



FIVE CATCHMENTS, NATIONWIDE

MĀORI ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION

PROJECT DETAILS

Project cost:

Individual catchment budgets vary according to project staging. For example, total for three North Island catchments in 2019 = \$25,000; for South Island catchments \$50,000

Locations:

Five Living water Catchments:

Wairua River, Northland

Pūkoro-Miranda, Hauraki

Lakes Areare, Ruatuna, Rotomānuka, Waikato

Ararira-LII River, Canterbury

Parties:

Living Water Partnership

Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngā Wai Māori

Ngāti Paoa

Ngāti Apakura

Waikato Tainui

Ngāi Tahu

Te Taumutu Rūnanga

Awarua Rūnanga

Project purpose:

To build strong, stable relationships with mana whenua that will enable knowledge sharing, contribute to the protection of our cultural and natural heritage, and grow the scale and impact of our work over the long-term.

Desired outcome:

Enhanced kaitiakitanga, greater Māori participation in ecosystem restoration projects, Mātauranga Māori interwoven into as many Living Water projects as practicable.

Project timeframe:

Duration of Living Water Partnership

This case study is useful for:

Organisations looking to partner with iwi



Early engagement with mana whenua identified the loss of mana caused by a much reduced ability to exercise kaitiakitanga (guardianship) over their natural resources. Participation in the restoration of indigenous biodiversity in their rohe (tribal lands) is one pathway to restoring kaitiakitanga.

BACKGROUND

Living Water believes that by establishing strong relationships with Māori we are not only helping to restore their kaitiakitanga, we are also benefiting from sharing knowledge and collectively growing the scale and impact of our work.

The Living Water Partnership set an objective to develop relationships with mana whenua by weaving Mātauranga Māori into project design and delivery. We have developed a Māori engagement strategy which includes relationship building principles for our teams and our work.

APPROACH

To capture the thinking behind our partnership with mana whenua, Living Water adopted a whakataukī (proverb). Whakataukī play a large role within Māori culture. They are used to relate the wisdom of the past and to strengthen korero (speeches). It is a poetic form of the Māori language often merging historical events or holistic perspectives with underlying messages that are influential in Māori society.



The Living Water whakataukī is: “*He waka hourua, he waka eke noa*”. This translates to ‘a waka with two hulls bound by a common kaupapa or purpose’. It acknowledges that while indigenous and non-indigenous peoples may be willing to get into the same waka and collaborate on things like a vision, objectives and outcomes, they can also maintain ‘separate hulls’ to preserve and advance the knowledge, institutions and practices of their own cultures.

We sent an invitation to iwi representatives offering to introduce ourselves and present the Living Water Programme. From this initial contact, we looked at ways to work together including how we can:

- share knowledge
- engage at the right level to match responsibilities and decision-making
- invest in building capability and capacity to assist Māori exercise kaitiakitanga
- ensure iwi/hapu co-design solutions in their catchments
- weave Mātauranga Māori into all aspects of our work including Farm Environment Plans
- adopt a Living Water kawa or set of engagement principles
- grow staff capability in Te Reo and Tikanga

AT A GLANCE

Projects completed as of July 2019:

Wairua

- We have worked with eight hapū (Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngā Wai Māori) with mana whenua over the Upper Wairua catchment of the Kaipara Harbour, to record in writing and video what Mātauranga Māori means to them.
- We are collaborating with this hapū collective and NIWA on a [four-year project](#) to survey native fish habitat in the streams and creeks of the Hikurangi Repo/Swamp and catchment, gathering information to enable the restoration of tuna habitat.

Pūkoro Mirānda

- Ngāti Paoa has joined a group of community members to establish a [Trust](#), which will eventually manage the ecological restoration of a recently purchased 19.6ha reserve. This reserve will add significantly to habitat for wildlife along western shores of Tī Kapa Moana/Firth of Thames and provide a place to tell cultural and conservation stories

Waikato Peat Lakes

- We have agreed an annual work plan with Ngāti Apakura for lakes Ruatuna and Rotomānuka, which includes a cultural health index for monitoring the restoration of these freshwater ecosystems
- A garden containing rongoā (medicinal plants) and plants suitable for cultural material harvesting will be developed at Lake Ruatuna. DOC and the Department of Corrections has added Ruatuna as an adopted site to their partnership programme and has agreed to support the development of this garden

Ararira-LII River

- We are funding a rūnanga advisory group (Te Mana Ararira) to participate in developing our Living Water Annual Plan and integrate Mātauranga Māori into freshwater ecosystem restoration projects in farm waterways and the public drainage network.

Waituna

- The [Whakamana Te Waituna](#) partnership is a large scale multi-year collaborative project funded by partners including Ngāi Tahu working to restore runanga kaitiaki of Waituna lagoon.



National

- Developed national Māori Engagement Strategy for Living Water
- Living Water staff have attended [DOC's Te Pukenga Atawhai programme](#) - others are scheduled to attend.
- A schedule of DOC courses is circulated annually within the wider Living Water team. DOC courses hold places for externals to attend.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Building trust with partners takes a significant amount of time and relies heavily on individuals having strong people skills
- Obtaining funding for restoration projects is a major challenge for some rural Māori communities.
- Using only western science as a project driver limits opportunities
- Providing funding for Māori to participate in projects can challenge other stakeholders
- The sharing of knowledge is about the process of sharing as much as the knowledge itself
- Working together on projects de-mystifies and shrinks actual or perceived knowledge gaps Innovation and success is more likely when there is a collective knowledge and shared understanding
- The Treaty of Waitangi settlements process covering Living Water sites is a much higher priority for Maori and will therefore influence the level of participation in our programme Like other stakeholders, Māori may move in and out of projects as circumstances require over time

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Take time to build trust with Māori partners. To foster good relationships, it is important to involve individuals with good people skills including the ability to listen, communicate, and relate to others. Empathy for others and a willingness to work together toward the common good while being honest and acknowledging the responsibility your organisation has for the issue are important
- Where possible provide funding to support Māori participation but be clear about what your programme can resource to manage expectations
- Mātauranga Māori is a very broad concept that may be easily incorporated into projects and provide a wider range of opportunities that complements western science based approaches.
- Be prepared to educate stakeholders who challenge funding for Māori participation
- Use knowledge sharing as an opportunity to develop a mutual respect for each other's views and experience
- Understand and acknowledge where Māori are at in their Treaty of Waitangi settlements process.
- Invest in building respectful and resilient relationships to help maintain momentum when circumstances or priorities for Māori change



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai