

# Te Arawa Ruku Ora

A Hapū & Iwi led Covid-19 Kaupapa

Activating a legacy workforce



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**Ruku Ora is a unique Te Arawa-designed model of care based on shared whakapapa and dedicated to the ongoing preservation of that whakapapa. Tukua mai ki a piri, Tukua mai ki a tata is the famous call to action to all Te Arawa to bind together and support one another in times of emergency and peril. The Covid-19 pandemic was an emergency where the whakapapa of Te Arawa was threatened by an unseen enemy.**

Te Arawa Ruku Ora was established under the umbrella of Te Rōpu Hauora o Te Arawa, the iwi relationship partner to the Lakes District Health Board. It was designed to build hapū/iwi capability to deliver clinical and manaaki support to whānau during the Covid-19 pandemic.

With targeted resourcing, hapū/iwi can relieve pressure in the system, and bolster health provider organisations by quickly caring for whānau across the rohe. Not only was it the mission of Ruku Ora to ensure no-one fell through

the gaps, but it was also critical that whānau were supported with manaaki and aroha consistent with Te Arawa tikanga.

Ruku Ora focused on leveraging the strengths of hapū/iwi to ensure community involvement in health planning and delivery. It is strength-based, innovative and future-focused. It is also sustainable, as it can continually draw, through whakapapa, new recruits and hungatiaki (guardians and caregivers), to step up and take the place of others.

Te Rōpu Hauora's role as an enabler was critical to Ruku Ora fulfilling its purpose and intent. We tried to remove all the roadblocks and barriers so that hapū/iwi could achieve what they were setting out to do. When we connect resources and critical decision-making authority to hapū/iwi who are already driving kaupapa underpinned by their own aspirations and moemoeā, then we are effectively supporting Māori success and community wellness.

Communities are dynamic, so the solutions also need to be dynamic in nature.

We've been used to contracts that have been prescribed for us, that are designed to deliver on someone else's priorities and that's not the future we want because we have seen the limitations of a one size fits all approach.

Ruku Ora showed us we can be intentional without being prescriptive and targeted without restriction.

As a successful Tiriti-partnership model that is premised on hapū empowerment, Ruku Ora could support some big shifts in the current health system. As a workforce development approach that also enhances and nurtures tribal leadership and builds whānau capacities, Ruku Ora interns in the community, not in institutions.

We warmly acknowledge all hapū/iwi, marae, and tribal leadership, hungatiaki, kaimahi and whānau, who contributed to the rollout of

Te Arawa Ruku Ora. This report is dedicated to all of you, in celebration of your efforts.

We thank too, all the funders, ministries, providers, and partners who helped Ruku Ora to take flight.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa. Tū mai Te Arawa, mo te oranga o te iwi.

*Jenny Kaka-Scott & Aroha Morgan*

*Co-Chairs, Te Rōpu Hauora o Te Arawa.*

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# RARANGI UPOKO

**Te Arawa Ruku Ora**  
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# Ko wai rā

Ko wai rā, te tangata nei,  
Ko wai, ko Tū pea, ko Rongo pea,  
Aku mataara, tāhia te kii tāhia te wānanga,  
He aro mākite, he aro māwhiti,  
Ko māwhiti kura, ko māwhiti awa,  
Ko te wehi ki te whare,  
He whare mātahi, e hui te rangiora  
E tū ake nei ki runga,  
Uhi, wero, tau mai te mauri  
Haumi e, hui e, taiki e.

Ko Te Arawa te waka,  
Ko Ngatoroirangi te ariki ihorei  
Ko Tamatekapua te tangata o runga  
Mai Maketu ki Tongariro,  
Tukua mai kia piri, tukua mai kia tata!

**Nau mai te hunga tiroiro,  
pānuitia mai ngā kupu i  
tēnei pūrongo, kia kite rānei  
i te hua o roto, hai whaktere  
i wō wawatatanga, mā te  
māramatanga o ngā tūpuna i te  
wāhi ngaro. Kotahi tonu te rākau  
māramatanga, ka peka, ka peka,  
kia pūawai tō tū i te ao nei, kia  
tere ai tōu waka ki te ao mārama  
te tū nei ki mua i a tātau.**

He kupu wēnei, hai whakatore i te  
Waka-o-te-ora kia ū ai ki te tauranga, e  
rere nei te kupu, e te iwi kia ora,  
Turuki, paneke, te ihu o te waka,  
Te Arawa e! E koko i a, e hika e ... tau!

# NGĀTI HURUNGA TE RANGI

**Ngāti Hurunga te Rangi has the resources to ensure whānau can hold tangihanga from home, should anything prevent them from taking place at the marae.**

Ngāti Hurunga te Rangi Marae Committee chair, Liz Te Aonui, says the iwi had a number of tangihanga during Covid, however its marae (Apumoana, Hurungaterangi, Hinemihi) were closed.

“We don’t lend anything from the marae to whānau, so our whānau who are not financially well-off had to come together to find a way to manage their tūpāpaku at home. It was a real struggle for some of them,” she says.

“When the Ruku Ora funding became available, the first thing our young ones said was, ‘why don’t we use the money to get us some stuff so we don’t have to rely on everyone within the village?’”

The committee worked through the logistics, such as where the equipment would be held, who would administer it, and allocated tasks for members, including sourcing quotes. They settled on purchasing a 40ft container for storage, 10 mattresses, 20 pillows, tables, chairs, three large pots, an urn, and first aid kits. The shipping container is permanently located at Hurungaterangi Marae.

“We allocated money to a whānau member, Robert Williams, who is a registered builder to construct the internal fit-out. We also had a whole lot of wooden forms but most were unstable so he repaired them and we ended up with 20 forms for seating.

“Our second highest-priced purchase was a large marquee with the Hurungaterangi logo. We envisaged it down a driveway where whānau could eat and cook. We have two smaller gazebos

from Te Arawa Lakes Trust, which we can use as a wharepuni to create an area where whānau can receive manuhiri who want to pay their respects. That was our vision.

“We are very clear though that this is a hand-up, not a handout. We can’t supply everything but we will supply the things people need most,” says Liz.

One of the first users of the tangihanga resources was a cousin whose wife had passed away. They chose to have her at home but didn’t have any mattresses. While he knew the marae didn’t lend its mattresses, he reached out for help.

“Sourcing mattresses had been a big issue for us in Ngāpuna. Whānau were going to different houses to borrow a couple here, there, and everywhere, so that was one of our high priorities.

“We now have nice plastic-coated mattresses and I was able to say to my cousin, ‘yes, how many do you need? I’ve also got pots, an urn, pillows, tables and chairs.’ We delivered everything they needed and the whānau was so grateful. But we felt good to be able to help our own whānau.

“We don’t put a cost on anything but we receive koha which is good,” says Liz.

The koha is deposited into the marae Covid response bank account and used to purchase further tangihanga supplies for whānau.

“It’s something I believe is tangible for everyone to use during their time of need. While we came through Covid relatively unscathed, we had two kaumātua in their 70s who passed away. They weathered the Covid storm but were elderly and their time had come. They chose to stay at home and we were able to support their wish as opposed to coming to the marae. It makes us feel like we did right by that funding. We have to be

held accountable for how we spend that money. Not just to the funder, but to our own whānau.”

A health day which included information about the Ruku Ora funding was also held at the marae. Local Māori health and service providers, including Korowai Aroha, Te Utuhina Manaakitanga Trust, and Te Arawa Whānau Ora, supported the event and provided cardiovascular screenings, flu vaccinations, immunisations, drug and alcohol kōrero, rongoā demonstrations, and bouncy castles for the tamariki.

“Through the CVA (stroke) screening, six people were identified as red alerts. Three were borderline diabetic and two of our kuia were very unwell but hadn’t had flu vaxes. They hadn’t seen their GPs because during Covid you couldn’t enter the clinic. Instead, you had to make an appointment and then wait outside in the carpark. They were already sick so never went.

“The whānau of those individuals were spoken to by the nursing staff and they were strongly encouraged to go and see their GPs. For me, that was a really big benefit in bringing that to Ngāpuna for our people. The marae is a safe and non-threatening environment where everyone feels welcome.”

On reflection, Liz says she’s proud of what the organising committee has achieved because it’s a sensitive area to work within.

“The hard thing is marae just don’t give things out to whānau who choose to keep their tūpāpaku at home – and for valid reasons too. But for us, we’ve moved a few steps ahead and our whānau are fortunate we have this resource.

“People may say you’re doing the marae out of money. No, we’re not doing the marae out of money because it’s a personal choice to stay home. They’d be staying at home even if we didn’t have these resources. We’re just in a better space to help them stay at home more comfortably.

“I believe this was the best way to go because it benefits everybody in their hour of need and will be here for years to come. It’s something positive in light of Covid because Covid was not positive. In fact, it was a real downer for a lot of people and

caused a divide amongst a lot of people in our village – those who chose to be vaxed and those who chose not to be vaxed. Everyone has a right to choose what’s right for themselves.

