a couple of days earlier. We were both on a committee that dealt with conservation issues for our iwi. I was able to take the catch, which ended up being smelt and not whitebait, to the tangi. The smelt was cooked and put on the table for the hākari.

The outcome for the tangi was good. By contrast, the procedure for the charges was drawn out. A year passed before my fellow fisherman and I appeared in court. We had decided, with the guidance of our legal counsel, to pursue a pathway of not guilty on the grounds that we were practising a traditional right. Fortunately for us, the Conservation Act of 1987, which governs the regulations for the freshwater fishery states: Māori fishing rights unaffected by this Part (1) Nothing in this Part shall affect any Māori fishing rights. This clause proved beneficial to us and our case going forward.

The day before we were to appear in court, the Department of Conservation withdrew the charges. Yet my fellow fisherman and I had to appear in court to hear the verdict. My family, as well as the family of my wife, attended the hearing. The judge was not happy that the Department of Conservation had made us wait for a year only to withdraw the charges at the eleventh hour. The judge dismissed the charges and ordered the Department to pay our counsel's legal costs of eleven thousand dollars. The Department stated that it would continue to deal with actions like ours on a case-by-case basis regardless of this legal precedent.

I guess my children do not fully comprehend, even today, the outcome of such a case and their part in it. On the upside, I still have the photos that the Fisheries Officer took of my children and I at the river.

Ka mate ruu, kai horo,
Ka ora ruu, kaiwhakatonu.

If one cannot displace hunger, one consumes food quickly.
If one succeeds in displacing hunger, one will continue to eat.

Nā Te Kahui Kararehe of the Taranaki Iwi

The above proverb is about a person who quickly consumes all their food. The wisdom in the meaning is that there is no substantial thought for the days ahead of them. By contrast, the person who thinks about the days ahead of them will stretch their food out to make it last instead of quickly consuming it.

I eat my food relatively slowly, and have done so since childhood. My oldest child, who is no longer a child, is much the same as me. The whakawai above reminds me of a well-known tauheke of Ngā Ruahine Iwi who, when gathering kaimoana with his mokopuna, would take a bit of everything. I was at his home when his mokopuna arrived with some mātaitai. A variety of food was on the menu: kuku, ngākihi, kina, pāua, pūpū and kōtoretore.

This tikanga, as I understand it, is a better way of harvesting, and sets in practice an appreciation of the various edible food found on the tidal reef. It gives some balance rather than an imbalance to the taking of food from the sea. I have traditionally only taken pāua and kina, which over time has contributed to the depletion of stocks. Now I am in what I call "the sunset time of my life" where I can reflect on my actions and yet still make changes that will benefit me as well as future generations. The old saying of 'get what you can, while you can' does not sit well with me.

Recently I watched and listened to a young vibrant wahine Māori speaking on a social media platform outside parliament buildings. She was talking about the political maelstrom that Māori are entering into in 2024 with a new government, and the emergence of a new political movement. Her message was that it's all about the mokopuna. I understood this to mean, think about the future in the long term. The young wahine ended by saying that there is no place for ego, and that by

belonging to this political movement the primary concern is the wellbeing of the mokopuna.

When I was teaching full time at a high school in 2017, I wrote an affidavit outlining the interest of my hapuu to acquire Customary Marine Title and Protected Customary Rights over our coastline under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011. My cousin filed the affidavit with the court on behalf of our hapuu.

At the time I was unhappy about having to go back to the Crown to say what my ancestors had already said in 1875 when they petitioned the Government to return the tauranga waka to our hapuu. The Crown had already acknowledged such a return when they gave ten tauranga waka back to the Ngā Ruahine Iwi in 1881. The reserves were formerly gazetted and remain to this day - 143 years later - in the ownership of the hapuu of Ngā Ruahine Iwi.

The Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 extinguished the ownership of our tauranga waka. The Crown stated that no one owned the space from the mean high water mark out to twelve nautical miles. Actually this space is governed by law, which regulates what is taken and when it is taken. The space includes the channels of the tauranga waka which are exposed at low tide.

A request by the Māori Party for the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 to be repealed was supported by a National Government and the two entered into a coalition government. From here a new Act was born: the Marine and Coastal Areas (Takutai Moana) Act 2011. Under this Act, the Crown requires iwi around the motu to prove that they have occupied coastal regions of their area since 1840, before the Crown will grant Customary Marine Title and or Protected Customary Rights. These two provisions are elusive and misleading in my experience, and are part of the trickery that a new law imposed by an iwi manene, upon Māori people throughout Aotearoa. This law has superseded the lore of our ancestors.

When I hear a relative and tipuna of the awa tupua, - the Whanganui River - say ‘Kia mau ki tō Māoritanga, hold onto your culture’, I am reminded that our culture has value in the eyes of its people. It is this sense of values that sustains me when the going gets tough, and the challenge weighs heavy on my shoulders.

The present legislation under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 is limited and ineffective for Māori, which I think is the intention of both the Crown and the Government. The Act gives the illusion that they are giving occupation rights to Māori and protecting our customary practices when they are actually maintaining control for their own interests.

If there is a lasting memory that my father left me it is never to sell kai that I gather from the water. I appreciate the wisdom of his words today, to disallow greed to overcome the power of giving, and the life-giving attributes that doing so offers to others in need.

My people of the Taranaki tribes come from a legacy of manaakitanga. When we were under siege by our oppressor from the 1860s to the beginning of the19th century, we found ways to feed the people who supported us in an effort to create a place governed by our own rules. The value of manaakitanga has a lasting impression and is often talked about amongst all people regardless of ethnicity. To show hospitality, for my people, is the pinnacle of an expression of love to another person. To care for and to make others feel important builds character in today's world.

My wife is from the people of Uepohatu, an ancient people of the East Coast Tribes. She and I, and our children, would often make the 12- hour journey from Taranaki to Te Tairāwhiti to acclimatise our children to the kāinga of their mother and her people. These purposeful journeys created lasting memories of connection to place, time and people.

Something I have gained from the journeys to the land of my wife is a saying from her koroua, Sir Apirana Ngata.

E tipu e rea mō ngā rā o tō ao
Ko tō ringa ki ngā rākau a te pākehā hei ara mō tō tinana
Ko tō ngākau ki ngā taonga a ō tīpuna Māori
Hei tikitiki mō tō māhunga
Ko tō wairua ki tō Atua, nāna nei ngā mea katoa

Grow up and thrive for the days destined to you.
Your hands to the tools of the pākehā to provide physical sustenance,
Your heart to the treasures of your Māori ancestors as a diadem for your brow,
Your soul to your God, to whom all things belong.

I often reflect on the rising and setting of the sun, the ebb and flow of the tide, the waxing and the waning of the moon, and the river moving from the mountain to the sea; and realise this more and more, that in nature, nothing exists alone. Our interdependence is fully realised in Rangi-nui and Papa-tu-ā-nuku.

Glossary

mātaitai	seafood, shellfish - fish or other food obtained from the sea
tipua	supernatural being, unnaturally or extraordinarily great
Tangaroa	atua of the sea and fish, he is one of the offspring of Rangi-nui and Papa-tū-ā-nuku
kaitiaki	guardian, keeper
tikanga	customary system of values and practices that has developed over time
Te Reo Māori	the Māori language
whakapapa	genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent
waiata	song, chant
iwi	extended kinship group, tribe
whānau	extended family, family group
hapū	subtribe - section of a large kinship group and the primary political unit in traditional Māori society
tuna heke	migrating eel
piharau	lamprey, Geotria australis
pāua	abalone, Haliotis
kina	sea egg, common sea urchin, Evechinus chloroticus
kōiro	southern conger, Conger verreauxi - greyish to black eel common on rocky reefs
kahawai	kahawai, Arripis trutta - an edible greenish-blue to silvery-white schooling coastal fish
inanga	whitebait, Galaxias maculatus
mangō	shark, dogfish, gummy shark, mustelus antarcticus
kōtoretore	red sea anemone, Actinia tenebrosa
tē rongo	a person who does not listen
mouri	life principle, vital essence, special nature, a material symbol of a life principle
waiora	water able to sustain life
waimate	water unable to sustain life
rāhui	to put in place a temporary ritual prohibition, closed season, ban, reserve - traditionally a rāhui was placed on an area, resource or stretch of water as a conservation measure
whanaunga	relative, relation, kin, blood relation
takutai moana	coast, foreshore
hākari	sumptuous meal, feast, banquet for a special occasion
tangi	rites for the dead, funeral - shortened form of tangihanga
mokopuna	grandchildren, grandchild
tauranga waka	fishing station, boat landing place
marae	courtyard - the open area in front of the wharenui, where formal greetings and discussions take place.
whakawai	proverb
manene	stranger, one living in a strange country, immigrant, foreigner
manaakitanga	hospitality, kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others.
Tairāwhiti	east Coast Region of the North Island of New Zealand
koroua	elderly man, old man, elder, grandfather, granduncle
Rang-nui	atua of the sky and husband of Papa-tū-ā-nuku, from which union originate all living things.
Papa-tu-ā-nuku	Earth, Earth mother and wife of Rangi-nui - all living things originate from them.
rimurimu	seaweed - a general term

Kōwai 6

Ko wai au – waters wisdoms

Nā Waiaria Rameka
Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Raukawa

Ko Wai Au

Waters Wisdoms

WAIARIA RAMEKA

This piece of writing has been crafted as part of the Ngā Tohu o te Ao (Ngā Tohu) research project within the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge. The project focused on understanding how reclaiming maramataka knowledge and practice can support the development of cultural marine indicators. The project spanned three years and covered three research areas: Ngātaki, Tauranga, and Tokomaru Bay. Although the project included research products that provided insights into the collective research process, writing this chapter has offered the opportunity to explore my personal experiences as a project researcher and share insights from a deeper and more personal perspective.

A key concept reiterated throughout the development of the Ngā Tohu project is encapsulated in the statement "Ko te wai te kai kawe o te ora, ko te wai te kai kawe o te mauri", which translates as "water is the carrier of life, water is the carrier of energy". From this perspective, the Ngā Tohu project acknowledges water as the fundamental element connecting all living things and driving all environmental processes. Positioning water in this way has been crucial for developing a deeper connection to, and understanding of, larger water systems in taiao.

Here I share my personal lessons of water through various interactions and experiences with three key individuals in the core Ngā Tohu research team. The team consisted of four primary project researchers. Each had different roles but worked together cohesively to deliver the project outcomes. As

a collaborative team, we spent numerous hours designing, developing, conceptualising, deconstructing and reconstructing understandings of water in reference to maramataka and tohu. It was with these people that I experienced my most profound lessons with and about water.

'Waters Wisdom' reflects on the valuable lessons I was privileged to learn alongside my research team. A common phrase used when asking someone's name is "Ko wai koe?", which translates to "Who are you?" or literally "You are water". In one sense, I explore the various spaces and places where I had the privilege of learning from and connecting with. In another sense, "Ko wai koe" recognises these teachers as bodies of water themselves, acknowledging the insights that they imparted to me. I give three short accounts of the lessons learned from each teacher, framing each within a specific season. While many lessons were imparted to me throughout the programme, these are etched in my memory and have directly influenced the way I view and interact with the world of wai.

