

**Name: Cr Rākena**

**Ward: Ngā Tai o Tokerau**

**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> Sept – 27<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2024**

**Meetings Attended**

Date	Meeting Topic
10/9/24	<p><b><u>Staff and Elected members Teams hui.</u></b></p> <p>I had a productive Teams meeting with several staff and elected members to discuss the critical need for gathering and producing information ahead of our upcoming Council meetings. The main focus of our kōrero was ensuring that the material prepared would provide sufficient depth and clarity for Councillors to make informed decisions regarding our strategic direction.</p> <p>We began by addressing the types of information required, agreeing that a comprehensive approach was essential. This would include not only financial data and project updates but also more detailed reports on the impacts and outcomes of our current initiatives. It was noted that some of the material we've been receiving lately has lacked the depth needed for Councillors to fully grasp the broader implications of certain decisions. This needs to change if we want to maintain our strategic momentum.</p> <p>One of the key points raised was the importance of translating complex data into accessible formats. Several staff members emphasised that while they were confident about the information they were producing, more effort was needed in presenting it in a way that would allow everyone at the table to engage with it fully, regardless of their background. For example, there's a need for clearer executive summaries, concise but comprehensive breakdowns of issues, and visual aids like graphs and charts where applicable. This way, Councillors can quickly understand the significance of what's in front of them without getting lost in the finer details.</p> <p>We also touched on the timeframes. Everyone acknowledged that there has been pressure to produce information at a pace that sometimes compromises its quality. Moving forward, we agreed that it's crucial to build in more time for both staff to prepare</p>

	<p>the material and for Councillors to digest it. This will ensure that the reports are not only thorough but also reflect our commitment to informed governance.</p> <p>In terms of action points, we concluded with a shared commitment to improving the flow of communication between staff and elected members. We will implement more frequent updates ahead of deadlines and schedule briefings where necessary, allowing for any questions to be addressed well in advance of the meetings.</p> <p>Overall, the meeting was a step forward in aligning our processes with the Council's strategic vision. It was heartening to see both staff and elected members committed to ensuring the quality of information meets the high standards required for the significant decisions we face.</p>
10/9/24	<p><b><u>Rating for Whenua Māori Working Group hui.</u></b></p> <p>Our recent Whenua Māori Working Group hui focused on advancing the Council's engagement with Māori Freehold Landowners across the Far North District. The key agenda was the collaboration between Council staff and elected members to refine and support the engagement process. This engagement will involve a series of information hui to be hosted at approximately six marae throughout the district—two in each ward. These hui will provide a platform for whānau to learn about the opportunities available for Māori Freehold Land reclamation and utilisation, particularly in light of the recent legislative changes.</p> <p>The hui are being organised in partnership with relevant stakeholders, including rūnanga, Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK), and other government agencies that share similar aspirations for enhancing the value and use of Māori Freehold Land. A significant element of these meetings will be educating landowners about the Māori Freehold Land (Amendment Act, 2021) and how it empowers local government to wipe outstanding rates on unused or non-rateable Māori land, thus removing financial barriers and enabling whānau to return to and utilise their ancestral lands.</p> <p>The hui opened with a discussion on the importance of coordinated efforts between Council and elected members to engage effectively with Māori Freehold Landowners.</p>

Staff acknowledged the challenge of reaching whānau who may be dispersed, uninformed, or uncertain about the processes involved in reclaiming and making use of their land. The engagement plan, as it currently stands, involves hosting six hui across the district, ensuring a spread that encompasses key areas of Māori Freehold Land. By partnering with rūnanga, TPK, and other government agencies, Council aims to present a unified approach that maximises resources and expertise.

Elected members were sought for their input on how best to engage with landowners and facilitate meaningful dialogue at these hui. There was a strong consensus on the importance of ensuring these meetings are culturally appropriate and led by the right voices—those with mana in the community and deep knowledge of whenua Māori issues. The need for clear, accessible information was also highlighted, ensuring that whānau understand the processes and benefits of the initiatives being proposed.

The Māori Freehold Land (Amendment Act, 2021) represents a significant shift in how Māori Freehold Land can be managed and utilised. The Act provides local governments with the authority to wipe outstanding rates on unused or non-rateable Māori land, a move that removes a substantial financial burden from landowners. This legislation reflects the recognition that many Māori Freehold Land blocks have remained unused due to historical barriers, including complex ownership structures, a lack of access, and punitive rates arrears.