“These resources are for everybody, regardless of what their choice was. Slowly bridges will be mended and we’ll move forward in a positive way. And should anything else happen, we won’t be caught on the back foot again,” says Liz.





# NGĀTI KEA NGĀTI TUARA

## **Uplifting the spiritual and mental wellbeing of its people was the focus of Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuarā's Ruku Ora funding.**

Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuarā representative, Hemi Waerea, says they had provided a lot of support to the hapū during Covid through external funding. So, when the Ruku Ora funding was distributed the hapū re-established its core group, Ngā Pou Whirinaki o Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuarā, which supported them through the first two years of Covid.

"Ruku Ora gave us the opportunity to rethink our strategies on how we were going to support our people this time around. We decided to hold a hauora day at Keroa Marae, which was grounded on Te Whare Tapa Whā, ensuring all four taha are secure, in particular wairua," says Hemi.

"At the same time, we planned a Matariki wānanga and combined the two events. It meant those from outside of town didn't have to return for the second kaupapa and could stay at the marae and get to know the hapū."

Hemi says the Matariki wānanga was a great opportunity for the hapū to learn about Matariki and te ao Māori, and to refuel the wairua. A hautapu ceremony was held at Horohoro for the first time in centuries on Te Oha, a small maunga next to Te Horohoroinga o ngā ringa o Kahumatamomoe maunga.

"We walked up the mountain at 5am for the dawn ceremony. It took our kōeke half an hour to walk up but they were determined to do it, even though we offered to drive them up. People had been split into groups the night before and responsible for setting up the hautapu, kai, chairs on the maunga for our kaumatua, and fire pits to keep us warm because it was freezing out there," he says.

Hemi says the main focus of the hauora day was about reconnecting and rekindling bonds because they had not seen each other for a long time due to the Covid lockdowns. Workshops were held at Horohoro School for the tamariki, where they enjoyed activities, arts and crafts, competitions, and online games. The Ruku Ora clinical team set up in the wharenuī and provided clinical tests, immunisations and hauora checks, focusing on te taha wairua, taha hinengaro, taha wairua and te taha whānau, while at the other end of the marae were activities and incentives.

He says it was good to have our hauora day at the marae and our tamariki mokopuna playing together at the kura.

"We always have to go to a doctor or clinic, but we need to think about how hapū and marae can also provide a safe space for clinical and hauora check-ups where our tamariki and kaumatua feel more at home and share more freely than in a doctor's surgery or hospital. We saw a lot of people who didn't want to have the hauora checks, but they did when they were around the whānau – and they loved it. They came out with a new outlook on what they should be doing."

Hemi says they had a little bit of money left over from the Matariki wānanga and hauora day, so they continued to support whānau still trying to find their feet and make ends meet, especially in the kai space.

"We had purchased freezers with other pūtea and were able to fill them with essentials. It's something we can offer them on the fly if they need, along with dry food items, and cleaning and personal hygiene products. Some of the reasoning around that was a lot of our whānau had been rejected from MSD. Regardless, if you need kai, you need kai.



NKNT kōeke, Haeata & Jimmy Bray, were first to come to the vac clinic at Tarewa Marae.

"So today, we have a Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuarā pātaka kai where if you need more kai on your table, we can help with that. The long-term vision is that we'll always have kai. We'll be sovereign again in the kai space. But we're grateful the Ruku Ora funding has allowed us to deal with the short-term issues we have, like many hapū and iwi across the motu.

Hapū representative, Jenny Kaka-Scott, says there is an alignment between the Ruku Ora approach and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuarā's strategic plan, Paerangi 2050.

"Paerangi is the tribal blueprint for cultural, social, and economic advancement for Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuarā. One of the meanings of the word 'paerangi' is horizon. But another meaning is, Te Taumata o te Tangata, which means, 'person in their prime with their leadership qualities fully apparent'. If you look at the intent of Ruku Ora, it's to build capability amongst hapū so that everybody flourishes or comes into their prime; and that leadership qualities that are inherent in the hapū are supported and activated.

"There's a really big alignment between the intent of Ruku Ora, which is not to do for hapū, but to give hapū resources and a platform within which they'll develop their unique response to the needs of the hapū. It's not about the Rūnanga 'doing for'. It's about being able to create opportunities, so that people build their own capability," says Jenny.

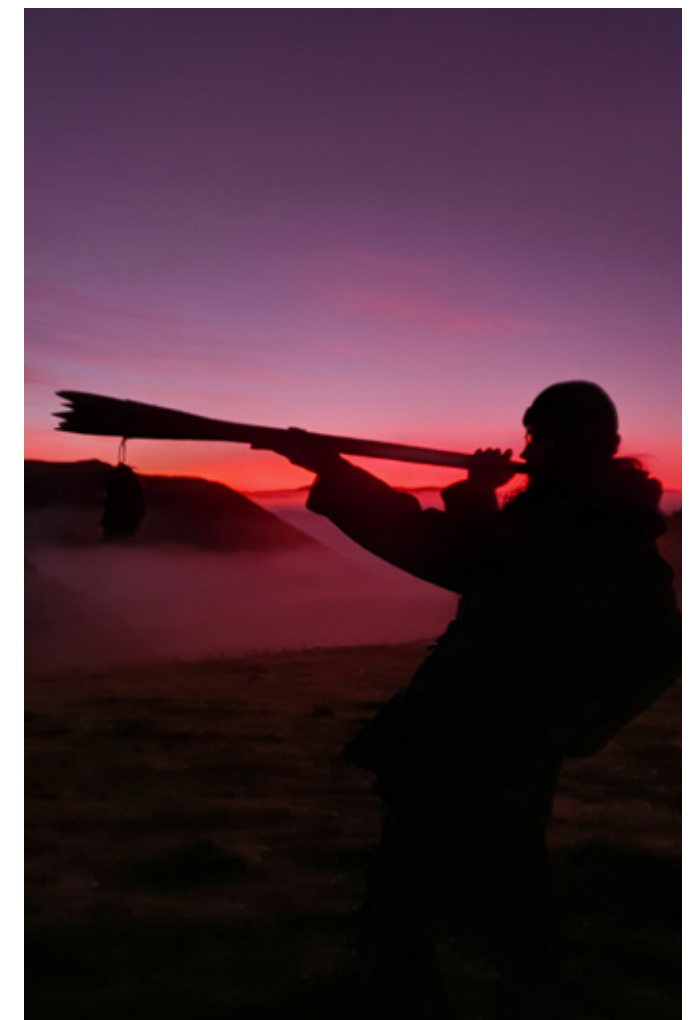
Jenny agrees that Ruku Ora is effective in terms of enabling hapū to deliver short-term response.

If Paerangi is the map towards mana motuhake for Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuarā and fulfilling our deep need to express our own self-determination, then Ruku Ora is a perfect fit to that aspiration. Ruku Ora is government funding and comes with

broad parameters. But inside of that, the hapū can paint their own picture of their future.

We got engagement at the marae and through these kaupapa to a far greater degree than we'd ever get sending our people somewhere else.

"If the end game is to have healthy, wealthy, prosperous people, then we have to do things really differently. And it's pretty clear the whole, 'go to the ministry, go to the agency thing' is not working," says Jenny.





# NGĀTI MĀKINO

Ngāti Māhino utilised its Ruku Ora funding to deliver a hauora day which resulted in life-changing results for a number of kōeke with hearing difficulties.

Ngāti Māhino Iwi Authority trustee, Cheryl Stephens, says while they had grandiose ideas on how to spend the funding, the short turnaround time to put forward their proposal curbed those thoughts. However, the whānau hauora day coincided with their hapū settlement commemoration, which provided a well-timed opportunity to celebrate being Ngāti Māhino.

The entire day was free, including kai, ice creams and a bouncy castle for the kids, along with examinations and information on hearing, bowel screening, Covid and flu vaccinations, and each whānau received a wellness pack.

Cheryl says the iwi authority utilised a lot of hauora providers from Ngāti Māhino who already service whānau in the Ngāti Māhino rohe.

“While the majority of our whānau live in Rotorua or elsewhere, our providers on the coast already work with us strategically, through the provision of hauora and clinical services. They come to Ōtamarākau Marae frequently to run various strategic kaupapa,” she says.

Kōeke were encouraged to get their hearing tested in the lead-up to signing a collaboration with Triton Hearing.

“The audiologists tested for ear wax during the day, as people can’t get their hearing tested unless their ears are clean first.

“I took a whānau member to get his ears checked. His ears needed cleaning because the wax blocked his hearing ability, and the testing revealed that hearing aids would improve his hearing.

He’s a speaker on our paepae so it’s important that he can hear the kōrero and respond appropriately.

“We have a formal signed relationship with Triton Hearing and encourage other iwi groups to do the same. People with hearing aids are amazed at what they’re hearing. Our kōeke don’t want to be fussed over or bother people so they’ve just put up with their hearing loss. The Triton Hearing collaboration has been a real eye-opener for them,” says Cheryl.

