



## Environment Pou Workshop Summary

22-24 November 2012

---

### Key Issues:

Environment was the last pou workshop on the agenda for day two of the Summit and due to time pressures key note speakers were asked to keep their presentations brief, which they did. Eventually, the decision was made to delay the environmental group workshops until the morning of Summit day three, as time had run out on day two, due to the extended focus on the cultural and economic pou. This scenario prompted one keynote speaker to comment on the irony, that although we claim whakapapa back to Papatuanuku; and environmental references permeate Te Rarawa reo, tikanga and whakatauki; somehow the environment always gets left to last and receives less attention than other priorities. That sequence of events reinforced one of the most pertinent environmental issues identified at the Summit – a lack of quality time and attention to the subject of environment.

Eventually the environment group workshops were held on the morning of Summit day three, it is unclear whether the workshop participants were the same that heard the keynote speakers the day before; however in a fair reflection of the environmental sector, the workshop feedback was extensive, complex and strongly issues focussed.

Feedback identified a multitude of issues affecting water, forest, fisheries, flora, fauna and whenua. There was a consistent concern expressed about the current and future impact of foreign organisms on native species. This sentiment extended beyond flora and fauna to include impacts on native

species of the two legged variety, i.e. Tangata Whenua – noting the symbiotic relationship between environmental wellness and whānau, hapū and iwi wellness.

Specific issues included the insidious prevalence of pest flora and fauna; the negative impacts of commercial forestry on waterways and whenua; and the potential impacts of mineral extraction in its various forms and guises. Unsustainable practices were identified as an issue, whether that was by farmers, developers, marae or even Te Rarawa whānau themselves. The higher level concerns about a lack of protection mechanisms for Te Moananui-a-Kiwa; and the need for balance between environmental restoration and food security priorities; were reflected in the flax roots ‘reality check’ that depletion of resources through development and commercial activities, was undermining cultural imperatives around the harvesting of kai – “you can’t catch eels anymore!”

The relationship between Te Rarawa whānau and the environment with regards to kai-Māori; was duplicated in feedback concerning wai-Māori; and the identified risks to nga puna-wai through pollution, development and commercialisation.

The feedback emphasised the significance of the Environmental Pou and revealed an association with the imperatives expressed in the Social, Cultural and Economic Pou.

---

**With the key issues identified, the workshops sought to identify the key priorities requiring Te Rarawa focus and energy.**

In an unusual spin on standard environmental feedback, planning did not feature as a significant priority. However, where it did feature consistently, was around supporting hapū to complete and implement their environmental plans; a process which might incorporate environmental stocktakes, skills stocktakes and capacity building. Feedback emphasised the need to *remember* whānau and hapū when dealing with environmental matters; and suggested that whānau should be supported to exercise their kaitiakitanga responsibilities and to be in charge of the decision making process themselves, rather than having decisions made on their behalf.

Education was identified as an enabler of kaitiakitanga at all levels of application. School children, particularly youth were identified as kaitiaki and leaders in their own right, who could be supported through improved environmental curriculum in schools and scholarships for appropriate tertiary study. Knowledge transfer and skills development for hapū and whānau was also suggested; along with workforce development which could include more Te Rarawa people working in environmental agencies. Focussed, iwi led, independent research was strongly supported with the caution not to

duplicate existing research; nor to compromise the integrity of research, through external commercial funding.

A significant amount of feedback focussed on sustainable environmental practices and covered the spectrum ranging from environmental burials and cloth nappies; to alternative energy; to better use of fisheries by-products; through to protection of waahi tapu, water security, bio-diversity and natural genetic integrity i.e. species whakapapa. Feedback also emphasised the need for action to protect, sustain and replenish natural resources as traditional mahinga kai. The tools of mataitai, rahui and taiapure were identified as possible mechanisms for these important priorities. Protection of Te Moananui-a-kiwa through shared rohe moana and sustainable fisheries management was also highlighted.

The fear of the threat of mineral extraction featured in the feedback with some clear messages of 'no mining' and 'no fracking'; countered by some cautious suggestions that these matters should be investigated further to ensure an informed decision could be made – 'kaua e mataku'. Either way, effective hapū engagement with potential exploration companies was mooted.