Before the Amendment Act, Māori landowners often found themselves trapped by unpaid rates, which accumulated over years, sometimes even decades. The inability to clear these rates meant that land remained unused and undeveloped, further exacerbating the socio-economic challenges faced by many Māori whānau. The Amendment Act seeks to redress this by giving councils the flexibility to remit these rates, thereby enabling landowners to reclaim their whenua without the shadow of debt looming over them.

Under the new provisions, local authorities can now:

- Wipe all outstanding rates on non-rateable or unused Māori Freehold Land.
- Encourage land utilisation by removing the financial barriers that have long restricted development.

- Provide pathways for whānau to return to and live on their whenua, contribute to the local economy, and ultimately help pay rates in the future.

This legislation offers a transformative opportunity for Māori landowners to reconnect with their whenua, engage in productive land use, and strengthen their ties to their ancestral lands. The Council's role in this is pivotal, as we are now tasked with implementing these legislative changes in a way that supports Māori aspirations while fulfilling our responsibilities as local government.

The primary purpose of the information hui is to inform whānau about the Council's initiatives regarding the remission of rates on unused Māori Freehold Land and how this can be a catalyst for land reclamation and development. The hui will also serve to demystify the application process, outline the steps required for whānau to engage with Council, and explain how they can assist in data collection. Accurate data on landownership, use, and aspirations is crucial for the Council to tailor its support effectively and ensure that the right information is getting to the right people.

A secondary but equally important goal is to gather feedback from landowners and whānau, providing the Council with insights into the challenges they face in accessing and utilising their land. This will not only shape future engagement efforts but also allow us to refine our policies and processes to better meet the needs of Māori landowners.

The hui will focus on the following key areas:

1. Understanding the Māori Freehold Land (Amendment Act, 2021): Explaining how the Act can benefit landowners, particularly in relation to rate remissions and land use.
2. Application Process: Detailing how whānau can apply to have their rates wiped and what documentation or information they need to provide.
3. Support for Land Development: Outlining the resources available from the Council, TPK, and other agencies to support whānau in making their land productive and liveable.

4. Data Collection and Land Use Planning: Encouraging whānau to share their land use intentions, ownership details, and any barriers they have faced in developing their whenua. This data will assist the Council in tailoring its future support and strategies.

5. Moving Back to the Whenua: Encouraging landowners to consider returning to their whenua, utilising it for housing, horticulture, agriculture, or other forms of sustainable development. The Council hopes that by wiping rates, whānau will be able to move back to the land, contribute to the local economy, and eventually be in a position to pay rates on the land they are using.

The role of elected members in this engagement process cannot be understated. As representatives of their communities, elected members have a direct line to the people who will benefit most from these initiatives. Their involvement in the hui is crucial, not only to lend their mana and authority to the discussions but also to ensure that the information is conveyed in a way that resonates with the community.

During the hui, staff emphasised the importance of elected members helping to facilitate these engagements, by supporting the organisation of the hui, promoting the events within their wards, and ensuring that key stakeholders are informed and involved. Their local knowledge and connections are invaluable in ensuring that whānau feel heard, understood, and supported throughout the process.

Additionally, elected members will play a key role in advocating for ongoing Council support and ensuring that the initiatives discussed at the hui translate into real, tangible outcomes for Māori landowners. This means maintaining an open line of communication between the Council and the community, monitoring progress, and addressing any issues or roadblocks that may arise.

The Whenua Māori Working Group hui marked an important step in the Council's efforts to support Māori Freehold Landowners in reclaiming and utilising their whenua. By holding information hui at marae across the district, in partnership with rūnanga, TPK, and other government agencies, we are providing a crucial platform for whānau to engage with Council, understand the benefits of the Māori Freehold Land (Amendment Act, 2021), and take the necessary steps to reclaim their land.