Ko Wai ahau

To contextualise my lessons with water, I begin by briefly sharing my personal connection to wai. Ko wai au? Ko Waiaria Rameka tōku ingoa. I was born and raised by the waters of Taupō-nui-ā-Tia — waters so pristine that as young children we could drink directly from the river without hesitation. My childhood was marked by summers that extended into late autumn, filled with endless days of swimming, playing, and gathering fruit and nuts from nearby orchards.

I grew up in a family whose life was devoted to collecting food, both on land and in water. Always, focused on feeding the whānau and the community. We tramped through the bush blocks collecting pikopiko, fished for trout from Koro's aluminium dinghy, and dragged nets along the shore for whitebait in the early mornings. At night, we used torches and scoop nets to catch freshwater crayfish in the shallows around the bays. We also hung bags of maize off the sides of the boat wharves, strategically hiding our treasures from pesky five-fingered passers-by.

"Ko au ko te wai, ko te wai ko au" perfectly describes my relationship with water — I am water, and water is me. Water has always been a central part of my world and the driving force behind my involvement in environmental research and the Ngā Tohu o te Ao project. Water has guided me on my many life journeys — through my education, my career and even my relationships. It was water that led me to the Ngā Tohu project where my cultural understanding of water was nourished and my view of the world was enriched.

Kaite Falls in Spring

Nestled in a secluded valley, I squat down to touch the gently flowing water emerging from a deep pool only twenty metres upstream. This pool, flanked by steep, imposing cliffs, is adorned with natural platforms carved out by the daring leaps of adventurous souls. These rocky stages are empty today, but they still beckon the brave to dive into the depths below. Above, the waterfall descends uninterrupted, overhanging trees making it impossible to see the top from my position. Its fall perfectly balanced, neither too forceful nor too gentle, it cascades down the cliff face, into the pool below. The air around the waterfall is laced with a fine mist, framing the scene in a delicate spray that captures the subdued light. The cliffs shadow most of the area, but the warm glow of light beams invitingly, illuminating parts of the stream.

The deep, resonant sound of plunging water is the lead alto in a chorus, its melody complemented by the harmonies of water journeying downstream. In places, the water eddies at the side of the stream before returning to the flow; elsewhere, it is forced through narrow gullies, pushing against rock formations, before being released.

My gaze rises to the surrounding space enveloped in green. Every shade of green— from dark to light, and dull to bright, from long narrow leaves to thick, bushy foliage. Ancient trees rise above the canopy, while delicate and fragile emerging shoots add to the lush tapestry. Green moss blankets the riverbanks, dipping in and out of the water as it splashes along the edges.

As my attention returns to the stream, a gentle contrast of colour floats by — the brownish-red flower of the rewarewa. Unlike the bright red of the early-blooming pōhutukawa, this shade is darker and more weathered. On closer inspection, I see that some of the petals have begun to curl, peeling back the outer velvet casing to reveal the delicate inner flower. I pause to reflect on this flower, knowing that, like the waterfall, it has likely fallen from a height, signalling the coming warmer season.

As the water passes through my fingers, gently placed in the stream — cold, yes, but not freezing — a comforting chill travels up my arm, holding in my chest. I breathe, sharing breath with the river, with the waterfall, with the tipua, the taniwha, and tūpuna — and I reflect on how fortunate I am to be in this place.

Waters wisdom – Tāne te Waiora

Standing lower along the stream, I see Te Rerekohu speaking to another one of our team, obviously sharing kōrero. Suspecting that I've already missed some valuable insights, I make my way over and quietly position myself behind them, careful not to interrupt their conversation.

Rere's solid stature is in stark contrast to his kind, soft, welcoming nature. We met several years ago at a marine biosecurity wānanga, where I watched him observe quietly from the sidelines, intrigued by his quiet and respectful character. Over time, I learned about his unique upbringing under the guidance of his karani and karanipa. Rere spent much of his childhood diving, fishing and collecting kai, the lessons of his elders endowing him with a deep understanding of Te Ao Māori that I find both extraordinary and rare.

As I move closer, Rere points to the pool and begins to explain that this is the pū, the puna. He recites the karakia "Ko te pū, te more, te weu, te aka, te rea, te wao, te kune, te whe", which is commonly understood to describe the growth or development of a seed. That is correct. Yet this karakia encompasses more: it describes the processes of Tāne te Waiora too, making specific reference to the movement and processing of water.

Looking at the pool and the stream flowing from it, Rere explains that this is the pū, or the puna — the source of water. He elaborates that the natural law of water is to flow downward with gravity. In the context of Tāne te Waiora, this karakia explains the movement of water up through the ngahere (forest).

If the puna is the pū, the origin or source of water, then more (mosses) refers to the first layer of water used by the mosses that sit above in the splash zone, drawing water up from the puna. These spaces are always very damp.

The next stage is the weu, including plants that hold water like reservoirs — ferns, ponga and nikau — storing water in the whenua (land).

The following stage is the aka, or the fibrous plants or trees, indicating the first level of barked trees. In this process, rea refers to the fruiting trees — symbolising the creation and multiplication of new life from seed.

Continuing, he directs our attention to the larger canopy trees. He explains that these are the wao, with their complex water systems requiring the processing of water from the roots to each water-processing leaf found storeys above the ground. Kune refers to swelling. Rere likens this to a baby's growth in the mother's womb. He further explains that this concept views the forest as a whole system. If a person could observe the entire forest from above, they would see kune — the forest moving, breathing and growing.

Finally, he describes whē as a specific sound of the ngahere — a product of the functioning internal water systems of the forest.

From the puna to whē, the movement of water through the forest gives life, transferring energy: this is Tāne te Waiora.

He waiwhakaata – my reflections

As I stand beside the stream, listening intently to the kōrero, each detailed description unfolds before me. With a keen eye, I follow the narrative and, as each part of the story is revealed, I begin to see the ngahere in a new light. I notice the relationships and interactions between the more and the pū. I observe the line of weu draping over the bank, seamlessly blending into bush shrubs above. And I feel embraced by the resounding presence of the whole ngahere system. This new perspective fills me with a sense of maramatanga (understanding), deepening my connection to the forest and its intricacies.

As I process and find meaning in the kōrero, I gain a deeper understanding of the karakia "Ko te pū, te more, te weu, te aka, te rea, te wao, te kune, te whe". Initially, my understanding was shaped by two well-known concepts. One pertains to Tāne Matua and the progression of a tree from a seed to a fruit-bearing, life-giving entity. The other is linked to Tāne-nui-a-Rangi, Tāne-te-Wānanga, symbolising the growth and expansion of knowledge. Yet this experience alongside the awa and within the ngahere revealed another understanding of the karakia and another dimension of Tane, that of Tāne te Waiora. Here, I was introduced to the intricate systems governed by Tāne te Waiora, which presented a new perspective on forest composition and water movement within the forest. From the smallest mosses along the stream's edge, to the fern-filled gullies that capture and store water, to the largest canopy trees above, I was able to track the systems and functions of Tane te Waiora.

As I reflected on how this new learning relates to the Ngā Tohu project, particularly in developing the theory and practice of tohu, it became clear that the characteristics of Tāne te Waiora described in the karakia are in fact cultural indicators of functioning ngahere systems. From the perspective of Tāne te Waiora, each component of the karakia — ko te pū, te more, te weu, te aka, te rea, te wao, te kune, te whē — is required for optimal water function. These components, detailed in the karakia, serve as tohu. Their presence indicates functioning water systems.

Conversely, their absence or poor condition signals potential issues within the ecosystem. The karakia provides us with very clear tohu that help us understand what must be present for Tane te Waiora to thrive.

Mauao in Summer

Tāngata are everywhere — walking, running, chatting — and it's hard not to be carried away by the energy in the area. Finding stillness amid all this activity is challenging. But perhaps this isn't a time for stillness; maybe it's time to move with, and take advantage of, the summertime energy.
I stand, gazing at the task before me. Starting at the bottom, my eyes trace a line from the base to the peak of the maunga. The position over-extends my neck, leaving me slightly uncomfortable, perhaps mirroring my apprehension about my commitment to climb all the way to top. This is not an unfamiliar challenge for me and, like every time before, I bow my head and stand in reverence before the proud maunga.

Rākau, in a brilliant array of colours, blanket the upper slopes of the maunga. Pōhutukawa are blooming, with those in the distance appearing a dull red — almost as if nearing the end of their season. Yet those close by are a bright, vibrant red — like those displayed on postcards. On closer inspection, some flowers have not yet bloomed: the red petals, enclosed in their furry white casings, resemble a shy child peeking from behind the safety of their mother's leg, not entirely convinced about joining in the fun. Even so, as is often the case with pōhutukawa, the boisterous blooming flowers dominate the tree.

The manu, vocal and lively, embody the energy of Hine Raumati, flitting between trees and darting through harakeke bushes. They settle momentarily on one branch before swiftly moving to the next, gorging on the season's new stores of nectar at each stop.

The heat of the day has not yet set in, but the air is already warm, with a very light breeze wafting in from the ocean. Looking down at

the shoreline, most of the reef structure is already exposed, and the submerged reefs are barely visible as dark silhouettes.

Underfoot, the pathway is dry, hardened from years of foot traffic. As each foot lands, a fine dust lifts, momentarily suspended before settling on the greenery lining the path and coating the edges white — unnatural yet common in this season. I return my focus to the maunga, again tracing the line to the top. Managing to tune out the distractions around me, I settle into the space. I breathe — sharing breath with the maunga, with the tipua, the taniwha and the tūpuna — and I reflect on how fortunate I am to be in this place.

Waters wisdom – waireka o te harakeke

There's never a feeling of eagerness or excitement, only a slight sense of dread at the thought of climbing the many staircases along the track. Today, I am with Kelly, a dear whanaunga who I often refer to as my tuākana. Our whakapapa connection extends back to our great-grandmothers who were sisters: my nani, the teina, and Kellz's nani, the tuākana. So, although I am older, acknowledging these whakapapa relationships is important. Kellz is never happy with this and always responds with unease: I know she doesn't like it, and we often play and joke about it.

Kellz is always up for a hīkoi. This maunga often calls to her, and she has spent hours walking its numerous carved tracks. As we move slowly but surely along the path, the first rocky staircase appears. It always gets the blood pumping and the body warmed. At its top, we pause for a quick breath and admire the view — a necessary ritual to fully prepare for the hīkoi ahead. As the pathway widens, more people appear, and a feeling of unease catches in my chest. Still, this doesn't distract us from our goal, and focused on the path, we continue.

As I scan the pathway, I see Kellz walking towards a harakeke bush just off the track, which is not unusual for her. A skilled kairaranga, Kellz loves weaving. I have watched her work in pā harakeke, always moving with

care and respect. When cutting harakeke, she dives in with the confidence characteristic of a harakeke practitioner. Her head hidden by the long leaves, and only her back visible, she carefully selects suitable leaves and cleans out the spent ones. Once done, she sits with her legs extended, sorting, stripping and preparing, her actions fluid and natural.

Kellz's movements are deliberate, as usual, but a little different to what I'm used to. Unsure of her intentions, I continue to watch intently as she reaches for the flower perched atop the long, upright kōrari. Gently, she pulls it towards herself, bending the stalk to get a closeup view. Eyes focused, she softly rubs the flower's outer casing, persuading it to open just enough to see inside. At this point, I realise that no-one else seems the least bit interested in the harakeke, all are more focused on reaching the top. For some of those passers-by, Kellz's deep inspection of the harakeke might look out of place. Yet such judgement does not bother her and as if she is the only one on the maunga, she continues to inspect the season's new bloom.

Snapping the flower from the stalk and placing it on her lips, she sucks the waireka (nectar). Then she pauses, her face marked by enquiry rather than the joy of a new experience. Moving further along the path, she spots another accessible harakeke. The kōrari again standing upright, she reaches out to pull it closer for inspection before snapping off the flower to again taste the waireka within.

My face reflecting both confusion and curiosity, Kellz realises that her behaviour might seem unusual even to me. She explains that she has recently been watching tui feeding from the new season's pōhutukawa and harakeke and wondered how they taste: "So, I tried it, and it's delicious", she says. She compares the sweetness to that of honeysuckle, a familiar reference since I grew up with a red honeysuckle shrub by my front doorstep. As children, we would sit together, carefully plucking the flowers one by one, pinching the base to easily access the nectar. Then, using the new opening as a straw, we would suck out the sweet liquid, immediately discarding the spent flower to quickly grab another, as if there was a shortage in supply — though there was not.

Kellz finds another flower and, with typical tuākana insistence, offers it to me to try. It's different in size and texture from honeysuckle, but I approach it in the same way, pinching off the bottom, exposing the inside, and sucking the waireka. To my surprise, it's full of wai and, although sweet, it is tainted by a bitter taste. Seeing my distaste, Kellz explains that the flesh

of the flower is kawa and must be opened carefully to avoid releasing the kawa. She offers me another, and this time I follow her instructions. She is right: no kawa, only slightly sweetened waireka. Seeing my second attempt was more enjoyable, she smiles.

Kellz explains that she has been sampling different harakeke and pōhutukawa flowers from various places and at different times. Although still becoming familiar with this new exploration of taiao, she has noticed that the waireka content and taste both vary depending on the time of day, the stage of summer and the location. Obviously excited by this discovery, she goes on to explain that on her many visits to the maunga she has never taken time to connect with harakeke in this way. I see that she is enlightened by her new-found relationship with harakeke.

With consideration for the manu, Kellz instructs, "We had better leave some for the tui; they might get hōhā with us for taking all their putiputi". Then, both happy with our brief interlude, we mihi to the harakeke and the manu, and return our focus to the track. The flow of walkers, unaffected by our brief digression, continues to stream by us until we find a break and step back into the flow, our focus reset on reaching the top.

He waiwhakaata – my reflections

Although I have walked many maunga with Kellz, this moment perfectly capturing her curious, inquisitive nature, remains etched in my memory. One lesson I have taken from this experience relates to the concept of 'tauira'. A tauira can refer to a pattern or a template. When referencing a person, it describes someone who has dedicated their life to a field of work or cultural practice. They have observed and experienced, trialled and tested, examined and analysed, deepening their understanding. From this place of wisdom, a tauira becomes an exemplar of cultural practice from whom others can draw understanding.

This brief interaction with harakeke expanded my understanding of tauira. Now I see that the harakeke is, itself, a tauira, embodying and

exemplifying the natural patterns of life. Through its interactions with the manu, the harakeke demonstrates its unique place in taiao and its intricate relationships with its surrounding environment. Examining the kōrari and tasting the waireka, the harakeke teaches us about its annual cycle, and its reproductive form. By positioning harakeke as a tauira, we position ourselves as students, learners and observers.

Reflecting on how this lesson applies to the Ngā Tohu project, particularly in developing the practice of maramataka, I consider tirotiro — the act of cultural observation of taiao. As a student, I realise that I could have walked past the same harakeke a hundred times and not truly understood or connected with it in the same way. However, tirotiro instructs us to be present, to engage purposefully, and to form meaningful relationships with taiao. Therefore, with harakeke positioned as tauira, tirotiro encourages us to look at what is being demonstrated, what knowledge is being shared and what indicators are being presented. By extending tauira to include all taiao systems, and positioning taiao as the teacher and tāngata as the students, through tirotiro we can develop intentional and respectful observation practices.

Finally, this experience reiterates for me the significance of water as the driver of all living things, and emphasises the relationship between wai and Tamanuiterā (sun). During a Ngā Tohu wānanga in Ngātaki, Te Hiku, a project advisor, Te Rerekohu Tuterangiwhiu, explained this relationship, describing the role of Tamanuiterā in illuminating and energising the world. His rā (light) allows us to see form and function, and his kā (heat) and hī (energy) drive the world's water processes. During the summer, Tamanuiterā's energy is most potent; the days are longer, the heat more intense and the taiao responds, as exemplified by the various seasonal forms. These transformations provide us with tohu, the seasonal expressions of wai and Tamanuiterā. If water is the essence of life, then Tamanuiterā provides the energy that drives and activates the processing of water through taiao, igniting the life force.

This relationship between wai and Tamanuiterā is evident in the living processes of the harakeke, as well as in its interactions and services in its ecosystem. Although we don't see the water moving, the harakeke physically expresses the use of water. Its interactions with manu, ngāngara and other taonga are further expressions of water's productivity. So, even though we cannot see the water move, we can observe the effects of its life force everywhere.

Raropua in Autumn

The sun has not yet set, and the patterns that adorn the mountain range are still visible against the clear autumn sky. Bright oranges and layers of soft-pastel pinks and yellows blend into a band of white which seems to prop up the blue evening sky. It's getting colder and, as I sit on the beach enjoying the last of the sunlight, I am aware that it will soon be time to head home before darkness falls and the chill sets in. We haven't yet started lighting the fire, but I can sense it won't be long. There is a level of excitement at the thought of the first fire of the season. Our wood stocks, replenished over the summer, are prepared, and the fireplace is stoked and ready to be lit.

The tide has just turned and, in the distance, slowly reclaims the sand flats. The leading edge, marked by a thin fringe of white foam, advances further up the mudflats. Soon it will have completely submerged the seagrass and tuangi beds and the small channels, whose intricate patterns will be lost to the rising waters. The water is calm, which is typical for the season. The colours of the sky dive deep into the water, as if captured in a photograph. Gentle ripples sweep across the surface; there is no sound, no lapping — only stillness, peaceful and tranquil.

I sit on an old log that has been dragged up on the beach, too high for the tide to reach; the sand here is dry. I'm barefoot and, as usual, I dig my feet into the sand. The surface is still warm from the day's heat, and I push it aside to expose the cooler black iron sand below. This sand is unique to this beach; in the warmer season, you often see tamariki collecting the sand in jars as a sparkling treasure to take home.

My feet are now covered in black sand; I walk to the water to clean off, stepping in the shallows, I feel the broken shells and rough rocks beneath them. Although uncomfortable, my hardened summer feet are unfazed. The water is surprisingly warm, inviting me to move deeper. I try to rub the clinging sand off my feet, but it holds tight and refuses to let go. Then, with a bit more effort, the water helps release the sand and it settles again to the sea floor.

The cleansing westerly winds of Poutūterangi have passed, leaving us with a soft breeze. I stand for a moment and let the cool air settle around my exposed cheeks. The breeze carries the faint scent of low tide, a familiar and comforting smell. I breathe — sharing breath with the moana, with the tipua, the taniwha and tūpuna — and I reflect on how fortunate I am to be in this place.

Waters wisdom – sky water

Standing in the water, I watch as Caine finishes setting his net. Having meticulously prepared the entire system before arriving at the beach, he doesn't take long. The net has been checked for holes, the weights are secured, and the anchor lines are tied with special knots. Holding the anchor, he pulls the net deeper into the tide, stretching it out until the whole net is taut. The timing is perfect: the tide has just turned and hasn't yet gained full momentum, making the job much easier.

Caine is at home in the moana. Growing up in his family's homestead only metres from the beach, he has a deep connection to this special place. He often shares stories of his childhood adventures exploring every nook and cranny of the moana, his childhood playground. He speaks as if drawing from a map imprinted on his memory. He can clearly recall the areas where oysters cluster in the mangroves high in the estuary, where titiko shelter in the enclosed bays, and where pipi gather on the sandspit beside the deep channels. He reminisces about the horse-mussel beds that once lined the shallows and the scallop beds once found in the deep channels. Mere memories now, he talks about these areas fondly.

When in the moana, Caine doesn't talk much. He moves quietly, almost as if there's a mutual agreement for stillness. His nature is quiet and thoughtful: I sometimes describe him as a tangata kī tahi, a man who only speaks once. People described in this way usually say little, but when they do, it is always with thoughtful consideration. When they speak, we are encouraged to be attentive and listen - for one, they often impart deep wisdom; and two, they rarely repeat themselves, so you get only one chance to capture their gems. The fisherman in Caine lends a natural

quietness as being quiet and present can determine if the time spent in the moana is fruitful or not. I also sense that Caine's quietness stems from a deep and genuine respect for the moana, a respect evident in everything he does.

Seeing that Caine has nearly finished setting his net, I break the silence and prompt korero by saying, "the clouds on the ranges look unusual today". He pauses briefly, looking up towards the ranges, and replies "Yeah", and immediately refocuses on his net. Unsatisfied by his response, and knowing he has much more to offer, I prod, "I don't think I've seen those clouds sitting like that before". To me, they do look quite unusual — the range blanketed in a thick, heavy, low-lying cloud that hugs the range tops, softening the jagged points and peaks. The clouds seem so heavy that they descend into the valleys like stretched fingers, their tips reaching to the baseline below.

Now finished with setting his net, Caine looks more closely at the clouds as he makes his way back to shore.

> Yeah, those are normal for this time of year. You see that formation when cold air settles into the valleys. The cloud will be coming over from the Waikato side of the pae maunga; the winds over there will be pushing the cloud across the plains and up the maunga. No doubt it's raining over there.

The westerlies are the prevailing winds in this area, and we track the clouds from the west as indicators of weather. I'm familiar with the big, billowing, lighter-coloured clouds. I know rain is not a threat with them and I can safely hang my washing. By contrast, when thick, dark-grey, sometimes black, clouds cover the range, I know that rain is on its way and washing should be left for another day.

I wonder why this time of year brings such different cloud formations, so I probe further, "Why do they drop down like that?" Softly spoken, Caine replies, "The clouds creep over the top of the ranges, still full of moisture. If the whenua is cold, it holds the clouds close rather than releasing them to the sky". Still looking towards the ranges, now more curiously, he explains:

> Those clouds are a little different than usual. You normally see them in the morning, after the night has cooled the whenua. But they should burn off during the day as the whenua warms. The whenua must still be quite cold. He pauses briefly, "I can't hear the ocean out the front".

"Out the front" is a phrase Caine uses to refer to the ocean side of the moana. From where we are positioned, that location is at least 15km in a direct line. I've always wondered how Caine can hear the waves from such a distance, but I know this ability is part of his special connection with the moana. He goes on to explain, "The onshore winds would tell us that the whenua is warming, but we haven't had a strong onshore for a while. The whenua must be cold to hold the clouds like that".

Now back on shore, Caine immediately starts packing the loose gear into a wheelie bin modified to hold his net. Then, without another word, he drags the bin across the beach and our mahi is done for the afternoon.

He waiwhakaata – my reflections

As I reflect on Caine's description and explanation about the cloud's formation, I can picture the cloud streaming across the lowland plains, growing and thickening as it is pushed higher and higher up the slopes of the maunga. Releasing some water as rain, the cloud continues to creep over the peak, tumbling down the valleys like a river. At other times, I have heard Caine refer to clouds as "sky water" and, in this moment, ka mārama, I am enlightened.