The arrangement with Triton Hearing is Ngāti Māhino provides kōeke with a \$1,000 health grant if they need hearing aids.



Triton Hearing and ACC will cover the rest, up to \$4,500.

“We’ve allowed 30 recipients in our grant process for hearing tests. If they then need hearing aids, there’s a dollar value Ngāti Māhino and Triton Hearing will contribute, and then ACC will pay some, which brings it all together.

“We’ve seen the monitor and the information they’ve provided us, and the hearing loss of our kōeke was quite high. If they’re on the paepae or doing iwi activities and they’re a long way from the people, exacerbated by the noise around them, it really affects their hearing.

“The relationship with Triton has been awesome, and their technology is outstanding. Some of the kōeke have chosen to have their hearing aids connected to the phone so they can hear it ring through the hearing aid. It’s been life-changing for them, as they have a greater ability to perform their everyday tasks and hear people speak.

She says the hauora day aligned with one of the hapū’s main strategies, Te Reo Māhino.

“Our cultural revitalisation focus is around our whānau and the taiao. Staff from our environment team were able to update whānau on the riparian restoration work they’re doing. While some of our tertiary grant recipients in the environment space gave some feedback on how the grants assisted them during their studies, and

the employment opportunities they received as a spin-off of those grants. These are all the strategic elements we were able to cover from the hauora day.”

Cheryl says they have received really good feedback from whānau. The iwi authority’s comms and website have improved, and the ongoing liaison with kōeke has increased, in terms of giving them a phone call and making sure they’re all right.

“Since then, whānau have become more engaged in coming to the hui. We had a series of eight sessions around decolonising kaupapa at Ōtamarākau Marae and had good numbers. Lots of people want to know about whakapapa now. We’ve been inundated with new registrations and have a whakapapa committee that vets them.

“The flow-on effect of the hauora day is a history project we’re currently doing based on our settlement process; resources are being developed for our kura; we’ve still got the care packs available, and probably making them more available as a result of working with Poutiri Trust.

“Some of the whānau from outside of the Bay of Plenty have started to interact with us by phone or email, which has given some impetus to our te reo wānanga. The hauora day has really just given people the ability to interact and talk about the kaupapa of being Ngāti Māhino,” says Cheryl.





# NGĀTI NGĀRARARUI

## Following years of disconnect due to Covid, the wairua of Ngāti Ngārararui is now soaring.

Hapū representative, Ana Te Whata, said the Ruku Ora funding provided an awesome opportunity to re-engage with the people in meaningful ways, while empowering a sustainable future.

She says half of the Ruku Ora funding was allocated to grocery vouchers which were disseminated to whānau who needed an injection of kai in their whare. However, it also provided an insight on the lived realities of its people.

“One of the gems that came out of the voucher distribution was we simultaneously carried out a survey for our whānau to complete. It gave our hapū important data to help us going forward from right across the spectrum, from our babies right through to our kōkeke.

“We captured 285 families and that’s a big scale for us. We’ve never had that kind of data before. We hit all our big whānau who have more than 10 people living in one dwelling. We provided just one food voucher per home so when you put those numbers together that’s a lot of homes in a short period who benefited from that funding,” says Ana.

Ruku Ora pūtea was also targeted across two Covid response kaupapa, including the purchase of tangihanga equipment and re-stocking the marae storeroom.

“We were still in the early stages of our people returning to our marae, as many were having tangihanga in their own whare during isolation. We purchased equipment, such as cutlery and crockery, to support that hui.

“It’s changed slightly since then, where equipment will go out to homes if they’re having their tūpāpaku at home for one night. However, we’re

also encouraging them to return to the marae, even though we’ll continue to support our tūpāpaku at home. We’re promoting wānanga and other services and events to encourage our people back to the marae, and that’s been positive,” says Ana.

With the marae providing whānau with resources from its storeroom during the Covid isolation, the funding also helped replenish and upgrade storeroom supplies.

“We improved the stock in our storeroom so it could cope with the capacity of 300-plus people at our marae during tangihanga and other events going forward. The smiles on the faces of our people have been gratifying. We haven’t had to sell raffles to action our Covid response, and we’ve been able to provide resources that will be of assistance for all our people,” says Ana.

With the remaining funding, the hapū was keen to establish a maara kai near the marae. Ana says the interest from Ngāti Ngārararui has been amazing, and the numbers continue to grow.



“The maara’s not only bringing our people home but reconnecting our whānau. That’s the big one. It’s opened a kūaha for all our whānau who’ve always wanted to be involved in the marae but were too whakamā.

“The overall value of the Ruku Ora funding has been more than monetary. It has raised a lot of wairua, and more relationships have been formed. Our communication has also gotten a lot better because we struggled during Covid. It was quite unnerving for our people, and everything went up in the air.”

Moving forward, Ana says they are now looking into sustainability and seeking other avenues of funding to improve other areas, such as kainga ora.

“Through this process we’ve learned that we have whānau with multitudes living in their home – up to 13 in some cases. We’d like to source funding to redevelop their whare to make them more inhabitable because one toilet doesn’t cut it for 12 to 13 people. We’re not looking at new kainga at this stage. Upkeeping the old kainga that our

people own and making them better for the whānau is the current focus,” says Ana.

The hapū ran a number of events and worked alongside various Te Arawa health services to bring people back to the marae.

“We’re wearing a lot of different hats to bring various concepts to life. We’re recalibrating our whānau support and providing mentors, so our people have the skills to navigate difficult situations. From dealing with government agencies to creating wills and looking after our kōkeke and tamariki, a whole lot of positivity and empowerment has come out of this.

“We’re very appreciative of Ruku Ora and the team who put in the hard yards to get us that pūtea. They’ve done a magnificent job. The wairua of our people has lifted and the connection among whānau who have been disconnected for four years is now really positive. Whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, tiakitanga – it all applies to us,” says Ana.





# NGĀTI PIKIAO

## Providing whānau with no-strings-attached grocery vouchers was the approach Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Pikiao took when Ruku Ora funding became available.

General manager, Pare Merito, says the organisation's leadership group, which was formed during the country's first lockdown, reconvened and discussed the best use of the money. While they decided to distribute the entire amount in PaknSave vouchers, it was ultimately an iwi decision.

"We've gone down the strategic planning pathway for the hapū and iwi and are now in the implementation stage of our long-term plan. So, this was more of an immediate response to that without fishhooks," says Pare.

The rūnanga remobilised the teams it operationalised in 2020, who essentially became kaiārahi. They either identified whānau or let whānau know the pūtea was available. Households of two or more received \$100 per adult and \$50 per child, with a cap of \$300. Almost 95% of the distribution was \$300 per

household.

Pare says the majority of whānau who applied for the vouchers had between three and seven members living in their individual homes.

"Back in 2020, the focus was aimed at kōeke, but this one was for whānau. It was just fabulous being able to distribute PaknSave vouchers. And it was absolutely critical to provide them to the low socioeconomic whānau we work with and those we know are out there through our existing whakapapa network. There were no strangers perse.

"We knew there were lots of whānau out there because when we did the first response with our kōeke they were more worried about their kids. We're talking about their 40 to 50-year-old kids and their mokopuna. But that's typical of our kōeke – the selfless sacrifice to ensure their tamariki and mokopuna are all right as opposed to themselves. This pūtea was an opportunity to respond to some of their concerns to make sure their kids were OK."



As soon as the \$50,000 funding dropped into the rūnanga bank account, its accountant rang PaknSave, and within two weeks the majority of the vouchers were distributed.

"However, we knew there were still whānau out there because we have around 10 people on the ground with our suicide prevention mahi, counselling, Whānau Ora navigators, and working with our kōeke through ACC mahi. So, within the rūnanga itself, they're already on the ground and can identify Ngāti Pikiao whānau who'd appreciate these vouchers.

"From the trends we see in our mahi, they're more likely to accept a PaknSave voucher from an iwi drive like this than go back to their own whānau and ask for help. It's complex as there's often a disconnection between whānau and hapū. They're definitely in need but won't go home and ask for help because they're whakamā.

"But a distribution like this will keep the cupboards full for a while. In terms of hardship, this is pretty much their normal life – always planning one week to the next how they're going to fill the cupboards. They're used to living a hand-to-mouth existence. With these ones, the smashed wairua comes through compared to whānau who've come from healthy whānau constructs."

Pare says the process was quick and simple. Whānau would go to the rūnanga office to complete a registration form. Their kaimahi or Pare would then sign it off and give them a phone call to collect their voucher.