	<p>The hui also reinforced the importance of collaboration between staff and elected members in this process. Elected members' involvement will be vital in ensuring the success of the engagement efforts and the long-term sustainability of the initiatives being rolled out.</p> <p>The next steps involve confirming the dates and locations of the hui, finalising the information packs for landowners, and ensuring that all relevant government agencies are on board. We also need to establish clear pathways for collecting and managing the data provided by whānau, ensuring that their input shapes the direction of our ongoing efforts to support Māori Freehold Land utilisation. By working together, we can help whānau return to their whenua, utilise it in meaningful ways, and contribute to the wellbeing of their communities and the district as a whole.</p> <p>More information on what our Council is doing in this space is available on our website: <a href="https://www.fndc.govt.nz/services/Maori-development/Rating-of-Maori-Freehold-Land">https://www.fndc.govt.nz/services/Maori-development/Rating-of-Maori-Freehold-Land</a></p>
12/9/24	<b><u>Council Hui.</u></b>
16/9/24	<p><b><u>Report on Comms and Engagement Hui.</u></b></p> <p>As part of my portfolio, alongside Councillor Vujcich, I meet with the Communications and Engagement team once a month to discuss the progress of various projects, community engagement initiatives, and the overall direction of communications from our Council. These meetings, often led by Ken Lewis, are a crucial element in ensuring that the Far North District Council (FNDC) maintains clear, transparent, and timely communications with our communities.</p> <p>The most recent hui provided an update from Ken on the work the comms team has been doing, along with forecasts for upcoming projects. These updates are vital, as they help us stay informed on how the district is being notified about key events, consultation processes, and Council decisions. One of the main kaupapa of the hui was forward planning for the 2025 local body elections, which has become a significant</p>

focus not only for the comms team but also for our CEO and elected members. There is a strong push to improve both the delivery of information and overall community participation in both the local and general elections.

The discussion around the 2025 local body elections was particularly robust, as it has become a critical project for the comms team in the coming years. There is widespread recognition that increasing voter turnout and participation in local democracy is essential, especially in a district as diverse and geographically spread out as the Far North.

Ken outlined some of the strategies the team is developing to promote the elections, including targeted communications that aim to reach younger voters, rural communities, and Māori. The goal is to ensure that all parts of our district feel informed, engaged, and able to participate in the election process. This includes ramping up social media campaigns, producing accessible resources on how to vote, and providing clear, concise explanations of the Council's work and the importance of local governance.

Elected members and the CEO are keen to see an improvement in voter turnout, and the comms team is tasked with playing a pivotal role in delivering on this objective. This will require consistent messaging, the use of diverse communication channels, and the creation of engaging content that captures the attention of a wide demographic.

While the hui covered many positive aspects of the comms team's work, I must express my disappointment in some key areas that I assumed were business as usual. Specifically, there seems to be a noticeable lack of planning, recognition, and integration around kaupapa Māori and national celebrations such as Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori, Matariki, He Whakaputanga, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and others. These events are not only significant national holidays but are also embedded in our Council's strategic direction and, frankly, should be a priority when it comes to our communications planning.

Te Pae o Uta, the Te Reo and Tikanga policy, and our commitments under Te Tiriti o Waitangi are all central to what we as a Council stand for, yet I find myself constantly following up on these matters as though I am a paid staff member tasked with ensuring they receive proper attention. This is incredibly frustrating, as it is not just a matter of good governance—it is about honouring our obligations to Māori and reflecting the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa.

One of the main concerns I raised in the hui was the apparent lack of passion and understanding from the comms team regarding these kaupapa. These are not optional or peripheral items on our agenda; they are embedded in our district's fabric, representing our commitment to tangata whenua and the unique identity of the Far North. It is disappointing that there seems to be a gap between what we as elected members believe is crucial and how this is being actioned within the communications team.

Events like Matariki and Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori should not be afterthoughts or last-minute communications exercises. They deserve thoughtful planning and engagement, not just because they are nationally recognised events, but because they resonate deeply with our local communities. As a Council, we have made significant commitments through our strategic direction to support and promote kaupapa Māori, yet this is not being reflected in our communications planning.

Despite these frustrations, I acknowledge that the comms team has an important and often challenging role to play in ensuring that our communities are kept informed and engaged. The work they do around upcoming events, consultation processes, and data collection is key to fostering a transparent and participatory local government. However, there is much room for improvement when it comes to integrating kaupapa Māori into the Council's broader communications strategy.

Moving forward, I will continue to advocate for stronger planning and recognition of our commitments to kaupapa Māori. This includes ensuring that events such as Matariki, Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori, and other significant occasions are given the time, resources, and respect they deserve. I will also be following up with the comms team to ensure that the strategies discussed for the 2025 local body elections are implemented