Two key reflections emerge from this brief interaction. First, it reinforced my understanding of how the entire world functions as a dynamic, living water system. While we often focus on visible water systems like rivers, lakes and seas, the cloud's behaviour reminds us that sky water is an integral part of a larger, interconnected and interdependent water system. Second, this interaction highlighted how the water system is much larger and more complex than I had ever understood. It emphasised how influential whenua is in driving cloud form and movement, demonstrating that the structure and composition of land are inextricably linked with the sky, determining how sky water moves and behaves.

In relation to Ngā Tohu o te Ao, these complex relationships demonstrate the importance of adopting a full-system approach when developing tohu and cultural observation practices. Pūmahara, the practice of reflection, of remembering, was integral to the Ngā Tohu project, guiding researchers through shared monthly reflections. Each month, the research teams met to reflect on the past month, share observations and discuss specifics related to their local maramataka. A simple structure used to guide these reflective sessions included rangi, whenua and wai. Rangi covered sky observations, such as wind, clouds, rain, sun, stars, and moon; whenua involved land observations, including trees, animals and people; and wai incorporated observations of water bodies such as rivers, streams, lakes and seas. By creating a full-system approach to observation, we developed a deeper understanding of the complex interconnectedness of taiao.

Finally, reflecting on how this lesson applies to the Ngā Tohu project, and particularly in developing maramataka practice, I consider the importance of haukāinga practitioners. Haukāinga is a term used to describe people who both reside in, and care for, traditional kāinga. As someone deeply connected to the moana and wai, born and raised on his ancestral lands, Caine exemplifies a haukāinga moana practitioner. His unique perspective, developed over years of interaction with the moana, equips him with a profound understanding of the intricate, dynamic systems of taiao. His brief explanation of a single cloud encapsulates the complex network of interactions between Tamanuiterā, Papatūānuku, Whenua, Parawhenuamea, Tāne Mahuta, Tāne te Waiora, Hine Pūkohurangi, Tāwhirimatea and wai.

This ability to draw together and form understanding from complex environmental interactions requires a special knowledge set founded on experience and practice in taiao. The knowledge held by haukāinga practitioners forms the foundation for the development of tohu. Therefore, Ngā Tohu encourages us to respectfully create space for these individuals to share and communicate their knowledge meaningfully, ensuring that the tohu are both grounded and whole system focused.

Kupu whakakapi

As part of the collective book-writing process, we authors were given the opportunity to come together to wānanga and share whakaaro about our chapters. We worked alongside our Mātāpuna (Māori research advisors), who helped each of us develop our thinking for the stories and helped to whiri (weave) the collective voice of the book.

At the time, I was uncertain about what I wanted to write. I knew it would be something related to the Ngā Tohu o te Ao project, but what? Should it be more technical and academic? Should it cover some of the project's theoretical components? While everyone around me was focused, structuring and shaping their stories, I had absolutely nothing.

Deciding to put the chapter aside, I planned to work on another technical report related to the Ngā Tohu project and blocked out an entire weekend for the task. When the time arrived, I woke early to set up my workspace, my computer (dual monitors always a necessity), highlighters, pens, notebook, tea bags and milk — all the essentials for a successful day's writing. I took a breath and launched in. The flow was like nothing I had experienced before. I had clear, vivid, pictures in my mind — the water, the ngahere, the beach, the birds. I could see each subject clearly — their facial expressions, their movements and gestures. I could hear the words as they shared kōrero.

After about an hour, I realised this piece was not shaping up as the intended technical report. I almost gave in to the internal voice telling me to maintain focus, but instead I embraced the opportunity to reflect on the special times spent with my close and dear research team — the story I was supposed to write.

As I wrote, I reflected on the spaces I was privileged to visit, the knowledge and wisdom that was so generously shared, the kind and caring nature of my teachers and the lessons they imparted to me. The chapter naturally shaped itself around the four seasons, each section describing seasonal characteristics of taiao and encapsulating the personality of each teacher.

Beginning with Te Rerekohu, marking the awakening of the forest in **spring** — a season that mirrors his unwavering drive to reinvigorate the world with Māori ancestral knowledge.

The narrative transitions to the high energy of **summer** with Kelly, — a season that reflects her passion and drive to reclaim space for the development of cultural practitioners.

The story moves to the cooling of **autumn** with Caine revealing his calm nature and steadfast dedication to the moana.

The final season marks the end of the cycle and the end of the Ngā Tohu project. **Winter** brings the cold and, with it, burning fires, soups, blankets and woolly hats — a time for rest and reflection. Winter is my season and, as I retreat into the welcoming cold, I conclude with two major reflections that I will carry into the new year.

Tuatahi - "Ko te wai te kai kawe o te ora, ko te wai te kai kawe o te mauri". Water is everything; it is everywhere. It flows through the rivers and streams, fills oceans and seas, and nourishes forests. It forms clouds, rain and fog, and drives the winds. Water moves through taiao, telling stories of the past, present and future. To understand tohu, we must understand wai.

Tuarua - Māori ancestral knowledge is crucial in helping us to truly understand water. It offers insights into the natural logic of water, the cycles that enable energy to flow; and it teaches us, as teina, how to interact appropriately with water. To understand tohu, we must understand water. To understand water, we must be guided by our traditional-knowledge holders and cultural practitioners, creating more space to explore and reclaim Māori ancestral knowledge.

Reflecting on lessons shared by my teachers, I'm reminded of essential truths about our environment and ourselves. The journey of water through taiao encapsulates the interconnectedness of all living things, with each element influencing and supporting the others — the delicate balance necessary to sustain life. As I consider the critical role of water in nurturing these complex relationships within taiao, I'm inspired to approach my interactions with the natural world — and indeed, with other people — with greater empathy and consideration. Recognising that we're all part

of a larger, interdependent system compels me to act responsibly and thoughtfully for the future of our tamariki and mokopuna.

Ko au ko te wai, ko te wai ko au, tihei mauri ora.

Kōwai 7

He maomao nō Nukutaurua

Nā Tekiteora Rolleston-Gabel
Ngāti Kahu, Tūhoe, Ngāi Te Rangi

He maomao nō Nukutaurua

TEKITEORA ROLLESTON-GABEL

Pou hihiri
Pou rarama
Pou o te whakaaro
Pou o te tangata
Pou o te aroha
Te pou e here nei i a tātou
Haumi e
Hui e
Tāiki e

Ka piki whakarunga ki te kōtihitihi o tōku maunga hirahira, o Maungataniwha e tū mai rā i te ao, i te pō, i te winiwini, i te wanawana. Ka kohuki atu ngā whakangita ki Te Paatu e tū whakamaru ana i ngā tūpuna, i a Parata rāua ko Kahutianui. Ka huri atu te tirohanga ki Tokarau e noho mai rā i te marae nui o Hinemoana, o Tangaroa whakamautai. Ka tere ana mai i tai, ka tōia ake te waka o Mamaru. Tau ana, ko tōku hapū, ko Te Paatu tērā e noho āhuru ana i raro i te maru o Ngāti Kahu.

E tū ana ahau ki uta, e tiro atu ana ki tai. Ka ruku atu ki te puna o mahara, ki ngā wai huritao o tōku nei hirikapo, ki te whakapuaki ake i ngā tini āhuaranga o ngā mahi rangahau. Ka hao mai anō i tētahi whakataukī whakahirahira hei taki i tēnei tuhinga huritao e pēnei ana:

He rāngai maomao ka taka ki tua o Nukutaurua, e kore a muri e hokia.

He whakataukī motuhake tēnei nō tōku ake iwi, nō Ngāti Kahu. Kāore e ārikarika ngā kōrero me ngā whakamāramatanga mō tēnei whakataukī. He tātai whakapapa, he tohu whenua, he kōrero taiao, he kupu whakarite, he kōrero whakaaro anō hoki kei tōna pū. Ka mutu, he momo tohutohu, he kōrero akiaki tēnei mō te tangata ki te whakatutuki i ngā mahi ki tōna

otinga. Nā reira, e mārakerake ana te kitea atu o te nui o te hāngai o tēnei whakataukī ki ngā tini āhuaranga o tēnei ao hurihuri.

Ka tīmata te tuhinga nei ki ngā whakamārama mō te whakataukī me te terenga o te maomao. Ka whakatairitehia te maomao ki tōku ake whakatupuranga, me ngā āhuatanga matua kua whakaaweawe i tōku nei tirohanga ki te ao – ko te reo Māori, ko tōku whānau, ko ngā kura kaupapa Māori me ngā kura ā-iwi. Kātahi ka anga atu te titiro ki ngā moana whakauka, ki ngā moana pukepuke, ki reira pōruturutu ai ki ngā mahi a te kairangahau. He whakamārama atu i ngā wheako, i ngā kitenga, me ngā akoranga o tētahi kairangahau ihupuku te mahi. Ka kōrerotia te hiranga o te toka tū moana, pēnei tonu i a Nukutaurua i kōrerotia rā i te whakataukī. Ka mutu, ka tere atu ki te paewai o te moana, ki reira pohewa ai i te hanga o te rangahau pūtaiao o te anamata. Ko te āwhero nui o te whatumanawa, kia māhorahora taku tuku i ngā huritao, i ngā whakaaro kei ngā rire o tōku hirikapo. Mā te whakapuaki i ēnei kōrero, ka whānui ake ngā mōhioranga mō te āhua o te rangahau ki tā te Māori titiro, tae atu hoki ki tā te ihupuku titiro. Ko te manako anō hoki, ka akiaki tēnei i te tangata kia anga whakamua ahakoa te tuarangaranga me te whenewhene o ngā tai rangahau i ōna wā.

He Terenga

Ka kohuki atu ki ngā wai marino o Tokarau, ki te nohoanga o ngā ika pēnei i te maomao. Ka rere noa ngā rāngai poto-maomao i ngā wai mahana o te takutai, e pātata tonu ana ki te whenua. He wai marino tēnā e āhurutia ana e te ākau kia pai ai te tupu o ngā rāngai maomao. Ka taka te wā, ka pakeke te maomao, ka rere atu ki ngā rire o te tai arā, ka taka ki tua atu i te toka tū moana, i Nukutaurua. E tohu ana tēnei i te awe o te maomao, e oti ai tana tere i te moana tuarangaranga, i te moana whenewhene. E kore a muri e hokia, arā e kore anō e hoki kōmuri ki ngā wai marino o te ākau.

Ka whakaaro ake ahau ki ōku wai marino i ahau e nohinohi ana. I whakaahurutia ahau e tōku whānau hei uri nō Ngāti Kahu, nō Ngāi Tūhoe.

Nā rātou ahau i whāngai ki te reo Māori hei reo matua. Nā rātou ahau i poipoi kia whaohia taku kete mātauranga i te kura kaupapa Māori me te wharekura. Mātua mai ko te reo, ko te tikanga, ko te whakapapa hei tau māku. Mei kore ake te whānau hei pou ārahi mōku.

