

Name: Cr Rākena

Ward: Ngā Tai o Tokerau

Date: 13th Hune – 27th Hune, 2024

Meetings Attended

Date	Meeting Topic
13/6/24	Ordinary Council Hui
17/6/24	Te Kuaka Te Ao Māori Agenda preview hui
17/6/24	<p>MoU Hui with Council and Kahukuraariki Trust in Te Kerikeri.</p> <p>I attended the hui between Te Kaunihera o Te Hiku o Te Ika and the Kahukuraariki Trust, aimed at establishing and strengthening our relationship. The goal was to explore how we could collaborate on kaupapa that impact both parties positively.</p>
18/6/24	CEO and Kahika catch up to discuss kaupapa Māori initiatives.
19/6/24	<p>Creative Communities Committee Hui @ Memorial Hall, Kaikohe.</p> <p>This committee, supported by Creative New Zealand, aims to nurture and promote creative endeavours in our community.</p> <p>We had a total of eight applications for funding, each presenting unique and vibrant projects that reflect the diversity and creativity of our region.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kāeo Art Classes: This initiative seeks to provide regular art classes for the local community in Kāeo, encouraging artistic expression and skill development. 2. Spoken Word Powerful Expression: A project focused on empowering individuals through spoken word poetry, offering workshops and performance opportunities to explore personal and collective stories. 3. Soundgarden: An innovative musical project aimed at creating community-driven soundscapes and installations, fostering collaboration between local musicians and sound artists. 4. Ngā Toi o Rongo Te Hiku 2024: A comprehensive festival celebrating various forms of Māori art, including carving, weaving, and painting, highlighting the rich cultural heritage of Te Hiku o Te Ika. 5. Celebration Kākahu: This project plans to explore and showcase traditional Māori clothing through a series of workshops and exhibitions, celebrating the artistry and cultural significance of kākahu.

	<p>6. Visual Poetry Jam: An interactive event combining visual art and poetry, encouraging participants to create and share pieces that blend these two expressive forms.</p> <p>7. Mindful Stabbing: A unique project focusing on therapeutic needlework, offering workshops that combine embroidery with mindfulness practices to promote mental wellbeing.</p> <p>8. Finding Venus: An exploratory theatre project delving into historical narratives and contemporary issues, aiming to produce a powerful performance that resonates with the community.</p> <p>We reviewed each application in detail, assessing their potential impact, feasibility, and alignment with our community's creative objectives.</p> <p>The discussions were thorough and thoughtful, with each committee member providing valuable insights and perspectives. We aimed to ensure that the funding would support projects that not only celebrate creativity but also foster community engagement and cultural enrichment.</p> <p>After careful deliberation, we reached a consensus on the allocation of funds. We prioritised projects that demonstrated strong community involvement, innovative approaches, and a clear vision for promoting the arts in Te Hiku o Te Ika.</p> <p>The decision-making process underscored our commitment to nurturing a thriving creative community. We were impressed by the calibre of the applications and the passion behind each project. The funding allocations will be formally communicated to the applicants, and we look forward to seeing these projects come to life.</p>
20/6/24	<p>Fortnightly Mayor and Councillors catch up.</p> <p>Our Mayor and Councillors catch-up meeting is a vital regular gathering where we discuss current issues, updates, and initiatives affecting our district. This meeting provides an opportunity for the Mayor and Councillors to align on strategic priorities, share insights from their respective wards, and collaborate on solutions to challenges facing our communities.</p> <p>During these catch-ups, we review progress on ongoing projects, address new concerns that have arisen, and plan future actions to ensure the wellbeing and growth of our district. Topics often include infrastructure developments, community engagement activities, policy updates, kaupapa Māori and financial management.</p>