	<p>effectively, with a particular focus on increasing participation from Māori and other underrepresented groups in our district.</p> <p>While there is positive work being done, particularly around the elections, there are key gaps that need to be addressed. Our communities deserve communications that reflect the full scope of our district's diversity and values, and I will continue to push for improvements in how we engage with and honour our commitments to kaupapa Māori.</p>
17/9/24	<p><b><u>Kaikohe Library &amp; Civic Hub Hui Report hui.</u></b></p> <p>Our recent hui regarding the Kaikohe Library &amp; Civic Hub was both insightful and encouraging, with significant input from a range of stakeholders. We had the pleasure of a detailed and engaging presentation from ĀKAU Design, who shared their vision for the project and how it aligns with the community's aspirations. Their approach, which centres around reflecting the identity and culture of Kaikohe, was well-received, and it was evident that their commitment to co-designing spaces with local input is key to the success of this project.</p> <p>ĀKAU's presentation touched on various design elements that resonate with the unique character of Kaikohe, highlighting the importance of creating a civic space that feels both welcoming and functional for all members of the community. They showcased how the design would incorporate aspects of local culture, ensuring that the hub will be a space that reflects the people and history of the area. Their collaborative process with local schools, hapū, and community champions stood out as a model of how the development of public spaces can be more inclusive and community-driven.</p> <p>Following ĀKAU's presentation, we received a comprehensive update from Far North Holdings Ltd, who provided clarity on the work schedule, timelines, and budgets. The update outlined both the milestones achieved so far and the road ahead. It was reassuring to hear that, despite some challenges, the project is progressing steadily. One of the primary obstacles discussed was around the budget constraints, particularly in light of rising costs in the construction sector. However, the team from</p>

	<p>Far North Holdings remains committed to keeping the project within scope while ensuring that the quality of the build is not compromised.</p> <p>The timeline update showed that key milestones are being met, although there have been some delays due to external factors, such as material shortages and contractor availability. Nevertheless, the team has been proactive in addressing these issues, and the projected completion dates remain within a reasonable timeframe. Importantly, the project remains aligned with the broader goals set out by the Council and community, and it was clear that everyone involved is working diligently to keep things on track.</p> <p>Another positive aspect of the hui was the opportunity to gather input from a diverse group of attendees. Representatives from local kura, hapū, businesses, and Kaikohe community champions shared their perspectives, which enriched the discussion and provided valuable feedback. Having voices from across the community in these meetings is crucial, as it ensures that the final outcome of the project truly serves the needs and aspirations of Kaikohe residents.</p> <p>One of the recurring themes during the hui was the importance of the civic hub as a catalyst for revitalising the heart of Kaikohe. The community sees the project not just as a library or a civic building, but as a central space for whānau, rangatahi, and kaumātua to gather, learn, and connect. The collaborative spirit of the hui reflected this vision, with a shared understanding that this hub has the potential to be a cornerstone for future growth and development in the town.</p> <p>In closing, I greatly value the regular monthly updates provided by SLT member Ruben Garcia regarding this project.</p> <p>For more information, please see our online platform; <a href="https://www.fndc.govt.nz/Whats-new/Current-projects/kaikohe-library-project">https://www.fndc.govt.nz/Whats-new/Current-projects/kaikohe-library-project</a></p>
18/9/24	<p><b><u>Creative Communities Committee hui.</u></b></p>

Unfortunately I was unable to attend this meeting due to a clash in meetings from my business calendar. Please see below the community groups and their projects who applied for funding in this hui;

Circability Trust	Kanohi Kitea 2024
Hidden Pocket Production	Flock! The Muscial
<del>Kaitaia Floral Art Club</del>	<del>Wearable Art with Flowers</del>
Doubtless Bay Floral Art Club	Northland Area 2024 Designer of the Year
Northern Dance Academy Trust	Ballet Workshop and holiday programme
Marita Hewitt	Sculpture Installation
The Centre	ThisIsUsHereNow Community Art Project
Our Kerikeri Community Charitable Trust	Kerikeri Summer Jazz Festival 2025
Te Kura o Hato Hohepa Te Kamura	Kia Tupu Tangata Ai - Whangaroa Arts Festival

20-  
21/9/24

### **The unveiling of the new waharoa at Mātihetihe marae.**

On the 20th of September, I had the honour of attending a wānanga at Mātihetihe Marae, which was held in preparation for the unveiling of the new waharoa (entranceway). It was a significant occasion, drawing together more than 80 whānau members, from pēpi to kaumātua, all gathered to discuss, reflect, and finalise the details of the upcoming event. The discussions were full of mana and underscored the importance of ensuring that every aspect of the tikanga was considered and adhered to. It was an enriching process for the marae and hapū, providing an opportunity for

all whānau to share their views and knowledge, and to agree on the correct steps moving forward.