I whakaahurutia ahau e te kura kaupapa hei raukura, hei ākonga Māori. Ka rere atu ahau ki te kura kaupapa, ki te kura ā-iwi hoki, e whānui ake ai taku tirohanga ki te ao. Ka noho tonu mātou i te mātotorutanga o te reo Māori. He huhua ngā kōrero tuku iho i whāngaia mai pēnei i ngā whakataukī, ngā karakia me ngā waiata a kui mā, a kara mā. Waihoki, ko ngā kōrero ā-iwi tērā i whakamanatia hei tūāpapa mō te marau o te kura. Koinei ētahi o ngā tino motuhaketanga o te ako i te kura. Ka mutu, he māori te tūāhuatanga o te ako, ā, e aro kau atu ana ki ngā hononga o tēnā ki tēnā. Ko te hua, ko te tamaiti e mōhio ana ki tōna ao Māori tūturu, ā mohoa noa nei. Mei kore ake te kura kaupapa Māori me te wharekura i takatū ai ahau i te ara o te mātauranga, otirā, i tēnei ao hurihuri.

I whakaahurutia ahau e te wharekura hei tauira Māori. I whakaū te wharekura i te reo, i ngā tikanga, me ngā mātāpono o tōku whānau. I reira whakawhānuitia ai taku tirohanga ki ngā momo pakirehua, ki ngā momo kaupapa ako, me ngā momo rangahau. Ka pōruturutu, ka whakamātau hoki ahau i ngā mahi pūtaiao i te wharekura. He kaupapa tēnā i whakahihiri i te hinengaro i ahau i te kura. Waimarie katoa ana ahau i toro atu ai au ki te pūtaiao nōku i te wharekura. He Māori tōku kaiako pūtaiao, me te aha, ko ana whakaakoranga pūtaiao i kawea ki te reo Māori tonu. Ko ngā pakirehua i hāngai ki tōku anō ao Māori. I whāia ko ngā tikanga Māori i ngā whakamātau i te akomanga. I kitea hoki ngā hononga whakapapa me te whai pānga o te whenua ki te tangata, ki te ao wairua, ki te ao tūroa anō hoki. Nā runga anō i ēnei āhuatanga, kāore i tino rangona ngā āhuaranga taupatupatu o te pūtaiao ki te ao Māori i ēnei mahi. Mei kore ake te wharekura hei whakapūmau ake i ngā pito mata o te pūtaiao.

Ko taku terenga atu ki te whare wānanga, he pērā tonu ki te rerenga o te maomao ki ngā rire o te tai. Ka haere atu ana au ki te whare wānanga, ka whaowhia taku kete mātauranga ki ngā akoranga o te pūtaiao, mātua mai ko ngā kaupapa mātai hauropi me te mātai moana, tae atu hoki ki te reo Māori. I pōruturutu noa ki ngā mahi pūtaiao i te wharekura, me te aha, i minamina ki te ruku atu ki ngā rētōtanga i te whare wānanga. Heoi anō, i ohorere katoa ahau i te rerekē o ngā akoranga pūtaiao i te whare wānanga, tēnā i tāku i ako ai i te wharekura. Ko te taumahatanga ki ahau, ko te rerekē o te whakaaro me te whāiti o te tirohanga o te tangata ki te

ao hurihuri. I te whare wānanga, ko tā te pūtaiao he āta wetewete, he āta whakawehewehe i tēnā mea, i tēnā mea, kia taratahi ai. Ka mutu, he tokomaha ngā ākonga i ū ki ngā mahi pūtaiao ānō nei he whakapono. He tohu pea tēnā o te rerekētanga o ngā akoranga auraki ki ngā akoranga i ngā kura kaupapa Māori. Heoi anō, i whai oranga tonu au i te whare wānanga mā te whai i ngā akoranga reo Māori, tikanga Māori anō hoki. He wāhi tēnā e taea ai te whakaū ngā mahi o te kura kaupapa me te wharekura. He momo āhurutanga anō tērā i ahau i te whare wānanga, ānō ko ngā wai marino o te ākau.

Nōku i mahi i te whare wānanga hei tauira rangahau, i rangona ngā āhuaranga taupatupatu o te pūtaiao ki te mātauranga Māori. Ko tāku, he tautāwhi atu i tētahi o ngā pūkenga pūtaiao o reira ki te rangahau i ētahi tupu. He ine i ngā pota o te tupu, he kohikohi raraunga, he arotake mātātuhi te mahi. He pai ēnei akoranga hei whakawhānui ake i aku mōhiohio ki ngā mahi pūtaiao. Nāwai rā, ka hiahia te pūkenga ki te toro atu ki te mātauranga Māori hei kīnaki i ngā mahi engari kīhai ahau i whakaae kia tāpirihia atu te mātauranga me ngā kōrero tuku iho ki tana kaupapa rangahau. E kore rawa ahau e whakaae atu kia whakawaimehatia te mātauranga i ngā kaupapa pūtaiao, ka mutu, koia hoki tāku atu ki a ia. Ahakoa tērā, ka tuhia tonutia e ia tētahi pepa, ka meinga atu ai taku ingoa hei kaituhi matua. Pupuke ana te riri i a au i te kitenga atu o taku ingoa me te kōmitimititanga o te pūtaiao ki ngā kōrero tuku iho. Ahakoa te taumaha o tēnei take, he nui tonu ngā akoranga i puta ki a au. Ko aua akoranga rā e mea ana kia mataara, kia matapopore hoki i roto i ngā mahi rangahau, kei raweketia e te tangata, ka tahi. Ka rua, me āta whakamana ngā momo mātauranga kia Māori mai, kia pūtaiao mai. Mā reira pea e tino kitea ngā hua o ēnā momo mōhioranga e rua.

Ka pahemo te wā, ka kōkiri whakamua, ka riwha ngā mahi o te whare wānanga. Ka riro i ahau aku tohu whare wānanga, ka panuku atu ai ki ngā mahi rangahau. Ka tau atu ahau ki tētahi whakanōhanga o te rangahau i te pūtaiao. Ka whakaahurutia ahau e te uepū Māori hei kairangahau pūtaiao ihupuku ki tērā o ngā whakanōhanga rangahau. Kāore e ārikarika ngā kaupapa rangahau me ngā mahi pūtaiao hei whakahihiri i te hinengaro, hei whakawhanake hoki i aku pūkenga. I whai wāhi atu ahau ki te rangahau i ngā tukumate o ngā mātaitai pēnei i ngā tuatua, te waihanga matapae pūtaiao ki te tohu i ngā mate o ngā mātaitai, me te arotake i te pānga atu o aua mate ki te tangata.

I roto i aku mahi kua hāereere haere ahau ki ngā momo huihuinga, ki ngā momo kauhau, ki ngā wānanga ki te ako i te whānuitanga o ngā mahi pūtaiao. Kua whai wāhi atu ahau ki te whakatairanga ake i ngā mahi pūtaiao ki ngā kura kaupapa Māori, ki ngā kura o Aotearoa, tae rawa atu ki tāwāhi. E ngākaunui ana ahau ki ngā mahi whakatairanga i te whānuitanga o ngā mahi pūtaiao ki te tamariki. Ka hoki atu aku mahara ki taku tamarikitanga, me taku pōhēhē ko te mahi a te kaipūtaiao kei roto katoa i te taiwhanga pūtaiao. Tēnā pōhēhē tēnā! Nā runga anō i tēnā, i pupū ake te hiahia ki roto i ahau kia whakatairanga ake i ngā pūtaiao me tōna whai pānga ki te taiao i roto tonu i te reo Māori, he whakapono nōku kāore i tua atu i tērā hei whakaihiihi, hei whakawanawana anō i a rātou. Ki ahau nei, ka hirahira ake ngā mahi rangahau pūtaiao mēnā ka āta whakapuakina, ka āta whakatairangatia atu ki te tangata. Mā te pēnei e mārama ake ai ngā hua o te rangahau, otirā, e whakatinanahia ai ngā whāinga matua o te rangahau, e tahuri mai anō te Māori ki te rangahau pūtaiao.

Nōku anō te maringanui i mahi tahi ai au ki ngā kairangahau Māori hei ringa hāpai. He waewae kai pakiaka, he waewae kai kapua rātou, me te aha, ka nui ngā akoranga māku i taku terenga atu i ngā tai o rangahau. Ko ngā mōhioranga me ngā tikanga tuku iho i whakamanatia i ērā momo kaupapa rangahau. Ko te wairua Māori tērā i rangona i ngā tukanga rangahau, i ngā whakawhitiwhitinga kōrero hoki. Ko ngā hua rangahau ērā i whai pānga motuhake ki te Māori. Nā reira, katoa, katoa, e whakatauira mai ana i te āheinga ki te rangahau, ki te mahi i ngā kaupapa pūtaiao, kia Māori ai te hanga mai i runga ki raro, mai i roto ki waho. Ki ahau, ko te whakatinanatanga hoki tēnā o te ako tahi a te tuakana me te teina. Mei kore ake ngā waewae kai pakiaka Māori, ngā uepū rangahau Māori hei pou whakawhirinaki mōku i te ao pūtaiao, i te ao rangahau.

Ahakoa te nui o te pai o ngā mahi rangahau, ka huritao tonu atu ki ngā akoranga me ngā wheako matua kua toko ake i ngā mahi a te kairangahau pūtaiao Māori. Ka whakaaro ake ahau ki ngā tukanga rangahau me ōna momo, pēnei i te arotake mātātuhi. Ko te arotake mātātuhi tētahi o ngā tino tukanga rangahau mō ngā mahi pūtaiao. He rautaki tēnei e taea ai e te tangata te kohikohi te whānuitanga o ngā kōrero e pā ana ki tētahi kaupapa. Ka ākona tēnei momo i te whare wānanga, ā, ka kitea noatia i te ao rangahau. Ahakoa te nui o ngā mōhiohio ka kohikohia, ka aro noa atu te tangata ki ngā mātātuhi, ki ngā kōrero kua tāngia, pēnei i ngā pukapuka me ngā pūrongo. Heoi, he tukanga tēnei e whakataha ana i ngā kōrero tuku iho pēnei i ngā

whakataukī, i ngā pūrākau, i ngā karakia, otirā, i ngā taonga tuku iho a ngā mātua tūpuna. Ko te rahinga o ēnei momo, he kōrero ā-waha, kāore anō kia tāngia ki te pepa. Ko te mea kē, ko ēnei kōrero tuku iho, ko te mātāpuna tonu o te mōhiotanga e rukuhia ai e tātou te Māori ngā rētōtanga o te whakaaro. Nā reira au ka whakaaro ake ki te tapu o te kōrero, me te whai wāhitanga o ngā kōrero tuku iho ki ngā mahi pūtaiao me te ao rangahau.

Ka tīkina i konei ko tētahi o ngā kōrero a Tā Hēmi Henare e mea ana, 'ko te reo te mauri o te mana Māori'. Me te aha anō ko te reo te waka e kawe nei i te whakaaro, ā, ko tētahi o ngā wero i pā mai ki ahau i roto i ngā mahi rangahau ko te whakamārama atu i te tirohanga Māori mā te reo Pākehā. He uaua te whakapākehā i ngā kupu, ka tahi. Ka rua, he uaua te whakamārama atu i te hiranga o tētahi mea ki reo kē. Ki te huri ki reo kē, ka ngaro te tino ia o ngā kōrero me ngā whakaaro, me te aha, me uaua kē ka rongo i te wairua o aua kōrero.

Hei tauira, i whai wāhi atu ahau ki tētahi tira rangahau i ngā āwhata o te whakahaere i te pūnaha hauropi o te moana. He mea hanga te whakahaere i te pūnaha hauropi o te moana hei pou tarāwaho mō Aotearoa whānui. Ko tā te pou tarāwaho nei, he whakatakoto ake i ngā mātāpono e whitu kia ea ai ngā hiahia o tēnā, o tēnā puta noa i Aotearoa. Ahakoa ka whai wāhi atu te iwi Māori ki tēnei pou tarāwaho, ehara i te mea i ahu mai i te whakaaro Māori, i te ao Māori rānei. Nāwai rā, i puta te whakaaro ki te rangahau i ngā momo āwhata ki tā te Māori titiro. Heoi anō, he momo ariā te āwhata ka whakamahia i te ao pūtaiao. Ko te āwhata e kōrerotia nei, he momo inenga i te whānui, i te roa rānei o tētahi mea. Hei tauira, ko ētahi o ngā āwhata auraki e kōrerotia ana i ngā mahi hauropi ko ngā momo inenga wā (pēnei i te hēkona, te mēneti, te hāora me te wiki) me ngā inenga wāhi (pēnei i temita, te kiromita, te rohe me te moutere). He maha hoki ngā momo āwhata mana whakahaere pēnei i ngā kaunihera ā-rohe me te kāwanatanga o te motu.

Nā, ahakoa te maha o ngā āwhata i tēnei ao hurihuri, me uaua ka kite i te Māori e kōrero ana mō ēnei momo āwhata hauropi. Nā te rerekē pea o te pū o te whakaaro i pēnei ai. Kia hoki atu anō ki te whakataukī e pā ana ki te maomao, ki reira kitea ai te te huhua o ngā āwhata o roto. Ko ngā tohu whenua ka kōrerotia, he momo āwhata. Ko te terenga atu o te ika ki tua o Nukutaurua mai i ngā wai marino o te takutai, tae rawa atu ki ngā rire o Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, he momo āwhata. Ko ngā hītori me ngā kōrero tuku iho, he momo āwhata mokowā anō hoki. Nā reira, mārakerake ana te kite atu e taupatupatu ana tēnei mea te āwhata auraki ki ngā momo

āwhata a te Māori. He mea whakaharahara tēnei i te mea ko te reo tērā e kawe ana i te whakaaro, e whakaaweawe ana anō hoki i te tirohanga o te tangata. Tē taea te whakamāori ngā ariā pūtaiao pēnei i te āwhata. Tē taea te kōmitimiti ēnei momo ariā pūtaiao ki te tirohanga Māori. Engari kē, me whakamana ngā mātauranga kia Māori ai i tōna ake reo, i tōna ake ao.

Nā runga anō i ēnei āhuaranga taupatupatu o te pūtaiao me tana whai pānga ki te Māori, ka toko ake te pātai pēnā e tika ana kia whakapeto ngoi ahau ki ngā mahi pūtaiao. E whakapono mārika ana ahau ko te pūtaiao, ko tētahi momo taputapu hei tiaki i te whenua, hei tautoko i te iwi Māori hoki. I ngā tau tata nei, arā noa atu ngā tauira, ngā kaupapa rangahau a ngā tautōhito Māori e taunaki ana i taku whakapae. Ka mutu, mā te whakaū i te reo Māori me ngā tikanga a te Māori e tino kite ai i te hua o ēnei puna mātauranga.

He Paewai

E tere tonu ana ahau i te moana tuarangaranga, i te moana whenewhene o ngā mahi rangahau. Heoi anō, ko te whakataukī tonu tērā e ārahi ana, e akiaki ana i ahau ki te whai tonu, i runga anō i taku whakapono ki ngā hua o te rangahau. I taku terenga atu i ēnei wai pukepuke, e tika ana kia tiro atu ki tua atu rā, ki te paewai.

Kāore e ārikarika ngā tauira kairangi e whakatinana ana i ngā mahi rangahau Māori i te ao pūtaiao. Ko ngā kaupapa mahi o te hōtaka Moana Whakauka ētahi tauira e whakaatu ana i te whānuitanga o ngā mahi rangahau. He tauira tēnei pukapuka o taua āhuaranga. Ko te aro ki tēnei tuhinga tētahi mahi e kaingākautia ana e au nā te mea he momo tēnei kāore e tino kitea ana. Ko te nuinga o ngā tuhinga e aro ana ki ngā mahi pūtaiao, he pūrongo, he arotakenga, he momo whakamātau rānei. Heoi anō, ko tā te kaupapa nei, he whakamana, he whakatairanga, he whakapuaki hoki i ngā kōrero a ngā kairangahau Māori. Mā te pēnei, e wātea ai te tangata ki te tuku māhorahora i ōna whakaaro, i āna akoranga, i āna wheako, ahakoa reo Māori mai, reo Pākehā mai rānei.

Nā, e kitea ana ngā whanaketanga mō te taha ki te whai wāhitanga atu a te Māori ki te rangahau. Kua whānui ake ngā momo mātāpuna mōhiohio i ngā mahi. Kua whanake ngā tukanga rangahau e mana ai ngā momo pēnei i te wānanga, i ngā whakawhitiwhitinga kōrero, i ngā ritenga o neherā ki te ao pūtaiao. Kua whakatūria ngā kaupapa e whakakotahi ana i te Māori kia whai hua anō i roto i te rangahau. He hua katoa ēnei nō ngā mahi a ngā tautōhito. Nā reira e tika ana kia whakanuia ngā waewae kai kapua e whakahaere ana i tēnei kaupapa.

Kua tawhiti kē te haere, kia kore e tawhiti kē tonu, ā, e kore a muri e hokia. Ahakoa te nui o ngā mahi kua tutuki i a tātou, me kōkiri whakamua tonu. Ko tāku e awhero ana, kia tāraia e tātou te Māori tō tātou ake waka rangahau. Kia kaua rā ngā pūnaha o te ao pūtaiao e tāmi i a tātou. Mā te whakapeto ngoi, otirā, mā te whakapātari atu i ngā pūnaha whakahaere pūtaiao e tino kitea atu ngā hua mō tātou, mō Ngāi Māori.

Hei whakarāpopoto i ēnei kōrero, ko te rangahau, ānō he moana pukepuke. Mā te whakapeto ngoi e terea tonutia ai te moana rā e tātou. Kia kaua rā tātou e tatū, kei riro ngā kōrero tuku iho a kui mā, a kara mā. Me whai kē tātou i te whānuitanga o ngā mōhioranga kia māhorahora ai te titiro ki te ao whānui, hei painga mō te iwi. Tēnā, tukuna ngā whakaaro kia rere, rangahaua ngā kōrero mō te iwi, mamarea ngā mātanga ki te mahi a te pātai, kia riro i a koe ngā mōhioranga, kia whāngaia ai ko te hinengaro me te wairua. Kia hoki anō ki te whakataukī i tākina i te tīmatanga rā anō o tēnei tuhinga, “He rāngai maomao ka taka ki tua o Nukutaurua, e kore a muri e hokia”.

Kōwai 8

Waipuna-rere: He wai kei aku kamo

Nā Te Rerekohu Tuterangiwhiu
Ngā Puhi, Ngāruahine, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Ranginui, Tainui

Waipuna-rere:
He wai kei aku kamo

TE REREKOHU TUTERANGIWHIU

The following chapter is a dedication to two special people in my life who, by simply being tūpuna, great uncles, great mentors, and great kaumātua, even for just a moment in time, imparted some of the greatest taonga of my lifetime. Knowledge that seemed like only kōrero over a cup of tea at the time, turned out to be conversations that have laid the very foundation of my understanding of Te Ao Māori — my understanding of Te Ao Tūroa and taiao as an environmental innovator. These mentors also shaped the discipline I have spent my whole life exploring as a practitioner of science and mātauranga Māori. This chapter is a tribute to these tūpuna — these humble men whose riches are seen not in the wealth of possessions or assets but in the wisdom of their experiences that floated around in their kōrero. This chapter is an attempt to honour their immense contributions.

This is a tribute to people who gave so much to me, and, in doing so, gave to my children; and to the legacy of the many children they supported throughout their lifetimes. They are the mātāpuna, the tūpuna of those of us who grew up in the valley.

E āku mātua, taka rawa atu koutou ki te riporipo o te pō-tahuri, ki te au nunumi o te pō-tahuri atu, o te pō-tahuri-mai ki taiao. Ko te pūmahara kei ahau, he wai-marire i rere mai i a koutou, ka tere ki te tāwhangawhanga o Tāwhiri-mā-atea i waho. E kore rawa e monenehu, e memehā i ahau. Papa Wally (Walter Whiu), Papa Mooney (Morris Brown), me te huahua o āku matua me āku whaea e noho mai ra i te pūmahara o Wainuiātea.

Mō koutou tēnei tuhinga...

Me hoki ki te iti

Ko Maungarangi te maunga,
ko Tereawatea te awa.
Ko Owhareiti te roto.
Ko Ngāti Te Ara me Ngāti Kopaki ngā hapū ririki.
Ko Ngāti-Rangi ko Ngāti-Hine ngā hapū.
Ko Tūmatauenga te tupuna whare
Ko Otiria te tūranga waewae.

Tereawatea ka rere ki Te-rere-i-tīria, ki te puna i Keteriki, Kete-riki, kete-tangariki. Koia nei ko ngā manga i whakarere ai i te awa o Otiria, ka rere ki Kawakawa, ki Tirohanga. Tūtaki ake āku wai omiomio ki Taumarere herehere riri, herehere kōrero. Ko Taumarere , ko te awa o te rangatira ka rere ki Waikare puta tahi mai ana i te wahapū o Ōpua, ka tūtaki ki te Moana i Pipiri. Te urunga mai o āku mātua tūpuna, ko te Tai Tama Wahine tēnei e whanga atu ana ki te Moana i Pikopiko i Whiti i hoea ai e aku mātua tupuna i Hawaiki.

Tihewa Mauri ora!

Kia ora...

Ko Te Rerekohu ahau.

I come from a little place called Moerewa in the Bay of Islands in the mid North Island of Te Tai Tokerau. It's original name was Te Waipuna. It's a small working town with a mill, a milk factory, and an AFFCO (meat processing) factory. It used to have a railway station. In the 1970s it was a booming metropolis of Te Tai Tokerau where Māori families from all over the North Island and the country would move to partake in all the industries located in this one little town. Today, it's a town of about 300 to 500 people; but, back then it was the convergence of the multitudes of

people from the North Island — so much so that one of our tūpuna whare was named Te Porowini, translated into "The Province". This is the meeting house where all the kaupapa and the 'take' of the time were discussed.

A particular type of person who came from this little rural Northland town were known as 'Mahi Dogs' that's what we called them — a particular type of workhorse personality who was tough but gentle — a hard-headed and resilient type of mindset, yet also intelligent and gentle. These were people who got up before the sun, had one meal, and left for mahi in the factories, on the railroads, or in the bush, and returned after sunset. They ate their second meal, went to sleep, and then woke to do the same routine the next day. They created a legacy of big, dark, fat hands, tough-skinned, kind-hearted, quick-witted, practically intelligent, and self-determined people.