	<p>These meetings are essential for maintaining open communication and a unified approach to governance. By staying connected and informed, we can better serve our constituents and work together to achieve our collective goals. The discussions and decisions made in these catch-ups are integral to the effective leadership and smooth operation of our local government.</p>
21/6/24	<p>Pre-Hui Brief – Puketitī with Mayor, Far North Holdings Ltd and Councillors</p> <p>A briefing hui to bring us up to speed on the history behind Māori land at Puketitī before our hui in Otiria the next day.</p>
21/6/24	<p>Hui at Wainui Marae, Ngāti Ruamahue.</p> <p>A significant hui was held at Wainui Marae, hosted by Ngāti Ruamahue, to address critical issues surrounding Motueka Iti, an island situated just off the shores of Mahinepua. This hui was a crucial step in discussing the rates remission for the island, which has been a focal point of Ngāti Ruamahue's efforts to reclaim their ancestral land.</p> <p>The historical context of Motueka Iti is poignant. Like much Māori land, it was confiscated, converted into general title, and sold off to non-Māori. This dispossession has had lasting impacts on Ngāti Ruamahue, who are now engaged in a complex process of reclaiming the island back into their rightful title. The hui aimed to address the support needed from the Council to facilitate this process, particularly in areas such as rates remissions, consenting, and other essential services.</p> <p>In attendance from the Council were myself, Councillor Halyard-Harawira, Lawrence, Dena, and Sophie. I am deeply grateful for their support and commitment to this important kaupapa. The collective effort of our team underscored our dedication to assisting Ngāti Ruamahue in their quest for justice and reclamation.</p> <p>The discussions were both moving and enlightening. The process of reclaiming land, especially under such historical circumstances, is fraught with challenges and emotional weight. It was clear from the hui that Ngāti Ruamahue is navigating a path filled with obstacles, not only in terms of bureaucracy but also in dealing with the emotional and cultural ramifications of reclaiming their ancestral land.</p> <p>I want to express my heartfelt empathy for Ngāti Ruamahue and other hapū and iwi undergoing similar struggles. The journey to reclaim and restore land is a testament to resilience and determination, but it is also marked by significant hardships. The hui was a reminder of the deep-seated injustices that continue to affect Māori communities and the urgent need for comprehensive support from all sectors, including local councils.</p>

	<p>In summary, the hui at Wainui Marae was a crucial step in advancing the discussion around rates remission and support for Motueka Iki. It highlighted both the historical injustices faced by Ngāti Ruamahue and the ongoing commitment required from the Council to support the reclamation process. I am hopeful that with continued collaboration and understanding, we can contribute positively to addressing these longstanding issues and assisting Ngāti Ruamahue in their rightful journey towards reclaiming their land.</p>
<p>22/6/24</p>	<p>Puketitī Hapū Hui at Te Rito Marae, Otiria.</p> <p>I attended the hapū hui that was held at Te Rito Marae, Otiria, bringing together representatives from Ngāti Hine, Ngā Uri o Pūmuka, Te Kaunihera o Te Hiku, Far North Holdings Ltd, and several other rūpū. The focus of the hui was Puketitī, a site steeped in historical and present-day injustices that continue to affect Māori communities.</p> <p>The land at Puketitī, along with other Māori land blocks, was confiscated under the Public Works Act to facilitate the construction of a railway for the transportation of resources. This act of confiscation has had lasting impacts on the descendants of those dispossessed, and the hui served as a stark reminder of the historical wrongs that continue to reverberate through the generations.</p> <p>Currently, the land is owned by an overseas Chinese investor who plans to develop it into housing. The investor, though respectful of tangata whenua, was unaware of the land's significant historical context and the extent of the injustices that have occurred. His respect for Māori and lack of knowledge about the historical significance of the land did little to ease the pain experienced by those present at the hui.</p> <p>The emotional weight of the hui was evident in the kōrero shared by the mokopuna of Pūmuka. It was deeply painful to hear their stories and witness their distress upon learning that the land would not be returned to them. Their faces told a story of hope and despair, exhibiting the broader struggle of Māori communities seeking justice and reclamation of their ancestral lands.</p> <p>The hui highlighted the urgent need for recognition of historical injustices and the importance of addressing these wrongs in contemporary contexts. The emotional response of the mokopuna stressed the ongoing impact of past injustices and the deep desire for healing and restitution.</p> <p>The hui at Te Rito Marae was a powerful reminder of the enduring effects of historical land confiscations and the need for continued advocacy and support for Māori communities. The</p>