Throughout the wānanga, a range of important questions and decisions were deliberated. A central point of discussion was around who would be given the responsibility to unveil the waharoa. This role was not just about lifting a cover; it was about selecting someone who carried the right whakapapa, mana, and connection to the marae, the hapū, and the significance of the occasion. Further, discussions extended to the reading of the wording on the new plaque, an equally significant role that required a person who could not only read the words but embody the kaupapa behind them.

The kōrero also touched on whether the inclusion of a puhi would be relevant to the ceremony. The use of a puhi, a young female of high status within the whānau, can hold great cultural significance in certain contexts, so there was careful debate around whether her role was appropriate for this occasion. Ensuring that the tikanga for this unveiling was upheld was paramount, and the wānanga provided a space to ensure all voices were heard and that the correct pathway forward was found.

The whakapapa and kōrero behind the waharoa, both old and new, were also central to the wānanga. Discussions unfolded about the history of the original carvings and how they would be honoured in this new phase, alongside the symbolism of the new carvings. This is where the carvers, who had worked on the waharoa, shared the whakapapa behind their craft and the thought process behind the designs. The history and significance of the waharoa were layered in meaning, connected to the ancestral narratives of the hapū, with the carvers playing a pivotal role in bringing those stories to life through the intricate woodwork.

The wānanga then turned to the appointment of those who would partake in the sacred incantations during the unveiling ceremony. This required careful consideration of whakapapa, knowledge of the incantations, and the ability to carry the mana of those who had gone before. This was not a decision to be taken lightly, as the incantations would call upon the ancestors, the elements, and the mauri of the place to bless the new waharoa and ensure it would stand strong for generations to come.

The following day, on the 21st of September, the unveiling and blessing of the new waharoa began at 5.30am sharp. We gathered before dawn, standing in the shadow of Tarakeha maunga, waiting for the first light to pierce the horizon. Matua Doug Te Wake led the proceedings with Catholic prayers, grounding the ceremony in the dual spiritual traditions that many of our marae uphold. Matua Doug then passed the mantle to Kahika Moko, who carried out the incantations of Nukutawhiti, the captain of the great waka Ngātokimatawhaorua. This particular incantation holds immense historical weight for the people of Hokianga, as it invokes the arrival of Nukutawhiti upon the shores of Te Wahapū o Hokianga.

It was fitting that Kahika Moko, a direct descendant of Himiona Kāmira, was the one to recite this karakia. Himiona Kāmira, a revered tupuna of the hapū, was responsible for bringing this karakia back to life, ensuring its survival and continued relevance within the whakapapa of the people. Standing there, hearing Kahika bring forth the words of his tupuna, there was a palpable sense of continuity, of the past reaching into the present through the voice of the descendants.

Following this, I had the honour of reciting karakia Haumanu, whakanoa, and whakawātea. These prayers serve to clear the path, to ensure the new waharoa is not only spiritually safe but also open to the future generations who will pass through it. It was important to acknowledge the layers of tikanga that are woven into the fabric of our marae, and to ensure those layers were honoured and upheld.

The final karakia was led by tohunga carver and linguistic expert, Bernard Makoare of Kaihū. Bernard's contribution was significant, not only because of his skills as a carver but because of the depth of knowledge he holds in te reo Māori and tikanga. His karakia — Te Kawa o Tāne, Te Mauri o Rongo, and Te Mana o Ruatēpupuke — brought the ceremony to a close. These karakia, which relate to the gods of the forest, peace, and the arts, respectively, encapsulated the spiritual foundation upon which the new waharoa now stands. Bernard's involvement was not just ceremonial but deeply connected to the kaupapa of the waharoa, as both a creator of the physical structure and as a guardian of the spiritual traditions tied to it.

It was a special honour to have Meng Foon attend the event. As the former Mayor of Gisborne and Race Relations Commissioner, Meng Foon's presence carried a great deal of mana. Not only does he hold a strong reputation for his work promoting racial equality and supporting diverse communities across Aotearoa, but his connection to Mātihetihe is also tied to the SS Ventnor tragedy. The Ventnor, a ship carrying the remains of 499 Chinese gold miners who had passed away in Aotearoa, sank off the coast of Hokianga in 1902. Mātihetihe, along with other local iwi, played a crucial role in recovering and caring for the remains that washed ashore. This tragic event has forged a bond between Mātihetihe Marae and the Chinese community, and Meng's attendance as part of the Chinese delegation underscored this ongoing connection.

The Chinese delegation regularly pays homage to the care that was shown by the marae and the wider Hokianga community, and Meng Foon's attendance reinforced the respect and gratitude that the Chinese people continue to hold for Mātihetihe Marae. His role in New Zealand as Race Relations Commissioner sees him working to strengthen relationships between communities, making his presence at this ceremony not only significant in the context of the Ventnor tragedy but also in the broader effort to build unity and understanding between cultures.