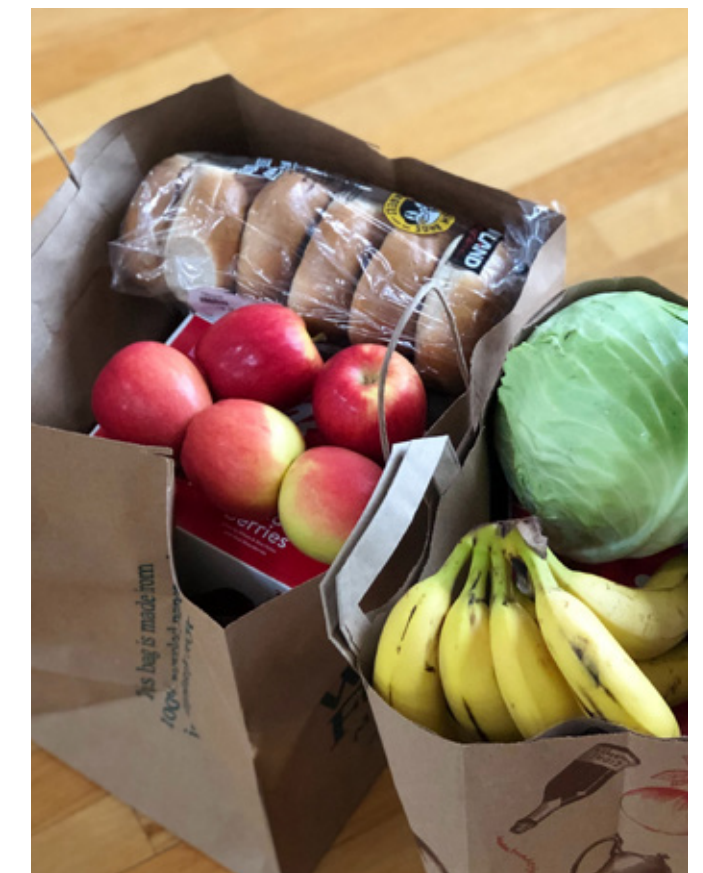
"They couldn't believe it. They asked, 'is that all I have to do aunty?'. They were so grateful that there were no fishhooks. Some of our low socioeconomic whānau are on-to-it because they've been in the system for a while.

They know both the good and the bad within the system. They're not dumb.

"One of our aunties brought a swag of whānau with her. Now, we all know our whānau and how tricky they can be, so she said to them, 'you better watch out if I find out you've bought smokes'.

"She said \$300 is a lot of vouchers and we should just hold it and give them \$100 at a time. But I told her that's not our call to make. If we did that, it'd be no different to how the Pākehā treats them. So, I said no give it all and she accepted that decision," says Pare.

For transparency and spending accountability, all data will be provided back to the iwi.







# NGĀTI RANGITEAORERE

**Over 120 Ngāti Rangiteaorere members turned up to a hauora day at Mātaikōtare Marae in an event that highlighted the hapū's desire to reconnect and create better health outcomes for whānau.**

Marae trust secretary, Keri Anne Tane, was the project lead for the Ruku Ora funding.

"We were quite a new trust and had been in a bit of strife in our hapū for some time. So, this for us was perfect timing because it allowed us to address a whole lot of issues. It allowed us to reconnect post-Covid, and not only have whānau come in who hadn't seen each other for a while, but also find some new connections," she says.

Keri Anne says they were able to extend the invitation to whānau who knew they were Rangiteaorere but had never quite ventured across to Mātaikōtare Marae.

"We had a really good turnout, including lots of kids, which was a big thing for us. We had a spectacular day. The weather played ball, we had lots going on across the marae, and our people came and enjoyed it.

"We had mirimiri, a chiropractor, and rongoā happening in the wharenuī. Some of our people were there from the moment we opened until the moment we closed, engaging in different activities. We ended up being there two hours longer than we'd scheduled but the providers were happy to stay because they were being utilised and thrilled that so many people were engaging with them."

Keri Anne says the providers talked about how it was a really great day for them.

"A couple of the Pākehā health workers were quite astounded. They said people just came in and seemed to want to ask questions.

They wanted to know what they did and were happy to engage in conversation about what they were there to do, whether it was taking blood pressure or vaccinations.

"They found that being on the marae seemed to settle people. They were happy to come to their place of haven and engage in those vulnerable conversations. Those two Pākehā ladies were really taken by that. They said we should all do it like this rather than the clinical environment they'd experienced through Covid vaccinations, where people line up, sign a form, and get a jab. But this was a really open kōrero with a cup of tea and lunch, with people moving through the different options. There was no rush, and they were amongst whānau," says Keri Anne.

She says the hauora day was beyond what they had hoped for and served its purpose of providing health connections for whānau.

"But more importantly for us as a hapū, it allowed us to have a positive reason for coming together and re-forming that connection back with our marae, which people didn't have for some time, both through the Covid period and because of our hapū dynamic.

"We all talk about how we've got to find positive reasons to go back to our marae, not just for tangi. And this was one of those events that allowed for that. I can't say enough about it and there are others who'd rave more about it."

Keri Anne says people wanted to build on it and see if there were other things we could do in future, from a health perspective.

"They thought this was the way we should come together to talk about hauora, and potentially initiate things as a trust.



We talked about the different initiatives that happen across the rohe that we could try and connect with and whether we'd swing that into our marae.

"Pūtea is the big challenge of course, but that was the wonderful thing about this project in that the funding was provided to allow for it. We're monitoring other things that come our way that allow for this. We know we'll have a good platform because whānau will remember we had a great day, and it wasn't that scary. In fact, it was a beautiful day. We've had people talking about it and saying, 'you should've come cuz.' And we've had people say we should do it again.

"My uncle's a real ratbag. He's a typical older man who won't go to the doctor. He came and saw the health workers and I don't know exactly what went on in there, but he had the kōrero and felt really comfortable. They did his blood pressure and arranged a doctor's appointment for him. He walked away with a whole programme, and he's been progressively working through that – I know because I've been driving him to those appointments. He's been totally committed to it, which has been fantastic. It has definitely made him think about his health and he's been making moves to make changes, including giving up smoking."

Keri Anne says at the end of the day, if you can help one person, it is all worth it.

"My uncle's an absolute example of someone who wasn't in the best of health but has made a concerted effort now. He was with them for a long time, talking through a lot of things and he stayed the whole day.

"We've got a long way to go because we're looking at decades of issues, but it reminded people about the marae and how wonderful our

marae is. Even though it's falling down people loved being in that space.

"Part of the funding also contributed to some immediate marae improvements. Heaters were purchased for all three buildings on site, and new aluminium windows were also purchased for the south wall of the administration building. Both these purchases will help the health of the whare and, therefore, the health of our whānau.

"It was also a great profile of the new marae trust and provided a real positive initiation that helped our reputation as new trustees. People met us on the day and have engaged with us since. We did a survey before Christmas, and usually, we're lucky to get 20 people replying. Following our hauora day, we had 90 people complete the survey, which was an unexpected but positive outcome."

Keri Anne says marae trustees know they have an important role to keep building on that momentum.

"It reminds me that our people do want better health. They just don't necessarily know how to navigate all the options. I'd like to think we could try and organise another event this year. While it was awesome to receive funding for this, you don't have to have a lot of money to make it happen. We could deliver it through other means and people would value it just as much," she says.





# NGĀTI RANGITIHI

**Te Mana o Ngāti Rangitihi Trust utilised its Ruku Ora funding to implement a Healthy Homes project, purchase vouchers for whānau, and treat kōeke to some pampering and adventure.**

Kaiwhakahaere hāpori/social pou lead, Darcy Stoneham, says they got their funding late in the timeframe, so while they had to think fast on how to best utilise it, they were careful not to make any rushed decisions.

“We decided to put \$15,000 towards vouchers because that was something we could disseminate over a period of time. We purchased petrol and grocery vouchers, along with pressie cards, and have been giving assistance to whānau who need it due to Covid implications,” she says.

A group chat was set up, and each whānau has a representative who is responsible for reporting back to the rūnanga to advise if anyone has Covid or needs support. The trust replies through the chat or makes direct contact with the whānau member.

“We also did mental health days, and we had a couple of days where we pampered our kuia at our local rugby club. We’ve got a bunch of volunteers in our community with different skills, such as make-up, beauty, and mirimiri, and they got together to give our kuia a little bit of TLC.

“Our kuia had the best day – manicures, pedicures, eye treatments – you name it, they had it. A barista was available on tap and they could order anything. We also put on a few little drinks, nibbles, and a tasting session.

“It was the first time we’d ever done this for them and we’ll definitely do it again with everybody, including our ladies who came and did all the pampering. It was just about getting together and taking the first step towards reintegrating back

into the community after isolation because a lot of them hadn’t actually been out of their homes or spent time with each other,” says Darcy.

However, it wasn’t just the kuia who were treated to a special day. Pampering didn’t hold the same appeal to the koroua of Matata, so they came up with their own idea to reconnect with their mates following the Covid isolation.

Kaumātua, Dennis Paterson, said they loaded up the trust van with six koroua – along with his lucky wife – and travelled to Hamilton for the night to watch the Māori All Blacks vs Ireland rugby match at FMG Stadium.