Anchored in the heart of Ngāti Hine, this small town was also a stronghold for mātauranga Māori and the retention of te reo through the period of colonisation and assimilation that our country went through post-nativity or Waitangi. It's an unusual thing that happens to indigenous communities when colonised by the British. Two extreme social contexts occur at the same time, especially in small rural, isolated towns. The first is an extreme shift to the right, where families wholeheartedly orientate themselves around employment. That's part of the reason Moerewa was such an attraction for many families in the north. So many industries were polarised around a railway line as this was the lifeblood into the north and out to the many ports, including Whangārei and Auckland. So, you had communities and whānau that oriented themselves around mahi.

The other extreme social shift was where key whānau and hapū were trying to retain what little indigenous culture they could in this extremely confusing colonial experience. What did this look like? It looked like whānau going 'underground', having 'secret society'-type hui, referred to as 'blackouts'. These were led out by esteemed tohunga and practitioners. Despite legislation like the Tohunga Suppression Act of 1903, they continued to practise ancient learning styles and systems of whare wānanga. These people devoted themselves to continuing the sharing and innovation of traditional knowledge, histories, practices and skillsets despite the influence of assimilation into mainstream schools.

Make no mistake; this was not an easy way of life, and it often split whānau where the father was committed to maintaining mana motuhake and the mother wanted to assimilate their children so they would not have

to struggle through the Pākehā world. It was a ‘catch-22’ scenario for many families, including mine, who wanted their families and their children to succeed in a world that was rapidly changing in front of them. The desire was to succeed without compromising who they were or the legacy of their family, as well as the way of life that had given them their identity and sense of belonging.

As a Māori person who grew up away from my iwi, hapū and whānau, I find myself on a journey of reconnection. This journey is both deeply personal and profoundly communal. It involves not only reclaiming my language and cultural practices, but also understanding the historical and social contexts that have shaped our whānau and community.

Moerewa is more than just a town; it’s a symbol of resilience, adaptation, and the enduring spirit of our people. The stories of our ancestors, their struggles and triumphs, provide a foundation upon which we can build our future. In reconnecting with my roots, I am reminded of the importance of manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, and whanaungatanga — values that are central to our identity as Māori.

Through this process, I am learning to navigate the delicate balance between embracing modernity and honouring tradition. It’s about finding ways to integrate the old and the new — ensuring that our cultural heritage is not only preserved, but also revitalised and passed on to future generations.

As I delve deeper into my whakapapa and the stories of my ancestors, I am inspired by their strength and determination. Their legacy is a guiding light, showing us that, despite the challenges we face, we have the power to shape our destiny and create a future that honours our past and embraces our potential.

He kura, he kaumātua

In 1999, my parents made the bold decision to homeschool my sister and me. It was a decision driven by their observations of the mainstream school movement and the kura kaupapa movement. They felt that neither was providing the type of education they believed we needed.

They saw gaps in how te reo Māori and mātauranga tuku iho (ancestral knowledge) were being taught and shared. So, with their limited skills but fuelled by a profound dedication, they took it upon themselves to educate us at home.

My parents were not educators by profession, but they had an unwavering commitment to our learning. They sought to expose us to as much mātauranga tuku iho and as many kuia and koroua as possible. They understood the importance of learning directly from our elders, who were the living repositories of our culture and language. These experiences were invaluable, grounding us in our identity and preparing us for the world ahead.

Our home became a hub of learning, where the walls were adorned with whakataukī (proverbs) and kōrero (stories) that reminded us of our heritage. We learned the language not just from books, but through conversations with our elders, who shared their wisdom and stories. Our lessons were not confined to the house; they extended to the marae, the riverbanks, and the forests, where practical knowledge and traditional skills were passed down.

Our parents' decision to homeschool us was not without its challenges. Their decision required immense dedication and resourcefulness. They sought out experts in te reo Māori and mātauranga Māori, inviting them into our lives to teach us. These experts, our kuia and koroua, became our mentors, guiding us through the intricacies of our language and practices of everyday life. They taught us not only the words but the deeper meanings and connections to our whakapapa and whenua.

The influence of our kuia and koroua cannot be overstated. They were the keepers of our traditions, and their teachings were imbued with the wisdom of generations. Each visit from them was a journey into the past,

where stories of our ancestors came alive. They taught us the significance of our pepehā, the importance of our maunga (mountain), our awa, and our whakapapa. Through their stories, we learned who we were and where we came from.

These elders also taught us the values that are central to our identity as Māori. They instilled in us the principles of manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, ahikātanga, and whanaungatanga . They showed us how to live these values daily, emphasising the importance of community and our responsibility to care for each other and our environment.

Our homeschooling journey was about more than just academic learning. My parents believed that understanding our culture and language was essential to navigating the world ahead. They wanted us to be proud of who we were and confident in our ability to contribute to our whānau and community.

Through homeschooling, we developed a deep appreciation for our heritage and a strong sense of self. We learned to value our traditions and to see them as a source of strength and guidance. This unique educational path equipped us with the tools to face the challenges of the modern world while remaining connected to our roots.

Papa Wally

Papa Wally, my grandfather, my father's father, was an imperfect man by many accounts but never short of a handful of courage and a good dose of wisdom; and I loved that about him. He and my nana lived on the main road in Moerewa. The house was world-famous in Moerewa, well-known for showing manaakitanga to many whānau, not only throughout Moerewa but across the North and the country. Many of our whānau and whanaunga travelling home would always stop in Moerewa to see my grandparents on their way to their own kāinga.

I would have been no older than 14 when Papa Wally began teaching me about the deep intricacies of te reo Māori and testimony. One particular day, I was in his kitchen while he was listening to Te Karere on television. He was getting frustrated, having a rant, rumbling, and grumbling under his breath. The kōrero came from the TV:

"Kaore i arikarika ngā mihi ki a koe e hoa ...pūrangiaho... kokoraho... he aha rā te tikanga o ēnei kōrero. Boy...[he always called me that], kaua e pēnā rawa tō kōrero i te reo.... I have never ever heard those kupu in my life.... Kāhore he take o te kōrero i te reo ki te kore te tangata e mārama ki ōu kōrero. Me mōhio wawe te tangata ki te tikanga o ia kōrero, o ia kupu. I shouldn't have to read the subtitles to get the information out of my own language.... Wēnei tāngata kua haere ki te whare wānanga ki te ako i te reo, ka hahu noa i ngā kupu o te tikinare ka whakakōrerohia i runga i te kuare ki ngā tikanga me te mātāpuna o aua kupu. I never want to hear you talk like that, ok?!... kaua e pēnā."

"Me noho koe ki tō ake mātāpuna mātauranga, he mea heke mai i tō kāwai whakaheke. Ko ia kupu he kura, he wairua tōna, he kikokiko tōna, he wānanga kei roto e hono ai ki tōna Ao Tūroa. Ko mātou ngā ahikā o te wā kāinga, ngā kaipupuri o aua kōrero tuku iho nā ō hikātanga ake i rangahaua. Koira te ia o tōna māramatanga. Kia whai whakapapa ō pūkenga, ō mōhio me ō mātau ki te puna mātauranga o tōu mātāpuna māramatanga, o tōu hikātanga. Ko te nuinga o ngā tangata kōrero Māori o ēnei rā he ngutu kākā, kua whāngai ki ngā kupu Māori engari kāhore he wairua tō ngā kupu. Ko ngā kupu Māori he kākahu noa iho mō ngā whakaaro Pākehā."

That event sparked a profound lesson and deep dive into our mātauranga Māori. Papa Wally taught me about what I've recently come to understand as the tikanga or the tikanga whakaaro of te reo Māori kei ia kupu. This is not only the words of our ancestors, but also the context in which they lived and the practices in the tangible world that those contexts and meanings occupy. Understanding these nuances is essential.

When people today are taught te reo, they often learn it based on the principle of translation. For example, this kupu 'rākau' is the Māori word for 'tree'. But, this assumes that English and te reo view the world from the same viewpoint, which, according to my grandfather, they do not. To him, it had a deeper meaning: "It was the process of how the 'ka' or energy from te 'rā' or the sun was harnessed here on the whenua." Within the kupu held the integrity and function of the tree's capability and

contribution to our world. He wasn't wrong. What he was educating me on was the intellectual capacity of our reo, our reo ā hapū, and our reo ā whānau, to mould our identity, shape our thinking, and influence our behaviour, provided we are educated to the true meanings and the true contextualisation and nuances from within the perspective of our own whānau collective viewpoint.

I didn't realise it at the time, but Papa Wally was introducing me to the awareness of speaking te reo Māori and comprehending the world from the perspective of my ancestors. There's a big difference here, and not everybody has access to that side of whānau and hapū-oriented mātauranga. This is about protecting the authenticity of whānau and hapū mātauranga and mana motuhake at a grassroots level.

Most people learn words within our language, but learning the words without the original context over time starts to change the meaning of the words. So 'rākau', which used to be understood as "the process of how the 'ka' or energy from the 'rā' or sun was harnessed here on the whenua", has been reduced to 'tree'. With it, the context within our language starts to slip in its intellectual integrity. Suddenly, one generation becomes a little more kūare than the last. The meanings start to change, and we find ourselves speaking a different language to our ancestors, even though we're using the same sounds. What they end up meaning is that we have lost the underpinnings of the understandings of our language. This was one of the key taonga that Papa Wally wished to share with me so I would never lose this.

He asked me, "Kua mārama?" I replied, "Aaahhuuuaaaa?" He sighed, "Ahhh, come on then, me haere tāua ki te kotiti!"

We got into his old blue farm truck, his kuri named "Found" on the tray, and off we went for a ride. We drove up Otiria Road, past the Otiria Marae, past Te Rito Marae, and up towards Papa Tama's farm. Papa Tama was my papa's younger brother who lived on and worked our Whiu whānau farm. I got excited as we got closer because I loved visiting Papa Tama. He had a huge māra mahinga kai, and there was always fresh kai. His wife, Nanny Peri, always had a stash of kānga wai for my dad and me. We kept driving, passing the farm, turning a sharp corner, and heading up the hill towards Ngāpipito Road. We drove past the old homestead of the Simeon and Brown whānau, known as the Ponderosa, and carried on along the straight before turning off into the Maungarangi Urupā carpark. Papa Wally parked the truck and said, "Haere mai, me piki tāua ki runga ki tō tūpuna."

Tūpuna whakarere mokopuna

Looking back, this was my favourite lesson from Papa Wally — a lesson about how te reo is a cipher and a bridge to understanding Te Ao Tūroa. We climbed the steep hill, passing many whānau plots, and stopped at my great-grandfather's headstone, his dad. Papa Wally sat down on the concrete slab in front of his father's headstone, then turned to me and gestured for me to sit beside him by tapping the ground.

As I sat, I cast my eyes across the valley. It was a beautiful day, with a clear blue sky and the sun lighting up the land as far as the eye could see. Te maunga tapu Pouerua stood as our backdrop, shadowing over our whānau roto of Ōwhareiti. It was such a peaceful moment. He didn't say anything for a while, breaking the silence eventually.

> "E moko, e mōhio ana koe i te tikanga o tēnei kupu te mokopuna?" I replied, "Āe.... I naively replied, ko au tō mokopuna."

"Ahh... Tēnā, homai tō ringa?" he asked, extending his hand to mirror mine. He pointed to all the finger and palm prints on his hand, then pointed to the exact same prints on mine — the same crevices, the same shaped fingers, the same hand wrinkles, the same shaped knuckles.

