

Name: Cr Rākena

Ward: Ngā Tai o Tokerau

Date: 6th Nov – 2nd Dec, 2024

Meetings Attended

Please note that this report may not include all events, as some may be unscheduled or incidental. Such kaupapa may include radio interviews, Council-related discussions with community members, follow-ups on emails, and impromptu meetings with staff and elected members.

5th Nov: Governance to Governance with Far North Holdings Ltd

As Councillor, I attended a governance meeting with Far North Holdings Ltd to strengthen alignment between Council and the organisation. Discussions centred on infrastructure projects, economic development, and challenges faced by Far North Holdings. Key topics included future-proofing roading and port facilities, ensuring sustainability, and engaging with hapū and iwi. It's important in these hui to maintain transparency and partnership to benefit our communities. Constructive dialogue highlighted the need for collaborative approaches in decision-making.

6th Nov: Annual Plan 2024/25

Today's meeting focused on setting the groundwork for the Annual Plan 2024/25. We reviewed financial projections, community priorities, and feedback gathered through engagement. I raised the importance of prioritising funding for infrastructure in rural areas while maintaining affordability for ratepayers. Equity in resource allocation and alignment with long-term goals were recurring themes. The meeting provided clarity on timelines and public consultation processes.

7th Nov: Te Huia - Executive Review Committee

The Executive Review Committee met to evaluate Council's performance and leadership effectiveness. As a Councillor, I contributed to discussions on governance best practices, organisational culture, and strategic direction. Key outcomes included identifying opportunities for improving accountability and reviewing executive performance metrics.

7th Nov: Ngā Tai o Tokerau Māori Ward Councillors / Te Kuaka Coordinator Monthly Hui

This hui was an opportunity for Māori Ward Councillors and the Te Kuaka Coordinator to reflect on progress and plan upcoming initiatives. Discussions included the implementation of Te Pae o Uta across council teams, improving engagement with hapū and iwi, and Māori-specific projects. We shared updates on advocacy efforts and explored ways to enhance collaboration. The hui reinforced our collective responsibility to uphold mana Māori in council operations.

10th Nov: Pōwhiri at Pōtahi Marae for Toitū Te Tiriti Hīkoi ki Pāremata

Attending the pōwhiri at Pōtahi Marae was deeply moving. It marked the beginning of the Toitū Te Tiriti Hīkoi, a significant kaupapa aimed at affirming the Treaty partnership between Tangata Whenua and the Crown. Speakers shared powerful messages about tino rangatiratanga, justice, and unity. As Councillor, I felt privileged to support this journey, acknowledging the past while strengthening future aspirations.

11th Nov: Karakia at Te Rerenga Wairua for Toitū Te Tiriti Hīkoi ki Pāremata

Standing at Te Rerenga Wairua for the karakia was humbling and profoundly spiritual. It was a moment to reflect on the purpose of the Toitū Te Tiriti Hīkoi. The kōrero honoured our tūpuna, the enduring significance of Te Tiriti, and the mana of those carrying this kaupapa to Pāremata. The wairua of unity and determination was evident throughout.

12th Nov: "State of the Far North" Event at the Turner Centre, Kerikeri

The "State of the Far North" event provided a platform to address community members on our district's challenges and achievements. Kahika Moko spoke on key areas, including infrastructure, housing, water, LTP and the huge success of our 2024 rates increase...if you would even call it an increase. I'm confident that the evening quenched the community's desire for greater transparency and equity in resource distribution. The event was a reminder of the importance of open dialogue and collective problem-solving.

13th Nov: Kaikohe Library & Civic Hub Steering Group Meeting

This meeting provided updates on the Kaikohe Library and Civic Hub project. We discussed project timelines, funding challenges, design updates, addition of toilet blocks and community feedback. As Councillor, I reiterated the need for the hub to reflect Kaikohe's unique identity, aspirations, functionality and longevity. The focus remained on delivering a facility that serves as both a functional space and a community asset for all to enjoy.

14th Nov: Full Council Meeting

The full Council meeting covered a wide range of topics, including budgets, resource consents, and community updates.

18th Nov: Comms & Engagement Portfolio Monthly Catch-Up

In this session, I reviewed ongoing communications strategies and community engagement plans with the team. We discussed improving access to council information, addressing misinformation, and enhancing storytelling to highlight Council's work through our social media platforms. I advocated for better engagement with Māori communities through culturally appropriate channels.

19th Nov: Toitū Te Tiriti Hīkoi ki Te Whanga-Nui-a-Tara

The hīkoi to Te Whanga-Nui-a-Tara was a powerful expression of collective commitment to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi. As part of the group, I witnessed heartfelt kōrero and unity among participants from all walks of life and racial backgrounds. Presenting our kaupapa to Pāremata reinforced the importance of acknowledging history, addressing inequities and the fact that Māori never ceded sovereignty.

23rd Nov: Whenua Māori Hui at Waipuna Marae, Whakarapa

At Waipuna Marae, we gathered to discuss whenua Māori challenges, particularly rating and development barriers. The kōrero was rich and passionate, reflecting the community's determination to protect and utilise ancestral land. I supported calls for legislative reform to reduce obstacles and strengthen Māori landowners' autonomy. We were also grateful to have Kath from Te Kōti Whenua Māori attend this hui and provide some expert advice around whenua Māori and how whānau can access their services.

26th Nov: Te Koukou Transport and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

This meeting provided updates on infrastructure projects across North Hokianga. Key topics included roading, drainage, and funding allocations. I emphasised the urgency of addressing safety concerns and ensuring rural communities have reliable infrastructure to support their needs.

26th Nov: Te Koukou Transport Committee Workshop

The workshop explored strategies for prioritising infrastructure projects in North Hokianga. Collaborative discussions focused on aligning priorities with community needs while managing resource constraints. I highlighted the importance of maintaining open communication with residents to ensure transparency through reporting.

27th Nov: Interview with Joel from Te Hiku Media

I spoke with Joel about council priorities, including Māori ward representation, infrastructure, whenua Māori hui and local challenges. The kōrero allowed me to share insights on key initiatives and highlight Council's work addressing community concerns. The interview reinforced the value of engaging through media to keep our whānau informed.

27th Nov: Whenua Māori Rating Relief Working Group Feedback Session

The session reviewed feedback on rating relief proposals for whenua Māori. I supported measures aimed at reducing financial burdens and empowering Māori landowners. Discussions emphasised the need for fairness, equity, and alignment with tikanga Māori.

27th Nov: Te Maruata Monthly Wānanga

At the Te Maruata wānanga, I joined discussions on strengthening Māori governance in local government. We shared updates on challenges and successes within our respective councils, focusing on enhancing Māori representation and addressing inequities. The kōrero was enriching and insightful.

29th Nov: Kawemate o Tūheitia Pōtatau Te Wherowhero VII at Te Kāo, Pōtahi Marae

Attending the kawemate was a moment to honour Tūheitia Pōtatau Te Wherowhero VII and support whānau and hapū. The pōwhiri was moving, and the kōrero reflected the mana and legacy of the Tainui leader. It was a privilege to be part of such a significant kaupapa for tea o Māori.

2nd Dec: Te Kuaka Te Ao Māori Standing Committee Agenda Preview

I reviewed the agenda for the upcoming Te Kuaka meeting, ensuring it aligns with kaupapa Māori priorities. Key items included updates on Te Pae o Uta implementation and strategies to enhance engagement with iwi and hapū. The preview allowed me to prepare for meaningful contributions at the hui.