	<p>presence of various rōpū, including local authorities and private entities, illustrated the complexity of the issues at hand and the need for collaborative efforts to address these historical and present-day challenges. The heartfelt kōrero from Pūmuka's mokopuna was a poignant reflection of the broader struggle for justice and the importance of acknowledging and addressing past wrongs.</p>
22/6/24	<p>Hui at Vision Kerikeri with Council Staff, Mayor, Councillors and Community Board Chair.</p>
24/6/24	<p>Citizenship Ceremony at Memorial Hall, Kaikohe.</p> <p>I attended a Citizenship Ceremony that was a truly uplifting event. It was wonderful to see all the new whānau officially become Far Northerners and Aotearoa citizens. The sense of pride and joy was evident as they embraced their new status.</p> <p>In attendance were Kahika Moko, Kōwhai Kelly, and staff from the CE Office and Te Hono. Their presence added to the significance of the occasion, highlighting the importance of welcoming new members into our community.</p>
25/5/24	<p>Te Koukou Transport Committee Hui</p> <p>At the recent Te Koukou Transport Committee Hui, we addressed various issues, with a key priority being the establishment of the North Hokianga Roding Committee. This new committee now holds the mandate to oversee and provide guidance on improving roading infrastructure in North Hokianga. We will be working closely to facilitate hui and direct efforts toward bettering the region's road network.</p>
25/6/24	<p>Te Koukou Transport Committee workshop</p>
26/6/24	<p>Extraordinary Council Meeting</p> <p>At our recent Extraordinary Council Meeting, we gathered with the primary goal of setting the rates for the Far North District. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to my colleagues, our CEO, and his dedicated staff. Their relentless effort was instrumental in bringing the expected rates rise down significantly—from an initial 35% to 16.5%, then 8.5%, to 5.1% and finally to a striking 4.5%. Well done to everyone involved!</p>

	<p>While there is still much work ahead of us, I am incredibly proud of this achievement. Despite any external criticisms, this mahi represents a significant step forward for our district, and it's a testament to our combined hard work and commitment.</p>
27/6/24	<p>Puanga Matariki Celebration and Remembrance Hui at Kawakawa with Kōwhai Kelly, Fire and Emergency NZ, Hato Hone St John, NZ Policy, Far North REAP, Ngāti Hine Health Trust and community members.</p>
27/6/24	<p>Te Kuaka Te Ao Māori Komiti Hui</p> <p>The recent Te Kuaka Te Ao Māori Komiti Hui marked a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to enhance our responsiveness and collaboration with iwi on kaupapa Māori. This Komiti was established with the dual purpose of facilitating communication between the Council and iwi and ensuring that our policies and practices reflect Māori perspectives and needs.</p> <p>One of the most compelling highlights of the hui was the report from our staff on the rates write-off for Māori Freehold Land. I was overjoyed by this development. The write-off is a vital step in addressing the barriers that have long impeded Māori land use. Historically, Māori Freehold Land has been subject to substantial rates that have rendered it economically unviable for development or utilisation. This has led to a situation where Māori land remains largely idle, unable to contribute to economic development or community wellbeing. The write-off not only alleviates the financial strain on landowners but also represents a crucial shift towards recognising and addressing the injustices faced by Māori landholders. It is a powerful statement of our commitment to righting historical wrongs and enabling Māori to fully utilise their lands for the benefit of their communities.</p> <p>Another major development that brought great joy was the update on the Te Pae o Uta Framework. This framework, which embodies our collective commitment to integrating kaupapa Māori principles into Council operations, has now been fully implemented across all Council teams. The Te Pae o Uta Framework is more than just a set of guidelines; it is a living testament to our dedication to ensuring that Māori values and perspectives are embedded in every aspect of our work. The successful implementation into Council teams is a significant achievement, ensuring that every team must now acknowledge and abide by the principles set out in this framework. This is a critical step towards ensuring that our policies and practices</p>

	<p>align with kaupapa Māori and that we uphold the values that are central to our relationship with iwi.</p> <p>Looking ahead, the next phase will involve the implementation of the Te Pae o Uta Framework into our Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs). This will extend our commitment even further, ensuring that our CCOs also reflect and uphold the principles of the framework. It is essential that our entire organisational structure, including our CCOs, aligns with the values and principles we are committed to promoting. This step will help ensure that the ethos of Te Pae o Uta permeates every facet of our operations, reinforcing our dedication to kaupapa Māori across all levels of the Council.</p> <p>The hui was a testament to the progress we are making in integrating Māori perspectives and addressing historical inequities. The collaborative efforts of the Te Kuaka Te Ao Māori Komiti, Councillors, and members of Te Kahu o Taonui are paving the way for a more inclusive and responsive approach to Māori issues. I am incredibly proud of the work we have accomplished and optimistic about the continued positive impact of our efforts.</p> <p>Ka mutu, Te Kuaka Te Ao Māori Komiti Hui is a pivotal moment in our journey towards greater integration of kaupapa Māori within Council operations. The rates write-off for Māori Freehold Land and the full implementation of the Te Pae o Uta Framework mark significant achievements. As we move forward with the next steps, including the implementation into our CCOs, we reaffirm our commitment to upholding Māori values and ensuring that our work benefits all members of our community.</p>
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Community Matters

This section should be completed for matters arising within the community, which Council need to be aware of. It could be related to ongoing projects, requests, feedback etc.

Topic	Comment

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