> "Titiro mai. Do you know why we have the same traits and skin prints on our hands even though we are different people?" I replied, "Kao."
>
> "I te mea, he moko koe nāku. You see? Ā, he moko hoki tāua nāna," he said, pointing to his father's headstone.

He scanned the entire valley with his arms and said, "Titiro atu ki runga rā ki te riu o Ōrauta, ko tō tāua nei rite, he rite pono nei, e pērā ana ki te puna i Tereawatea e whāngai ana i te roto o Owhareiti, i te rere o Otiria, ko Otiria te moko o taua puna. Heke iho ki te ara o Kawakawa, heke iho ki Taumarere, puta rawa atu ki te whanga o Ōpua."

"If you look up the valley," — he pointed towards the Ōrauta valley where one of our awa was — " the same way that the wai flows from Tereawatea into Owhareiti, into Otiria, then from Otiria into Kawakawa,

into Taumarere, all the way into Ōpua, that is the same way that the kāwai heke flows from your tūpuna to me, to your father, to you. I am the spring from which you have flowed, and I am a moko of my tūpuna. As he was telling me this, he gestured the sequence of source springs feeding into the following river, and then gestured from his father to him, then to me, ending by placing his hand on my chest.

> "Koia nei te tapu o tēnei kupu...it doesn't just mean grandson; it means so much more. It is the relationship we share. Koira ko te mokopuna..."

It clicked — I realised he was using the connection of our awa to explain his connection to me. He talked about how we, as tangata (at least in principle in our whānau), are meant to live our lives together with the same tikanga we see in Te Ao Tūroa. This is the nature of where our kupu and our reo have come from. Our perspective in terms of reo and identity is born from our wā kāinga.

Grasping the connection — between the puna wairere, the puna whakapapa we had, and the puna mātauranga — revealed that they all had the continuity of being born from the same source point, the same place — our kāinga. We are, and must continue to be, a wai whakaata — a reflection of our whakapapa, our mātāpuna, our wā kāinga, and Te Ao Tūroa.

As we sat by my great-grandfather's grave, Papa Wally gestured to me and asked, "Do you understand the concept of puna, mokopuna, tūpuna, and mātāpuna now?"

These are terms with symbolic meanings, but what he was trying to teach me is that their origin point is in the natural world. He proceeded to tell me that the reason our ancestors refer to ourselves and our relationships through the metaphor of a puna is that we are an imprint, a moko, a copy, and a reflection of our ancestors. I am the spring from which you have flowed and I am a moko of my tūpuna, and we both are a moko of our mātāpuna.

Little moments can change the course of your life because they awaken a māramatanga (enlightenment) inside of you that wasn't there before. This was one of those moments for me. Papa Wally's lesson wasn't only about understanding the concept of mokopuna; it was about seeing and living the connection between our whakapapa, our language, and our identity.

It was about understanding that our reo and our tikanga are deeply intertwined with Te Ao Tūroa; and, through this understanding, we honour our past and ensure the continuity of our cultural heritage.

Papa Moonshine

The story I am about to share is a treasured recollection of how I learned about te mauri o te wai from one of my grand uncles — an extraordinary man named Morris Brown, known affectionately as Papa Moonshine. A practitioner of many skills, he was a kind man wholeheartedly dedicated to the occupation of our whenua and the protection of our taiao here in Ngāti Hine. His nickname, Moonshine, came from his striking appearance — his face and big green eyes were said to shine so brightly on a clear night that they could eclipse the moon.

Papa Moonshine was a man of many talents. One of his most well-known roles was as a kaikeri poka or grave digger. He was someone who understood how to work the soil and manage the urupā. But this was just one facet of his life. He was also a professional hunter and culler, travelling from Te Rerenga Wairua to Rakiura and everywhere in between, hunting and culling pest animals like wallabies, possums, red deer, white-tailed deer, tahr and chamois. If it moved, he'd probably shot it.

One day, I was at home when the phone rang. A deep, booming voice came through the receiver, "Kia ora, boy, it's Papa Morris, Morris Brown. Is your dad there?" I replied, "No, Papa, not yet. He's still at mahi." He responded, "Okay, then you tell him to give me a ring when he gets home, and tell him that everything is ready for our mahi apōpō at the roto, okay?" "Okay," I replied, "see you tomorrow." My dad and I were planning to meet Uncle Moonshine to prepare for the duck shooting season. We would meet him at his place up Ngāpipito Road and then head out to the lake.

When we arrived at Papa Moonshine's place, he was already on his quad bike, ready to take us down the road and through the Brown's farm to get to the shores of Lake Ōwhareiti. We passed the Simeon homestead,

known as the Ponderosa, a couple of farms over from our own Whiu whānau farm, where my grandfather's brother lived and worked.

As we came over the ridge and started descending towards the lake, I spotted an old dinghy waiting in the bushes of wiwi grass, just off the edge of the water. In our quad was a barn full of my father's decoy fake ducks, ready to be set up for the fast-approaching shooting season. We had three tasks that day: first, to get in the dinghy and paddle out to the other side of the island where Uncle Mooney had designated a spot for us to create the foundation for our maimai hut; second, to place all the decoys and start positioning them for the shooting season; and third, to set the hīnaki.

We got on the boat, an aluminium dinghy, with Papa Moonshine and me paddling. The afternoon sun was catching the water as he faced me, looking up the Ōrauta Valley. Towering over his shoulder was the majestic Pouerua maunga. As we paddled, he began to talk about a lesson his grandmother had taught him.

"You know, boy, this place is a beautiful place. It's a special place, and it's our place. We belong to it. The key to this entire place starts up there," he pointed up the Ōrauta Valley. "It comes out of the Ōrauta stream, makes its way down the valley, finds its way into the roto of Ōwhareiti. Back in the tūpuna's time, before all the farming, there used to be all these repo in this takiwā. The water would then find its way into the Otiria River."

He continued:

> "See, the water is what makes this place live. It's what makes us live. Its job is to carry life. Without that water flowing and carrying life, from point to point, from place to place, from being to being, we don't have life, and we don't have kai. We don't have the things that feed us, that give our lives meaning as hau kāinga and ahikā. We don't have wāhi tapu like this lake. We don't have mahinga kai. We don't have tikanga. We don't have any of the things that make our Māori world relevant. Protecting water is protecting life. And that's what being a tangata whenua and kaitiaki is all about. That's our role here in Ngāti Te Ara and Ngāti Kopaki. This place is ours, and we belong to it. It's our duty to keep it alive. We cannot say we come from here with pride if this place isn't living."
>
> "Ko te wai te kai kawe o te ora. That is the process of māuri. Don't let

anybody tell you different because without it, the environment doesn't come to life. It stays stagnant or it stays barren and dies. Anyway, time to get up now; we have mahi to do."

We reached the shore, and he had already transported timber to our designated area to start the hut foundations. My job was to hammer the stakes into the ground, while he started to fix them using nails, screws, and creating planks so we could walk around. After setting up the foundation, we set the hīnaki and he told stories about the rich eel population in Ōwhareiti. He explained how the eels were once abundant and enormous, and how our whānau used to fish them out of the lake.

As we paddled back, I sat quietly, taking in everything he had taught me that day. I didn't fully understand the depth of his teachings at the time, but I felt privileged to have spent that moment with him. We were practising tikanga and kaitiakitanga, and I felt honoured that he had shared his kōrero with me. Those learnings resonated with me and stayed with me, forming the basis of my relationship with the taiao.

These experiences with Papa Moonshine were more than tasks; they were lessons in life, culture, and identity. He was a living repository of mātauranga Māori, sharing his knowledge and skills generously. His teachings were deeply rooted in our whenua, and his stories connected us to our ancestors and their ways of life.

Papa Moonshine's lessons extended beyond hunting and culling. He taught us about the importance of kaitiakitanga — guardianship of our environment. He showed us how to live in harmony with the land, respecting and protecting it for future generations. His dedication to our whenua and taiao was a testament to his role as a true kaitiaki.

As I look back on those days, I realise the profound impact Papa Moonshine had on my understanding of our culture and my sense of identity. His teachings were a bridge to our past, a guide to our present, and a legacy for our future. Through his eyes, I saw the world in a new light, understanding the deep connections between our language, our land, and our people.

The legacy of being good tūpuna

The lessons imparted by Papa Wally and Papa Moonshine are treasures that have profoundly shaped my understanding of the world and my place within it. These stories, rich with wisdom and cultural heritage, serve as a bridge between our past and present, guiding us towards a future where our identity remains strong and vibrant. In their role as tūpuna, they have demonstrated what it means to be good mokopuna by laying the foundation for future generations to uphold and strengthen our mana motuhake.

From Papa Wally, I learned that te reo Māori is not merely a language; it is a vessel carrying the depth of our ancestors' wisdom and worldview. His teachings about the true meanings of our kupu highlighted the importance of context and tradition in preserving the integrity of our language. By understanding the deeper significance of words like "mokopuna", we reconnect with the natural world and our ancestral heritage, ensuring that our language remains a living, breathing part of our identity. By sharing this taonga, Papa Wally ensured that the essence of our whānau and hapū remains intact and vibrant, securing our cultural legacy for future generations.

Papa Moonshine's lessons about the interconnectedness of water, life, and kaitiakitanga underscored the vital role of guardianship in our culture. His stories about the importance of protecting our waterways and the mauri they carry emphasised that our wellbeing is intrinsically linked to the health of our environment. As kaitiaki, it is our responsibility to preserve these life-giving resources for future generations, ensuring that our whenua remains a source of sustenance and identity. By practising kaitiakitanga, we honour the legacy of our tūpuna and safeguard the future for our mokopuna.

Both grandfathers taught me the profound significance of whakapapa. Papa Wally's metaphor of the kāwai heke and the flow of water through the valleys illustrated how our connections to our ancestors shape who we are. We are imprints of those who came before us, carrying their wisdom, values and traditions. This continuity is a reminder that we are part of a larger story — one that stretches back through time and extends forward

into the future. By maintaining our ahikā, we keep the fires of our heritage burning, ensuring that our cultural practices remain a living part of our daily lives.

These stories are more than just personal memories; they are reflections of the values and principles that define us as Māori. They remind us of the importance of manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, and the preservation of our mātauranga. By honouring these teachings, we ensure that our cultural heritage remains a cornerstone of our identity, guiding us in our daily lives and in our relationships with others. Papa Wally and Papa Moonshine have shown us that being good tūpuna means being good mokopuna, committed to passing down our taonga and practices with integrity and love.

As I reflect on the wisdom shared by Papa Wally and Papa Moonshine, I am reminded of our duty to carry these lessons forward. It is up to us to ensure that the next generation understands the importance of our language, our environment, and our connections to each other and our ancestors. By doing so, we uphold the legacy of our tūpuna and strengthen the bonds that unite us as a people. Practising our cultural traditions and maintaining our ahikā are key to sustaining our mana motuhake.

In conclusion, the stories from my grandfathers are not only tales of the past; they are living lessons that continue to shape our present and future. Such stories teach us that by embracing our language, protecting our environment, and honouring our whakapapa, we can navigate the challenges of today while staying true to our cultural roots. The lessons from my grandfathers are a testament to the enduring strength of our heritage and the unbreakable bonds of our whānau. Through their guidance, they have enabled another generation of hopeful tūpuna, ensuring that the authenticity and identity of our local whānau and hapū remain vibrant and strong.

WAIMĀNGARO

Stories of connection to wai

TE AO TŪROA