The connection between the environment and the economy was highlighted in the economic pou workshop and it featured again in the environmental pou workshop. Feedback suggested the need for greater balance between these strategic imperatives; and cited the prospect of eco-tourism possibly supporting environmental regeneration projects. Feedback offered a sage reminder, when embarking on environmental projects to ensure that they can be sustained.

On the matter of relationships, feedback noted the existing relationship with Department of Conservation and stated that while He Korowai was a good start, the 'key needed to be taken back'. At a broader level, it was suggested that all environmental agencies should be accountable to Te Rarawa. A proposed prerequisite for all engagements and partnerships would be to understand the potential partner's environmental policies; and applying Te Rarawa values to the relationship, knowing when to say 'no'. It was also noted that Te Rarawa could seek to learn from the environmental experiences of other Iwi throughout Aotearoa; as well as indigenous solutions further abroad.

Leadership was identified as a clear priority and 'He Korowai' and 'Wai 262' were acknowledged as key tools for expressing Te Rarawa environmental leadership. Enhanced governance skills and a shared direction were also promoted.

The sheer expanse and complexity of the environment means that identified issues and priorities would always be multitudinous; and while the workshop feedback did bring some order to these points, they were still numerous and complex.

---

**Nevertheless, the workshops next turned their attention to the question of “What do we need to do - going forward from the Summit?”**

A consistent point of feedback was that Te Runanga O Te Rarawa should support hapū to complete *and* implement their environmental plans.

The creation of strategic alliances with like-minded NGO’s and other Iwi was emphasised, along with the need to balance commercial and cultural imperatives in relation to environmental management. Feedback suggested that the prospects of job creation through aquaculture should be investigated further.

Increasing kaitiakitanga knowledge and skillsets featured strongly, whether in relation to traditional knowledge; Māori world-view; Western world view; sustainable practices; or understanding how genetically modified organisms; and instruments like the Trans Pacific Partnership, could impact on the ability of Te Rarawa to exercise its mana. Merit was placed on utilising matauranga Māori and protecting ‘old stories’ to better understand the environment, with the draining of the Lake Tangonge cited as an example.

More planning, targeted research and environmental summits were identified as key ways to increase Te Rarawa understanding and awareness of these matters, along with a recurring suggestion that Te Rarawa requires its own Wananga learning institution. Other consistent feedback suggested promoting the study of environmental sciences and kaitiakitanga in schools, with the prospect of issuing environmental scholarships to support tamariki to enter the environmental workforce.

From a cultural perspective, feedback suggested that steps should be taken to normalise Te Rarawa’s relationship with te taiao, recognising that notwithstanding its sacredness, through divine whakapapa connections with nga tamariki o Papatuanuku, it also remains a real physical relationship – not a just a myth. The feedback suggesting that Te Rarawa work with other Te Hiku O Te Ika Iwi to protect Te Ara Wairua and Te Rerenga Wairua, clearly demonstrated the integrated nature of a Māori world view, whereby the physical and spiritual realms are interwoven and the actions of tangata in relation to whenua can have both negative and positive impacts.

Feedback suggested that mechanisms for the protection of bio-diversity, natural genetic integrity, wai-Māori and kai-Māori, should be funded locally and actively supported at a constitutional level. Furthermore, the Te Rarawa economic and environmental frameworks should be closely aligned, particularly around industry engaging sound environmental practices.

Feedback recommended that Te Rarawa take a leadership role in support of hapū environmental planning, policy development, lobbying, protection and in its simplest form, support for whānau haerenga to the whenua, awa and moana.

**The Environmental Pou workshop offered some concluding vision statements suggesting that** fundamentally, the message was to ‘practice what we preach’ and create a healthy environment to support healthy whānau. The environment pou was seen as just as important as the social, cultural and economic pou, with a timeless reminder that as ‘tangata whenua’... we are the land. Toitu te whenua, whatungarongaro te tangata.

**Nō reira, ngā mihi atu kia koutou mō wēnei whakaaro pai, tēnā tātou katoa.**