“We picked up our passengers along the way and stayed at the Distinction in Te Rapa. We chilled out until the evening, went to KFC for dinner, and called into a rugby club near the stadium. We hung out with the locals and then went to the game,” says Dennis.

The group lingered after the game and proudly displayed their Matata rugby banner in the hope of capturing the attention of Māori All Blacks player, TJ Perenara. When security attempted to move them along, mischievous Dennis confessed they took advantage of their ‘koroua status’ and feigned deafness.

“The whole idea behind it was to talk to TJ Perenara because he’s from here. He looked up and spotted our banner, ran back to his coaches and bosses to tell them he was coming to speak to us, and then came and sat amongst us. By this stage, the security people were keen to join in and get their photos taken too but we told them to step aside,” Dennis laughed. “We had a little kōrero about the game. He was so pleased to see the Matata Rugby Club banner and thanked us for being there.”



The kaumātua were on cloud nine as they headed back to the motel for the night. Dennis says it was an awesome outing and they enjoyed the atmosphere and making connections with other rugby fans. The following morning they had breakfast in Hamilton before heading back to Matata feeling invigorated by their adventure.

While the kaumātua were taken care of with the Ruku Ora funding, Darcy says the biggest chunk of the money was used to develop a plan to create healthier homes in the community.

“We got Uncle Dennis and his friend Ray onboard. They went around to assess 38 homes within Matata and surrounding areas to see if there was any minor repair work that needed to be done, such as broken window latches, sliding doors that wouldn’t open, and leaky taps. So, if there was another isolation their houses would be a lot healthier for them,” she says.

The pair went around and completed repairs, and now there are around 40 homes in Matata that are a lot healthier than before. Dennis concedes that he is also looking “healthier” because every household would want to make them a cup of tea or coffee and cakes.

“The good part about it is knowing all the people. It made things a lot easier because they were a lot more comfortable with the whole idea. At times, some of them were very hesitant because they weren’t sure how they were going to pay for it. But when I explained to them why and how it was going to be done they were so happy. Being mindful that some of the things we repaired had been like that for a couple of years. They’d been living with it without knowing what to do. We showed people how easy it was to fix, and reassured them that they could contact us any time and we’d help them.”

Te Mana o Ngāti Rangitihi trustee, Tracey Raureti, says the spin-off from the Healthy Homes project is they now plan to run DIY workshops so whānau can perform their own repairs and build iwi capability.

“The whānau were so pleased to have tradesmen come in and do jobs they hadn’t got around to doing or just didn’t have the skills or money to do it themselves. Some of the issues were quite expensive, like the broken ranch sliders. Even to get somebody out to Matata to do that sort of work, you’re paying from the start of the callout.

“So, everybody has been very appreciative of the work. And their attitude towards this assistance has been fair and honest. We didn’t have people asking for a new roof or anything like that. They all targeted something modest so there was plenty to go around,” she says.

Darcy says the Ruku Ora funding has been really good for Ngāti Rangitihi.

“In a way, it has brought us closer together because everyone engaged in the Healthy Homes project was in the same boat. If someone knew that someone else was accepting the tautoko, they were more willing to jump on board. Initially, they were whakamā to let people into their homes to see the conditions they were living in but this has helped people open up and accept help.

“It’s good knowing there are people out there willing to help, like Uncle Dennis and his mates, and someone we knew personally instead of a stranger coming in. We know they’re going to do a good job, which was also a bonus for us,” says Darcy.



# NGĀTI RANGIWEWEHI

## Ngāti Rangiwewehi Rongoā Workshops

**Healing was at the forefront for Ngāti Rangiwewehi kaumātua who participated in rongoā workshops at Tarimano Marae. Part of the iwi's Ruku Ora funding was used to deliver three workshops in the tūpuna whare, Tawakeheimoa, with the first two provided to small groups of kaumātua, and the third one open to all.**

Iwi member and workshop organiser, Harata Paterson (with Kahuariki Hancock, Rangimaria Hancock, Jedi Bidois, Lee-anne Bidois, and Bubz Thompson), said the kaumātua appreciated the intimacy of the smaller groups and the hands-on approach of the workshops.

"Six months prior, we'd hosted a rongoā healing symposium. One of the needs identified during the weekend's kōrero was the importance of providing a rongoā workshop for our kaumātua. When the Ruku Ora funding became available we immediately knew how we'd respond to the opportunity."

### Small groups & Practice-based Approach

"Delivering to small groups was important as we wanted it practice-based and to allow for intimate conversations. We also wanted people who don't normally speak in front of larger gatherings to feel comfortable coming forward," says Harata. The subsequent workshop had larger participant numbers but the same approach (intimate groupings and practice-based) was adopted.

"It was made very clear that I wasn't going to be standing at the front of the room talking, as it would defeat the purpose of our goals for the funding - although there were moments when this did occur. Rather, the kaupapa was about whānau, and iwi and hapū resilience. We looked at it as a way for our people to regroup in

tikanga and te reo, and re-connect with practices that have been around for a long time but which only a few actively participate in. We've seen a resurgence in rongoā interest and practice over the past 10 years, and as an iwi, we want to engage," says Harata.

### Eye Poultices & Eye Bathing

In the relaxed environment of the whare with mattresses spread out for comfort, the first part of the workshop focused on kawakawa and mamaku eye poultices and eye baths.

"Some of our kaumātua were quite passive and took a while to 'get into it'. It's easy to sit back and leave those in front to do all the work. So, we partnered them up and explained what was going to happen and the purpose of it. Soon enough, the room was filled with laughter, whakawhanaungatanga, and a lot of learning. Not only for those of us who organised the event but for those who participated and those who entered the whare and witnessed it," says Harata.

The pairs performed dual roles of practitioner and client so each had a turn at giving and receiving. Following the practical exercises were opportunities for feedback, which provided organisers with rich kōrero for future iwi initiatives.

"The eye poultices and baths do a number of things. While they can improve circulation and soothe inflammation, you can 'read' the poultice when it's removed from the eyes. The leaves change colour and indicate for example if a person has too much sugar in their system, which can mean they're at risk of diabetes. It's a way of tapping into the body and the body telling you what it needs."

### Pani, Lotions, Jellies

After lunch, participants were given demonstrations on how to create pani lotions and creams with beeswax or medicated vaseline, as well as kawakawa jellies especially designed for kaumātua and babies. They were then able to roll up their sleeves and have a go themselves.

"They were really surprised at how simple and enjoyable the processes were to execute, and how inexpensive it is to go out and do it (gather rongoā and prepare and apply it) themselves."

### Rongoā

We spoke about key rongoā plants and their health properties and benefits, and contra-indications. So if a person was taking a particular medication they must be aware of the risks/dangers of using certain rongoā in combination. In these cases or where a person was in doubt, they were advised to seek full medical advice or the expertise of an experienced rongoā practitioner.

"The workshops focused on five products, along with the poultices and eye bathes, because too much information can become overwhelming in one session. Some of the plants used in the workshop grow at the marae, so we were able to provide participants with 10 samples of rongoā for identification," says Harata.

As a result of this workshop, anybody from the pā or who belonged to the iwi could go away with basic skills on how to create their own rongoā and safely apply them.

"Some participants wanted quite specific information, such as what rongoā they can use for a heart condition. To assist, we prepared and provided a booklet with a history of key plants and their dos and don'ts. Images were included allowing for easy and accurate plant identification, and plants and rongoā samples were also donated. Participants were taken by the generosity of the workshop/kaupapa and the willingness of the organisers and other



participants to share information/knowledge, and the subsequent opportunities for healing that were provided."

A number of people who attended the workshops were unwell and Harata says it served as a reminder that our people hold off accessing GP/hospital services while their health continues to decline. She also stated that perhaps, workshops such as these are one way to catch our people in time.

"Some of the cousins who attended complained of stiffness and soreness when they actually should have been in hospital. It was that kind of extreme health need. However, they felt a lot better halfway through the day and by the end of it we'd put them in touch with the appropriate follow-up health services. So, there was healing and instruction, combined with teaching happening throughout the workshops."

### Conclusion

Overall, Harata says the workshops confirmed what they already knew. There is a huge need for rongoā and rongoā services.

"People are more receptive after they've experienced rongoā themselves. Initially, participants were a bit passive but I believe that's a product of our current health system. You go in, give your name, sit and wait, and then this person in a white coat comes to get you and treat you. Then you go home. This singular, passive, and paternalistic health model has passed its use-by date.

"In contrast, rongoā services that work hand-in-hand with bio-medical kaupapa offer a more viable way forward for improved Māori health outcomes. Rongoā that can be offered in places like marae, by our people who use te reo and tikanga as required, can help us develop different health relationships, and take up health services quicker, more substantively and, hopefully, earlier."