The entire occasion was a testament to the whānau, hapū, and marae community's ability to work together to bring a vision to life. I extend my thanks to the marae committee for their tireless efforts, in particular to Kyla Campbell, the Chair, and Te Hāpai Ō for their role in turning this long-held dream into a reality. The whānau of Mātihetihe Marae now have a waharoa that stands not only as an entranceway but as a symbol of their strength, history, and future aspirations.

I would also like to acknowledge Tristan Marler and Michael Dunn, whose contributions behind the scenes helped to bring this project to fruition. The unveiling of the new waharoa is a significant milestone for Mātihetihe Marae, and it was heartening to see the warmth and pride with which the community embraced this moment. This new waharoa will stand for generations, welcoming all who come to the marae and serving as a lasting tribute to the strength and mana of the hapū.







21/9/24	<p><b><u>The opening of Waipuna o Hine Te Aparangi wharekai.</u></b></p> <p>On a remarkable day in Whakarapa, Panguru, I had the honour of attending the long-anticipated opening of the renewed wharekai at Whakarapa Marae, named Waipuna o Hine Te Aparangi. As an elected member, I was proud to be part of this momentous occasion, joining over 300 individuals who gathered to celebrate the culmination of years of hard work, determination, and whānau collaboration. Attendees travelled from near and far, with some coming from as distant as Western Australia. Among them were pēpi, school groups, kaumātua, kapa haka groups, and a wide cross-section of the community, including Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa, Te Rōpū Kapa Haka o Te Au Warawara, Kaikohe Hokianga Board Chair Rudkin (Te Waihou nui a Rua) and past political leaders. The diversity of the gathering showcased the strength of the ties that bind whānau and hapū to this marae and its significance to the wider North Hokianga community.</p> <p>The journey to restore and renew the wharekai, Waipuna o Hine Te Aparangi, has been one of perseverance, challenges, and a steadfast commitment to seeing the project through. Over four years, the process has seen its fair share of ups and downs, from securing funding to navigating unexpected obstacles. However, the strength of the community—its hapū, whānau, and leaders—never wavered.</p> <p>This wharekai is more than just a dining hall; it is a living symbol of the unity and resilience of the people of Whakarapa, whose dedication ensured that this lifeline for the marae was restored to its full potential. It was clear from the day's events that the journey had been one of immense pride for everyone involved. As the whānau gathered to celebrate the reopening, the emotional significance of the moment was insightful.</p> <p>Waipuna o Hine Te Aparangi stands on the hallowed grounds of the marae of Kahurangi Whina Cooper, one of the most revered leaders in Māori history. Born in Te Karaka, Panguru, Dame Whina Cooper's legacy as a tireless advocate for Māori land rights, her unwavering commitment to social justice, and her leadership of the historic</p>

1975 Land March from Te Hāpua to Wellington continue to inspire generations. Her presence loomed large over the event, as her marae—Whakarapa—once again became a focal point for her descendants and the wider hapū.

The hapū of Whakarapa, including Te Waiariki, Ngāti Manawa, and Te Kaitūtae, all trace their roots to this whenua, nestled under the protective gaze of Panguru maunga. The marae's iwi, Te Rarawa, is deeply entwined in the stories of this land and its people. On this special day, the renewed wharekai stood as a testament to the strength and mana of Whina Cooper's people and their enduring connection to the land, the marae, and their ancestors.

Wharekai have always been integral to the life of a marae, and Waipuna o Hine Te Aparangi is no exception. It is a space of nourishment, not only in the physical sense but also spiritually and culturally. In this space, whānau come together to share kai, kōrero, laughter, and stories. It is where connections are strengthened, and where the manaakitanga of the hapū is extended to all who visit.

The reopening of the wharekai is particularly significant for the North Hokianga. In times of crisis—such as Cyclone Gabrielle, which devastated parts of Aotearoa in 2022—marae like Whakarapa play a vital role in ensuring the survival and well-being of the entire community, both Māori and non-Māori. These spaces become centres of refuge, providing shelter, food, and support when the need is greatest. The refurbishment of Waipuna o Hine Te Aparangi ensures that Whakarapa Marae will continue to be a place of safety and sustenance for generations to come.

The opening ceremony began in the early hours of the morning, steeped in the rituals and traditions of the ancestors. It was a morning of spiritual significance, with the first rays of dawn illuminating the new wharekai as whānau gathered to begin the proceedings.

