



## Social Pou Workshop Summary

22-24 November 2012

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### Key Issues:

The Summit Hui considered a number of the social issues confronting Te Rarawa during one of the key Pou Workshop sessions. As would be expected, many of the issues are depressing, in that they are depressingly familiar, nevertheless, part of this summit is to identify and acknowledge the issues, so that the iwi can clearly plot the way forward to addressing them.

The workshop feedback suggested that there was a clear failure of the Government systems that purport to meet the needs of our people, in that they fail to enable equal access and they almost always lack cultural competence, therefore they fail to *understand*, let alone promote, a Māori viewpoint. Hence, it was not surprising that retention of te reo Māori was such a challenge.

It was noted that Te Rarawa's young people have limited training or employment opportunities in their own rohe, so they travel away, taking their families, and often not returning due to no sustainable employment, let alone somewhere nice to live.

Those that remain behind continue to persevere and try to uphold our marae, our whānau and our communities – but it is exhaustingly, hard work. Some whānau who carry the label 'unemployment beneficiaries' are the ones who actually mow the lawns and staff the kitchens at our marae; the ones who support our communities; but the system does not acknowledge those roles, instead it chastises them for not participating in the mainstream workforce.

The lack of sustainable employment combined with ineffective Govt. policies leaves some of our whānau living in poverty, and too often suffering from chronic physical, emotional and spiritual ailments, too numerous and complex to name.

There are some whānau and tamariki who live in substandard, unhealthy housing, often combined with drug and alcohol abuse. Some of these environments make our children vulnerable to predators, seen and unseen.

It was also pointed out that some Te Rarawa children are in CYF custody and some of our tane are in Her Majesties custody. Perhaps there is a connection?

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**With this summary of the broad and unpleasant social issues, the workshops sought to identify the priorities for Te Rarawa in order to address these issues.**

Education ranked as the key priority – noting that education underpins progress across the broader range of issues. The need for education that captures the attention and commitment of our young people was highlighted. The workshop feedback also wanted te reo and Te Rarawatanga to feature in education programmes and curriculum. More marae wananga and greater support for kohanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori was also wanted.

Furthermore the workshops wanted Te Rarawa to exercise leadership in generating change in the education system; promoting higher quality teachers, more male teachers, more relevant training linked to community development and employment opportunities like housing construction and retrofitting.

The need for Te Rarawa leadership in the health system and right across all aspects of those Government systems affecting our people was emphasised. “Te Rarawa needs to be at the forefront of their own rohe!” In this way, Te Rarawa could create the conditions for change, even if we needed to use our elbows to get into that space!

Uplifting the living standards of Te Rarawa people and reducing poverty was a clear priority. While this would require innovation, investment and development, it would also require “Whakaaro Pai” the power of positive thinking that can make such a dramatic impact on all aspects of a person’s wellbeing. Quality housing, home ownership and somewhere for our whānau to come home to live, all featured in your priorities. Along with safe kainga, safe marae and safe communities.

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**With an understanding of the key issues and the key priorities, the workshops set about exploring what it was that Te Rarawa needs to do – going forward from this summit.**

Underpinning the different suggestions was a consistent call for nga tikanga o Te Rarawa to feature highly in any strategic developments.

The importance of relationships and the need to rebuild whānaungatanga amongst our whānau was strongly emphasised. Better communication was a call that reverberated throughout the workshop feedback.

Innovative thinking and sustainable use of our resources was prioritised in the feedback. The notion of community development incorporating economies of scale and employment creation was mentioned favourably. These elements fit nicely with the prospect of a strategic housing development plan that involves other Te Hiku Iwi.

The korero reinforced the need for a strategic approach going forward, including support for hapū and marae planning and development.

Practically, the iwi wanted to see better access to education grants and scholarships; as well as mentoring and tertiary support. They also suggested that start-up and growth funding for whānau and hapū business development would be a sensible way to create sustainable employment as well as whānau and hapū growth.

Politically, a desire to hold Government accountable for the failure of its systems to meet the needs of Te Rarawa whānau was identified. At a local level, better representation in Local Government would hopefully help to address the growing liability associated with unpaid rates, but investment in land development would go a long way to addressing that issue also.

Repeated emphasis was given to the need for greater collaboration – whether that was with pakeha, local health service providers or nga Iwi O Te Hiku O Te Ika. Also noted was that the issues Te Rarawa face are complex and the need to create safe environments for whānau and tamariki; and stop generational abuse would not be an overnight fix. Any remedies would require us to embrace the wairuatanga mantra of “tika, pono and aroha”; rebuild whānaungatanga; raise awareness and literacy about these various issues; and develop strategies based on our authentic Te Rarawa cultural identity, te reo and tikanga.

**Looking to the future, the iwi felt that it would be successful if** the population of Te Rarawa, resident within our rohe, increased substantially. They wanted to see our Te Rarawa people employed and healthy, going through life, stacking our taumata and marae; and achieving the intergenerational transfer of matauranga o Te Rarawa.

Te Rarawa would no longer live in poverty; and the mana of their tane and wahine, as well as their kaumatua and kuia would be reinvigorated and upheld.

Te Rarawa's young people would be involved in regular hui like this summit. Te Rarawa would have festivals to celebrate their success; and their taitamariki would be able to perceive their own brilliance and fulfil their potential.

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