# NGĀTI TAHU NGĀTI WHAOA

## Ngāti Tahu Ngāti Whaoa Rūnanga Trust – Whare Hauora utilised its Ruku Ora funding to strengthen relationships with its marae and their people.

Laptops were purchased for Ohaki, Waimahana, Mataarae, and Te Toke marae, and while Ngāti Tahu Ngāti Whaoa Rūnanga Trust representative Sue Westbrook says they were “really stoked” to receive the new devices, there was a bigger picture at play.

“I wanted us to work on establishing better relationships with each of the marae so that if anything eventuates again we’ve got our marae prepared,” says Sue.

Each marae is responsible for managing the laptop’s software so that communication sharing is maintained. The person who holds the laptop becomes the marae contact.

“The rūnanga has its own iwi database but it doesn’t capture everyone. Therefore, each marae was asked to set up a database of everyone who

affiliates with the marae, so we’d have a line of communication from the rūnanga to the marae, and then out to their members.”

The four marae had been digitally enabled through Te Puni Kōkiri’s Marae Digital Connectivity project, and Sue says the laptops allowed them to put this new resource to good use.

“They can now host and attend virtual meetings, take their minutes, share information over Zoom, present online activities at the marae, and other online tasks. There are so many opportunities but we’re just leading them to water. You can only push so far and the rest is up to them.

“We wanted them to be involved so that if we have another Covid outbreak, each marae can provide a representative to work alongside the rūnanga to build a response,” says Sue.

Along with the laptops, the Hauora arranged comprehensive first aid training so each marae has a first aider in the event of another pandemic.



“It was really encouraging to see our marae taking these opportunities onboard and putting names forward because they saw the value in having a first aider available,” says Sue.

Ruku Ora funding was also used to deliver karanga and kapa haka wānanga to the people. Sue engaged with Erueti Rakena from Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, who agreed to combine the wānanga with his te reo Māori classes. The wānanga also provided hapū members with the opportunity to join a hīkoi up north, as part of Erueti’s te reo class. The haerenga related to the history of Māori and their arrival in Aotearoa, with the group spending time in Waitangi and other historic places of significance.

“We’re trying to boost the confidence of our iwi and whānau so they’ll come out again and socialise on the marae because there are still some who prefer not to leave their homes. Unfortunately, it’s mostly our kaumātua. However, activities like kapa haka tend to bring them out more.

“As a marae itself, karanga is one of the skills that is nearly depleted and we’ve only been able to utilise one or two people. These karanga wānanga have been a great way to grow more kaikaranga and build capability among our people,” says Sue.

Sue says a highlight of the Ruku Ora funding was being able to deliver a hauora day because it gave the rūnanga an opportunity to give the whānau what they needed, work closely with the marae, and continue to build on that relationship.

“We can’t keep doing it on our own and the Hauora can’t maintain another hit of Covid if it comes along. I wanted us to be set up for our marae but also encourage them to be involved instead of relying on us to source information for them. Strengthening their capability and having an avenue where they can access legitimate websites themselves was really important.”

Ngāti Tahu Ngāti Whaoa Rūnanga Trust – Whare Hauora also purchased pre-made wellness packs from Zoom Pharmacy for whānau with Covid symptoms or who had tested positive.

“Going into stores to purchase supplies for wellness packs was time-consuming for us, and

we questioned whether whānau actually wanted these supplies. Plus, there was usually a limit to the quantity of each product you could buy in each store.

“So, we took advantage of these pre-made packs with useful items, like Vicks Vaporub and lozenges. The packs distributed at the Hauora included a pulse oximeter and thermometer for Covid positive families, along with information about preparedness and wellness checks. Smaller pre-made packs were distributed at our whānau community day in December, along with R.A.T.S tests we received from Te Arawa Lakes Trust.

“We’ve also connected with the local Foodmarket in Reporoa and created shopping vouchers for whānau who are unable to drive to Rotorua or Taupo. There may not be as many options as provided in the supermarkets, but access to groceries and other essentials can be immediate, and they can let us know if they need more or other items,” says Sue.

Ruku Ora funding was also used to purchase firewood for whānau.





# NGĀTI TARĀWHAI

## **Ruku Ora funding helped Ngāti Tarāwhai kaumātua return to the whenua they lived on more than 100 years ago in a significant moment for the iwi.**

Iwi representative, Ruakiri Fairhall, says the iwi used part of the funding to host kaumātua from across its three marae to a wellness retreat at Ōkātina Lodge. Around 72 kaumātua were treated to a weekend of pampering, staying for two nights, from Friday through to Sunday.

“Upon checking in at the lodge, there were sign-up sheets at reception where our whānau and kaumātua could register for what ever activities appealed to them. They were catered for throughout the entire weekend. We had a barber, hairstylist, manicure and pedicure technicians, make-up artists, and offered boat rides on Lake Ōkātina for our kaumātua. There were a range of activities throughout the weekend.

“There have been quite a few deaths during Covid, and this whole new way of being with Covid had really frightened our kaumātua. It gave them a chance to be more confident going back out there in the community. Some of the feedback we’ve got from the kaumātua was it was ‘out of this world’. They just absolutely felt like they were cared for and that someone else beyond their immediate family really supported them.”

Ruakiri says the kaumātua retreat was the first time since the Tarawera eruption that the iwi has taken its pakeke back to the whenua they once lived on.

“It has been about 135 years since Ngāti Tarāwhai have returned to Ōkātina. So, it was quite a significant moment for us as an iwi – coming together, having kōrero with our kaumātua, and finding an opportunity to use that engagement

as a future focus time for us. We were able to collect a lot of historical kōrero from the kaumātua who attended, which was really cool because that was a bonus for us,” he says.

Meanwhile, a substantial portion of the Ruku Ora pūtea was used for a post-Covid winter support initiative.

One of the best things for us was we were able to reach about 120 whānau throughout the entire project, from Kaitaia all the way to Dunedin. We specifically used the funds to support the wellbeing of our whānau, so the support to our whānau was quite broad.

“We started off with a rongoā wānanga in June, where we were able to bring people to the marae and specialist kāhui of rongoā providers to do whakatau wairua kaupapa over the weekend. Second to that was one of the biggest parts to our mahi, which was providing support to our whānau through winter and post-Covid,” says Ruakiri.

The iwi developed a registration form for Ngāti Tarāwhai whānau to complete. They were asked to select up to three types of support they would like to receive. Options included petrol vouchers, firewood, transportation, and support towards power bills.

“We did that because we know that winter is quite a difficult period. The last time we did mahi with our iwi, we found that a lot of whānau struggled through winter,” he says.

Overall, they had 120 hits and submissions of forms from whānau from across the country. A team created individual packages for each whānau, and either delivered them personally or had parcels couriered.

“We had all the firewood delivered as far as

Ruaihona and Te Teko in the east, and up to Greerton in Tauranga in the north. So, we covered quite a large area in terms of deliveries within our Bay of Plenty rohe. For those outside the Bay of Plenty, we were able to support them by sending through courier or regular post,” he says.

Ruakiri says overall, throughout the three different kaupapa they delivered through Ruku Ora, the iwi now feels comfortable with sharing information.

“They might not regularly share in terms of the iwi space around their health and wellbeing, and mental and spiritual wellbeing. But Ruku Ora definitely provided an opportunity to give back to our kaumātua in a way of support. Those were the really cool things that came about from that, beyond the positive feedback from our whānau.

“There were some people who we delivered goods to who had never been supported by iwi prior. Some people were in tears when they received their packages. Others had been driven into town while our drivers waited for a little bit, and then drove them back home.

They were absolutely amazed by it. If that’s what

we could do with that amount of pūtea, just imagine what else we could continue to do for our kaumātua,” he says.

Ruakiri says the Ruku Ora funding has given the iwi a chance to seriously think about investing in the space of growing wellbeing for its whānau throughout moments of hardship. He says it was an excellent project that they were grateful to be a part of.

“One of the greatest things is the fact that many Tarāwhai people who may not have recognised their Ngāti Tarāwhaitanga prior, have now turned towards the iwi in a really positive manner. They’re like, ‘wow, I didn’t do anything Ngāti Tarāwhai before but it feels like something’s drawing me to my iwi again.’ I think that’s that whole part of the journey back to Ōkātina and finding what it means to be Ngāti Tarāwhai. That’s a real positive thing for us.

“We’ve booked in another kaumātua weekend this year. Of course we’ve got pau kē ngā moni left from Ruku Ora. But because it was such a positive impact on our iwi, we’re now looking at investing in those pockets and opportunities with our pakeke. It has just drawn our iwi closer which is really cool,” says Ruakiri.





# TAPUIKA

## Developing a workforce already within the hapū makes “absolute sense” to Tapuika iwi representative, Rutu Maxwell-Swinton.

She says Ruku Ora has been pivotal in terms of empowerment for Tapuika.

“We’re working from an empowering position where our hapū is taking the leadership and the control to put in place the necessary things to activate our people into a cohesive kotahitanga unit and working for the betterment of our people. I haven’t seen that for such a long time and it has been inspiring because it has re-established pride.”