The Catholic karakia was led by Matua Doug Te Wake, grounding the proceedings in the faith that is deeply rooted in the Panguru community. Following the Catholic prayers, Kahika Moko recited Te karakia a Nukutawhiti, invoking the spirit of the great navigator and leader who first arrived in Hokianga on the Ngātokimatawhaorua waka.

This karakia carries immense mana, and its recitation by Kahika Moko was a poignant reminder of the ancestral strength that underpins the history of this marae and its people.

I had the honour of delivering the whakatūwheratanga, a karakia to open the space, ensuring it was cleansed, sanctified, and ready to welcome all who would enter. The ceremony continued with Michael Marsden, the mokopuna of the esteemed tohunga Māori Marsden, who shared his kōrero and further karakia. It was fitting that he, as a direct descendant of such a respected tohunga, would be part of this important event.

The ceremony concluded with Bernard Makoare, a tohunga carver and linguistic champion, reciting Te Kawa o Tāne, Te Mauri o Rongo, and Te Mana o Ruatēpūke. These invocations, grounded in ancient Māori tradition, set the spiritual foundation for the newly refurbished wharekai, ensuring that it would remain a place of mana and significance for all who gather there.

The success of this monumental project is due in large part to the unwavering leadership of the marae committee. Under the guidance of the chair, Tangiroa, and the support of countless whānau members, this dream became a reality. Their tireless efforts over the past four years, through all the highs and lows, were crucial to bringing Waipuna o Hine Te Aparangi back to life. The committee's leadership has been a source of inspiration for the community, and their dedication has ensured that this wharekai will serve future generations with the same mana and significance as it has in the past.

It is also important to acknowledge those who played a role but have since passed on. Their contributions remain woven into the very fabric of this marae and their legacy will endure through the space they helped create. The whānau who supported this kaupapa deserve our deepest gratitude, for without their hard work, we would not have been able to celebrate the completion of this project.

The opening of Waipuna o Hine Te Aparangi was, at its core, a celebration of whakapapa. This wharekai, standing proudly in the shadow of Panguru maunga, carries the stories, histories, and legacies of the ancestors. It is a symbol of the

endurance of Māori identity, culture, and tikanga, and a living testament to the strength of the community that built it.

As the celebration unfolded, it was impossible not to feel the weight of history in the air. The kōrero shared by kaumātua and whānau throughout the day connected those present with the ancestors, reaffirming the importance of remembering and honouring the past as we look to the future.

The kapa haka performances by Te Rōpū Kapa Haka o Te Au Warawara were especially moving, as they echoed through the marae grounds, lifting the spirits of all present. These performances embodied the cultural richness of the people of Panguru and reminded us all of the importance of preserving and celebrating our traditions.

The opening of the renewed wharekai at Whakarapa Marae, Waipuna o Hine Te Aparangi, was a day that will be remembered for generations. It was a celebration of the people, the land, and the legacy of those who came before us. The event was a powerful reminder of the importance of community, whakapapa, and the enduring strength of Māori culture.

This new wharekai is a lifeline for the marae and the wider North Hokianga community. In times of joy and sorrow, in times of crisis or celebration, *Waipuna o Hine Te Aparangi* will be there to serve its people. It is a space that will continue to bring whānau together, nourish the spirit, and uphold the mana of the land and its people. To the marae committee, chair Tangiroa, and all the whānau who worked tirelessly to see this project through, we offer our deepest thanks. Your dedication and hard work have given the community a gift that will endure for generations. To those who have passed on, your memory lives on in this place. *Waipuna o Hine Te Aparangi* is your legacy, and it will continue to stand as a beacon of hope, resilience, and strength for all who come through its doors.







22/8/24 **Moringai**

Unfortunately I was unable to attend this kaupapa, however, I do find it necessary to provide a small report on this hui.

The unveiling of the pou at Moringai was a significant occasion, marking the recognition of Ngā Hapū o Te Ahiparapara and the tupuna Toakai, while also celebrating the return of this sacred land to the public. The beautifully carved pou stands as a symbol of heritage, strength, and unity. This event highlighted the strong connection between the hapū and their whenua, and reinforced the partnership with the Council. With this shared milestone, the relationship between Ngā Hapū o Te Ahiparapara and the Council is poised to grow stronger, cultivating collaboration and mutual respect for future generations.



