



Iwi Research and Development – Nga Tahuhu o te Taiao Te Mauri o Te Ukaipo Summary of Findings: Wellbeing

In 2007 a number of Te Rarawa people contributed interviews to the Te Mauri o Te Ukaipo research project under the banner of Ngā Tāhuhu o Te Taiao. This paper is one of several that summarises the key findings of the Mauri research and interviews. It can be read in conjunction with other Iwi Research and Development summaries that will be produced throughout 2008.

Te Mauri o Te Ukaipo is about the intersections between the environment and Te Rarawa views of wellbeing. This summary focuses on wellbeing. People interviewed had very broad ideas. They related wellbeing to kai, the environment, a sense of achievement, 'belonging' and social and cultural interaction with marae. No one interviewed spoke directly of disease or sickness, including specific illnesses like diabetes and cancer.

Kai and Wellbeing

Kai stands out as one of the main factors that people said contributed to their wellbeing. They regarded the food they grew up with, whether from land or sea, as 'healthy', and often got particular satisfaction from food they grew themselves.

...we had all these white teeth...Dad and Mum used to say it's because you eat very good food. It's all that paua you eat raw.

Eating fish on its own is probably a healer anyway because it's all the oil.

To live healthy you knew your parents had gardens and you knew organically organic was good. We never needed to be told that, we knew that from experience tasting nice, good, healthy food that you'd grown yourself.

Whanau, Marae And Community Wellbeing

Several interview contributors related wellbeing to involvement with their whanau, their marae and their community generally. The marae emerged as especially significant, with some participants relating wellbeing directly

to the status and health of their marae. They talked about the importance of ensuring the marae functioned well as a facility in order to benefit the wider community.

To Maori, marae is important, if your marae is good, then you feel good.

To me the Marae is the centre of the community.

For one person, taking part in the rebuilding of his marae and seeing the tamariki and future generations reap the benefits was a key influence on his wellbeing. Another person said his wellbeing depended on the wellbeing of his children, and also a sense of personal achievement. One of the women interviewed discussed the importance of whanau activity to whanau wellbeing, for example, attending social functions and collecting kai as shared whanau activities. Korero about whanau activity extended to ideas about 'safe environments'. Belonging to a community where everyone was known to each other, and in a natural environment that people became familiar with because they lived so closely with it, meant that many people saw their childhood as a time of being 'wild and free'. That freedom was often viewed as restricted when people moved to the cities, where boundaries and fences divided houses.

Turangawaewae and Identity

What makes me well today is being able to connect back with Papatuanuku and Rangi and Tangaroa.

Some interview contributors held similar views about the importance of a strong sense of identity and being connected to their turangawaewae to their well being. One person said her strong identity helped her to stand up as an individual while living overseas amongst other cultures.

A number of people interviewed talked about the impact of transitioning between rural and urban areas on their sense of wellbeing. The many reasons why people moved to the cities were matters of wellbeing, such as finding employment, or 'to put food in the cupboards', for better education and to find a life 'easier' for the whanau. But living away from home made going home all the more important.

Several interview contributors who lived away from home expressed impatience about returning home whenever they could. Heading home for holidays and hui were often a major whanau event:

The whanau would pack up the car full of kids and there would be this huge trip.

Social Wellbeing

Socialising positively impacted the wellbeing of some contributors, especially because so much enjoyment can come from some social interactions, such as card nights with friends:

Yeah I says that game it makes all our emotions [work] you know the anger emotions, the laughing I said all our emotions are working in that game. I said I think that's why we enjoy it. It's just it's not like a certain game of cards you just sit there like [stiffly]... It's all to do... that's how we stay well.

Fundraising events for marae contain a strong social element. They are not only about making money but also about attending to the marae, and feeling a sense of progress and achievement:

.. just like the marae I'm feeling good that we're just about ready to go and that money that we made on that day it really makes us feel good. I think it's a lot to do with it. It's the satisfaction of knowing we're getting somewhere.

Wellbeing and Kaitiakitanga

The research shows that Te Rarawa people see wellbeing and kaitiakitanga of the environment and its resources as interconnected:

It's living life that is going to empower and nurture not only you as the tangata but Papatuanuku, Tangaroa and you know our sky father Ranginui. That everything you do has an impact and you know if we can leave this place a better place you know we've probably achieved I think what the Atua would want in the time that you've got here.

So to me the wellbeing of us as people is reflected by the wellbeing of your physical surroundings; the mauri of those sites that you hold dear, because if that's not going to be well then the people aren't well and vice versa. So to me that signifies that the two go hand in hand they're intertwined.