She says the past three years have been tough with Covid, financial uncertainty, stress and anxiety. So to suddenly be able to focus on something so positive had a very uplifting flow-on effect on the hapū and whānau.

Rutu’s background has always been in the health sector and she is currently on the management team at Ngā Kakano Foundation. From that lens, she says the hapū empowerment approach was an effective use of health resources.

“In the past, a lot of investment has been health resources, yet we struggled to effectively engage with Māori communities. By utilising a hapū empowerment model to engage the whole hapū, the outcomes we have achieved have been fantastic. Building our leadership within the hapū has also been a significant outcome with regard to the future sustainability of Ruku Ora, so I’m definitely seeing the future.

“It goes back to my own organisation’s kaupapa, which is ‘growing futures through leadership, tikanga Māori and whānau.’ Of course, hapū is one of the levers that make it possible because that’s where our future leadership is going to be standing.

“Rather than sending a whole clinical team out into the community, there are key tasks that can be done a lot more effectively by the whānau if we target the appropriate training that builds on the skills and strengths they have. All of the cultural skills and the ‘knowing’ about the hapū is already there, so that’s the first level of competency that our people pass with excellence.

“They’re far more able to support those in the community with long-term conditions because our people trust them. If we design and then target the appropriate training, we’re really taking a kaupapa approach to workforce development which isn’t about translating a standard, one-size-fits-all approach.

“We’re building a workforce upon the cultural excellence and competency that is the lived reality. It’s an effective way of targeting health resources and supporting our people to become more capable of taking care of their own health needs and drawing less on an already over-taxed health system.”

Rutu concedes it can be a challenge to build Ruku Ora alongside Māori health providers. However, she says it also makes their role clear.

“As a Māori health provider, we pay a significant amount of money for our clinicians. If we could do that in a way that our people are taken care of, then I believe that would be beneficial for Māori health providers, as well as give us a clear view of the changes we have contributed to.

“I believe there will be challenges for Māori health providers to see Ruku Ora as a more collaborative use of resources and not to see it as taking away. But once we worked through it – understanding our hauora has had the monopoly on many of the health resources for the services we provide –

and supported hapū, we were so delighted with the outcomes. It’s a great relationship and gives visibility to the Māori providers on the kaupapa, not just on the contract.

“We asked ourselves, why the hapū? Why support the leadership from the hapū? We already have leadership and experience within our provider ranks. But we also knew we had a terrible fear. When Covid was on the rise we feared we might lose some of our people, especially our elderly, dying alone with no support – yet they lived close to a marae. So by engaging the hapū, it settled that fear. Not one of our people will be missed.

“The opportunity for our hauora to work alongside our hapū meant we had closer eyes on our kōeke, who would often discuss other things that they needed. Once alerted, the hauora was then able to meet those needs much earlier and quicker.”

Rutu says Ruku Ora is a model of care based on whanaungatanga and whakapapa at a hapū level, and the key to this approach is leadership.

“You need leaders to embed the model and it will take off. At Ngā Kakano Foundation, we were clear about our part and with our hauora experience, we could manage some of the risks. And there was great alignment between Ruku Ora kaupapa and our own, ‘growing leadership, tikanga Māori and whānau.’”

By continuing to develop Ruku Ora, Rutu believes Te Arawa will have an effective workforce that can work across sectors rather than have agencies taking the lead in any pandemic or emergency situation.

“We’re going to have hapū workers who are very familiar with MSD. They already know the levers to access the appropriate resources. Similarly in health, this knowledge and skill will already be in the hapū, which is far more effective than having the disjointed branches of government agencies attempting to make an impact. From a management perspective, Ruku Ora makes perfect sense in terms of maximising scarce resources and alleviating pressure on the health system. In terms of workforce, we’ve already trained people to do vaccinations and emergency response work and reduce costs.”

Rutu is pleased Ruku Ora didn’t give a prescription and instead allowed hapū to tap into the inherent knowledge and strengths it already had.

Ruku Ora was able to activate identity and whakapapa to enable cohesion. We were able to do things in Tapuika in our unique way based on the special gifts and strengths of each hapū.

“Being part of a kaupapa like this has meant we’ve achieved even more than we first envisaged – and it became bigger than Covid. It was about our people’s wellbeing and their mana motuhake. As I said, it allayed our fears as a hauora provider about not having enough eyes across our people and our rohe. We never wanted to wake up to the horrific news that one of our brightest nannies who had been on her own for a few days, died alone a few doors down from the marae.

“This initiative meant we did get the cover our people deserved,” says Rutu.





# TŪHOURANGI

**Tūhourangi has helped inject some normalcy back into its people's lives after Covid isolation by enaging with their concerns, providing a new way of doing things, and whanaungatanga.**

Tūhourangi Tribal Authority representative Annie Balle says they employed a contact team to reach out to whānau to get an understanding of how they were coping with Covid.

“We also asked other types of resilience questions, such as whether they'd been impacted financially with inflation and Covid exasperating that. We used that time to update their contact details in our system. That was a really good win in terms of engaging and having direct understanding of how the situation has impacted whānau,” says Annie.

“The team has received really positive feedback because it wasn't just Tūhourangi uri that we were contacting but wider Te Arawa. There were some really interesting insights, especially in regard to the resilience questions. A lot of whānau were really comfortable with Covid now. They don't view Covid as a fearful thing. Everyone's pretty much adjusted to it.

“The biggest concerns amongst recipients of calls were financial – no surprises there. Everyone's concerned about inflation and the cost of living, and education. We had a few mums who said they're really worried about their tamariki having to be kept behind because of the amount of schooling they've missed. So that's some of the feedback from the outreach team,” she says.

In addition, the iwi created Covid kits for the three Tūhourangi marae, Te Pakira, Hinemihi, and Apumoana.

“What we're seeing now is people opting to hold tangihanga at home, which has all been borne

out of Covid. Unfortunately, a lot of people don't really have the tools or resources to manage the large crowds that are coming into their homes.

“We bought cooking utensils, woks, pots, cookers, BBQs, and a whole range of items so whānau can set-up their homes as if they were at the marae. The marae will have that direct engagement with whānau and know what we've got to help support them with tangihanga at home,” she says.

PAK'nSAVE vouchers were also purchased but were distributed to whānau directly.

“The team has views to set up a pātaka kai at Te Pākira Marae, and those vouchers will be used to buy essentials for whānau who need it. Plus, we've arranged an agreement with a supplier to provide goods for our pātaka kai with food basics and dry goods to support not just Tūhourangi uri but the community as a whole,” says Annie.

“We purchased devices for our marae as we created a booking system so when whānau come in and seek support, whether it be in the form of the pātaka kai or the Covid kits, we lock it in so we can get some insight into which whānau need support. Some whānau may need it more than others.”

In December, a Tūhourangi whānau day was held on its whenua, Te Pūtaka o Tawa, where the tribal authority formally handed over the Covid kits to its marae.

“Basically, the intention of the event was to bring whānau from across the rohe together to enjoy kai, performances, and present some of the things we bought through the Ruku Ora funding.

“We had kapahaka performances from Tūhourangi Ngāti Wahiao and Whakarewarewa School, and launched our series of Tūhourangi tamariki books.



“Due to pandemic-related restraints, it was the first time we were able to do this on our whenua. Not many of the whānau knew Te Pūtaka o Tawa existed, so it was pretty cool to connect everyone and have kapahaka and kai on our own whenua,” says Annie.

Tūhourangi businesses based at Te Pūtaka o Tawa, Grounded and Mitai Holdings, supplied kai and refreshments, while Mountain Bike Rotorua

provided free bike hireage for whānau to ride on the trails.

“In addition to all that, we presented our three marae with the marae resilience packs. It was awesome. We got some really awesome feedback and we're probably going to do this every year. With Covid, our people have been really isolated from one another so it was just a really nice day to reconnect with whānau and hopefully get some normalcy back in their lives,” says Annie.





# NGĀTI TURA NGĀTI TE NGĀKAU

**Ngāti Tura Ngāti Te Ngākau has big dreams to grow a prospering hapū where whānau thrive in warm homes and the marae is once again the strong heartbeat of its people.**

Parawai Marae chairperson Taniele Edwards says given the short timeframe to spend the Ruku Ora funding and the conditions of receiving it, representatives of Parawai and Tarukenga marae came together to discuss how best to distribute the funds.

“With the support of our hapū trust, we came together and formed one committee, Te Rōpū Manaaki o Tura, and after a lot of debate, we elected to buy prezzy cards and firewood,” says Taniele.

Four assessors went out and met whānau and were also available at the hapū trust office in Ngongotahā. They shared the information on the marae hapū Facebook pages and through word of mouth.

“If people could whakapapa to Ngāti Tura Ngāti Te Ngākau and had Covid within a certain timeframe, they were entitled to the support. We asked whānau we knew if they needed help, and while some accepted the support, others didn’t need financial assistance.