23-  
27/9/24

**Rev Judy Anne Cooper (QSM)**

In my report, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the extraordinary life and work of my grandmother, Nanny Judy. While this is not directly related to my Council duties, her legacy is something I believe deserves recognition for the immense impact she had on our whānau, community, and generations of Māori across Tāmaki Makaurau and beyond.

Nanny Judy was the second child of Nikorima Waiomio and Merata Kopa, both of Ngāti Hine descent, a lineage that she held with immense pride. She carried the strength and mana of her tūpuna, which would see her become a respected figure in numerous spheres over the course of her life. She had six children with Paewhenua Witehira of Ngāi Tū before later raising some of her tamariki on her own in Glen Eden, West Auckland. As a single mother, Nanny Judy demonstrated remarkable resilience, strength, and aroha in ensuring her tamariki were not only well cared for but deeply connected to their whakapapa, their culture, and their reo.

In her later years, Nanny Judy's work would resonate far beyond her own whānau. She became a pivotal figure in the establishment of kōhanga reo throughout Tāmaki Makaurau, ensuring that tamariki Māori had access to early childhood education that was steeped in the reo and tikanga of their ancestors. Her commitment to the revitalisation of te reo Māori was unwavering, and she gave her all to this kaupapa, understanding its critical importance for future generations. As a kaiako at kura such as Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Hoani Waititi, she continued to nurture and inspire tamariki Māori, instilling in them a love for their culture and language.

Her influence was not confined to education alone. Nanny Judy was a founding member of esteemed kapa haka rūpū like Te Rautahi and Manutaki, contributing to the preservation and celebration of Māori performing arts. Her leadership in kapa haka was renowned, and she was admired not only for her knowledge of waiata and haka but for the depth of manaakitanga and tikanga she upheld within these rūpū. She believed kapa haka was more than just performance—it was a way to maintain and pass on the richness of Māori identity, and she embraced it with passion.

Nanny Judy was also an ordained Anglican minister, trained alongside others under the guidance of Bishop Te Kitohi Pikaahu. This role brought with it a multitude of responsibilities that she carried with grace and humility. Whether it was taking services for funerals, weddings, unveilings, or opening new buildings, she served her community faithfully, offering spiritual guidance and support wherever it was needed. Her ministry extended to hospital visits, christenings, and any other occasion where her presence was requested, and she never hesitated to offer her time and energy. Her faith was a cornerstone of her life, and she brought the same compassion, kindness, and love to her role as a minister that she did to every other aspect of her life.

Her work with Te Whānau o Waipareira, local authorities, and other organisations further cemented her role as a leader in her community. She built strong relationships with leaders across Tāmaki Makaurau, including the former Waitakere City Mayor Sir Bob Harvey, whom she was close to. Her friendships with Sir Pita Sharples and Dame June Mariu, among many others, reflected the respect she garnered among her peers

and the wider community. She was a friend, confidante, and advisor to many, and her words were always spoken with sincerity and wisdom.

Nanny Judy was a woman of immense mana, but she was also known for her infectious love for life and everything in it. She loved her animals—her birds, cats, dogs, chickens, and any other creatures that crossed her path. She approached life with an open heart, embracing the small joys and finding happiness in everything she did. Her capacity for love, laughter, and kindness knew no bounds, and those who were fortunate enough to be in her presence felt the warmth and generosity of her spirit.

Nanny Judy lived to the age of 92, and while she is no longer with us, her legacy remains ever-present. She left behind a legacy of aroha, resilience, and leadership. Her life's work—whether it was through her dedication to kōhanga reo, her kapa haka leadership, her ministry, or her countless acts of service—continues to shape the lives of those she touched.

For me, her mokopuna, Nanny Judy was not just a grandmother but a guiding light. She exemplified what it meant to live a life of purpose, to serve your people, and to stand tall in your identity as Māori. Her legacy is one that I, and countless others, will carry forward in our own lives, always striving to uphold the values she lived by.

Her passing marked the end of an era, but her influence will endure for generations to come. Nanny Judy's work was a testament to her untiring belief in the power of te reo Māori, tikanga Māori, and the strength of whānau. She was a beacon of love and leadership, and her presence will be sorely missed by all who knew her. As I reflect on her life, I remember her not only for what she did but for who she was—a woman of immense mana, deep aroha, and an unshakable commitment to her people.

In closing, I want to thank my friends, extended whānau and elected colleagues for attending the funeral and for sending through messages of support. Ka nui nei taku aroha ki a koutou.

Moe mai rā e Nanny Judy – ko te here o te aroha, ka mauroa.



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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