“There was a need for more than just grocery vouchers. One kuia had five of her mokopuna living with her, so she needed to feed and clothe them. The prezzy cards allowed her more options to be able to do that.

“Each card was loaded with \$200 and limited to one per whare. Everyone got \$200 because it’s not for us to decide how much they should get, or the trust receiving complaints for favouring some whānau over others. We just tried to keep it as fair as possible.

“The most overwhelming thing that I came across was our people’s need for kai because a lot of them couldn’t go to mahi or had lost their mahi due to Covid. So, they were living on the bare bones of their cupboards,” says Taniele.

The hapū spent \$15k on firewood and distributed over 60 loads to whānau.

Parawai Marae trustee, Joe Edwards, says each household received two cubes per load, and really appreciated the winter delivery.

He believes if all Ngongotahā hapū and government agencies pull their resources together they could help more whānau.





# NGĀTI UENUKUKOPAKO & NGĀTI TE RORO O TE RANGI

**The strong relationship between Ngāti Uenukukopako and Ngāti Te Roro o te Rangi enabled the two hapū to combine forces to purchase a big-ticket item with their Ruku Ora funding.**

Hapū representatives and whānaunga, Nireaha Pirika and Robert Pirika, say they pooled their money to purchase a 12-seater minibus for kaumātua and rangatahi. The minibus was fitted out to safely transport kaumātua to important events, and school groups attending a conservation programme run by Nireaha.

“The major use of the minibus is to move our kōeke around the place, including to and from doctor’s visits, hospital appointments, and tangihanga. One of our whānau members had previously been doing that in her own van. Now, she can carry out these duties without the extra responsibility of the wear and tear on her personal vehicle,” says Robert.

The Mokoia Island taiao programme involves 10 local schools, including Rotokawa, Lynmore Primary, Mokoia Intermediate, Te Rangihakahaka Centre for Science and Technology, and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Hurungaterangi. Nireaha says it offers the students an alternative to working inside the classroom.

“We’re trying to give them another class which is a lot different to working inside. They’re able to work outdoors and they love it. We’ve set up a predator-free trapping programme inside

Waikawau, and there is a possibility of riparian planting around our Eastern side,” says Nireaha.

Robert says the beauty of the programme is the older hapū members can watch the kids and see what they’re up to and whether their needs are being met at school and at home.

“The only way to do this effectively is to connect with our tamariki and be proactive. We can modify the programme to accommodate these needs because it’s not good enough to hear the issues and then continue as we were. While the fear of Covid has lessened, we’re going to be feeling its aftermath for a long time. We see the stresses of the household through the kids, and it substantiates the need for programmes like the one we’re delivering.

“Even though some of us are Hurungaterangi and others are Te Roro o te Rangi, we’re just one bunch of people who’ll come together on whatever the take is at the time. We don’t have any difficulty coming together because we’ve been doing it for longer than I’ve been alive,” says Robert.

Nireaha agrees with Robert that the strong relationship and whanaungatanga between Ngāti Uenukukopako and Ngāti Te Roro o te Rangi has provided opportunities for strategic collaboration and allowed the taiao programme to be grounded in mātauranga Māori.



“We’ve been putting our taiao last for some years and it has suffered. So, we’re trying to teach the next generation the values we have for our taiao and to put it first instead of last. While we’ve had to deliver this programme on a shoestring budget, we’ve persevered because the kaupapa is so important. The Ruku Ora funding has helped strengthen the programme by contributing to our hapū resilience through the trying times of Covid and as we move forward.

“Our kids are our future so we need to nurture them and share the values that will help them in later life. Hopefully, they’ll pass this knowledge on to the next generation,” says Nireaha.

Along with the minibus, the two hapū also contributed equal amounts of their own pūtea to go towards the additional purchases of Countdown vouchers and portable disinfection machines.

“We identified whānau who had a genuine need for the grocery vouchers – more so than people

who put their hands up. We particularly targeted our kōeke and larger families who had a number of tamariki and where employment had been an issue due to Covid,” says Robert.

Meanwhile, portable disinfectant machines were acquired to sanitise the buildings at the marae to help reduce the spread of infection.

“When the people leave for the day, we can start the machine and walk out of the room. It releases a fine mist that settles over all surfaces. Five minutes later the entire room – from the ceiling to the floor – has been disinfected and there is less risk of Covid and other viruses spreading. It’s been really handy at the marae after every tangi and hui. Instead of spending hours wiping down and disinfecting the rooms, our kaimahi can set off this machine and walk away,” says Robert.

“We’re now really prepared for the next wave that comes through and that’s the best thing that has come out of Covid and the Ruku Ora funding. I don’t think we should be complacent to say nothing like this is going to happen again. As the world goes by something else will crop up but we’ll be more prepared,” says Nireaha.





# NGĀTI WHAKAUE

**Ngāti Whakaue utilised its Ruku Ora funding to host a whānau hauora day at Waikite Rugby & Sports Club. The venue was transformed into a hub with a number of health providers who shared information with whānau and provided health examinations.**

Hapū representative, Marita Ranclaud, says while the initial emphasis was around getting more people vaccinated, by that point most were already onboard with the kaupapa, so it was more about re-engaging whānau in a conversation about their health and wellbeing.



“None of our marae were available on the day which is why the event was held at the clubrooms. However, we gave every person who came through a survey, and their feedback was they felt more comfortable receiving their healthcare in that kind of environment. It got people in, and rugby was on that day, so families were already there. They were comfortable to walk on in for a little extra,” says Marita.

She says people became quite distrustful of health services over Covid, particularly GP services, because they had been locked away behind signage and could not get in to do anything.

“We wanted people to feel like they could re-engage with services. If they had any niggles around health and wellbeing, they were able to talk to one of the health providers, which was enough to get some of them over the line, in terms of follow-up.

“We heard lots of stories about whānau who hadn’t had their blood pressure taken or diabetes followed up, who were now able to follow it up. We also had a drug and alcohol service there who engaged with a few people who’d been drinking throughout Covid and were in pretty bad shape. That was another opportunity for follow-up.

“Likewise, we heard lots of stories about people who did really well during Covid. Their kids were healthy, and they enjoyed their time at home together during the isolation. But the day was really more about the opportunity to re-engage. Many had forgotten to take care of things like their skin, eyes, and dental care, so we were able to remind them how important it was,” says Marita.

She says the hauora day helped encourage leadership from the rangatahi who helped out at the hauora day, which was exciting for the hapū.

“Growing our rangatahi was the other big deal for us. Growing them into roles so they learnt how to deliver this event, so the next time it comes around they don’t need us old people here.

“The uplifting story from all of this is the rangatahi who stepped in. They knew all the whānau, did the meet and greets, and made everyone feel comfortable enough to come in have their blood pressure taken or get whatever checked, and have a kai. Those Whakaue rangatahi who supported the whole initiative won’t need me next time. They were stunning,” says Marita.

While the \$50,000 was effectively spent on venue hire, giveaways, kai, advertising, and project support; the remaining resource was applied to the four marae, Te Papa-i-Ouru, Te Koutu, Te Kuirau, and Paratehoata, to purchase supplies.

“Our marae all had similar stories of how whānau were having tangi at home during Covid isolation, and often made requests for mattresses and

chairs, and things like that. Unfortunately, a lot of their supplies weren’t returned, so we asked them what they wanted, and whatever funding was left over, we applied to that.

“They were really grateful that we asked them what they wanted, instead of telling them what they’d be getting. It was important for us to give back to the marae because they had given so much during Covid, whether it was through the paepae attending tangihanga or other events at home which put them at risk, or through the lending of resources.”

Marita has worked in the health sector for many years and says she believes Ruku Ora and the marae hauora days kickstarted a chain reaction where the district health board suddenly got in on the act.

“I’m really proud of the efforts of Ruku Ora and how we’ve helped transform some of the thinking around more traditional healthcare and what could be done differently. Aside from the hauora day and \$50k funding, that initiative set-up the PCR testing, which over time became the mobile testing unit for the DHB. They were entirely reliant on a group of volunteers to do their mobile PCR testing. They take for granted that Māori are always going to be there to help them – which is true – but I just think they have a really unhealthy culture. I’d hope that something in the system would somehow create a mechanism and sustainable level of funding to keep Ruku Ora going.

“Recently it was publicised that there is a shortage of midwives. New mums having babies born and having to leave the hospital the same day or day after. Imagine if we’d been able to call our aunties and nannies to come and look after them. There are opportunities everywhere I look in health.”

Marita says she sees amazing opportunities through Ruku Ora.

“There are models overseas where you can train grandmothers in delivering basic mental health interventions. There’s a whole bunch of stuff we can be doing. I just don’t understand why our health system can’t respond differently,” she says.









**Te Arawa Ruku Ora**  
A Hapū & Iwi led Covid-19 Kaupapa

