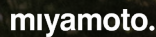


Project He Rau Aroha

Strategic Plan 2024





Ngā mihi nunui

Thanks to Engineering New Zealand Foundation who offered a seeding grant to allow us to advance our kaupapa. We also acknowledge each of the participating companies and supporting organisations that have supported the development of the Project He Rau Aroha through the allocation of time and monies to individuals to participate in the development of the overarching strategy and implementation programme. To ACENZ who through their leadership group has supported the project and are committed to providing ongoing assistance.

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1 He Rau Aroha

He Rau Aroha is a rōpū of Māori consultants, scientists, and engineers from across the private infrastructure sector. United by a shared commitment to give back to Māori communities, we formed in response to Cyclone Gabrielle. During this event, we saw the urgent need for culturally competent infrastructure professionals at the interface — to walk alongside service providers and help forge meaningful pathways with whānau, hapū, and iwi.

As Māori professionals, we bring a powerful and diverse mix of skills across infrastructure and professional services. Our collective includes engineers, climate change specialists, planners, kaupapa Māori researchers, mātauranga Māori experts, ecologists, air and water scientists, marine biologists, business development leads, strategists, circular economy and waste experts, marketing and communications professionals, and more.

Infrastructure companies involved include

Tonkin +Taylor, BECA, Stantec, Miyamoto, Mott MacDonald, WSP and Tektus.

Infrastructure associated groups

· National Science Challenge

Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities

· Massey University

School of Built Environment (Resilient and Sustainable Built Environment)

We are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between technical systems and cultural realities — ensuring infrastructure responses are not only effective but also culturally grounded. We work alongside communities to embed cultural values, assets, and practices into disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Through this approach, we help build resilient, inclusive systems that reflect what matters most to Māori.

Together, we are committed to serving our communities with integrity, innovation, and aroha.

We would like to acknowledge the support we have received to date from the Engineering New Zealand Foundation, the National Science Challenge: Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities (Māori) and representation from Massey University: Built Environment (Resilient Sustainable Built Environment).



2 Background

The name **He Rau Aroha**, meaning “leaves of love and compassion”, carries historical and cultural significance. It was originally given to the World War II canteen trucks that supported Māori Battalion members as they travelled through Italy and Africa. These trucks were funded through the heartfelt efforts of Native School children across Aotearoa, whose fundraising embodied the spirit of aroha and service to their people.

Our group has adopted the name He Rau Aroha to honour that legacy and carry it forward in a new context — as Māori infrastructure personnel dedicated to disaster response, recovery, and resilience. Just as the canteen trucks once travelled through harsh conditions to serve soldiers, we seek to serve our whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities in times of crisis.

We come from diverse whakapapa — different whānau, hapū, and iwi — united by a shared purpose: to uplift and support Māori communities during the immediate aftermath of disasters. Our mahi is grounded in aroha, manaakitanga, and kotahitanga, inspired by those who served before us and driven by a vision for a stronger, more resilient Aotearoa.

Figure 2.3 [Sourced from Archives New Zealand Auckland Regional Office. Archives reference: ADAE 14952/2j] Te Rau Aroha truck



Hononga ki ngā 2.1 Atua Māori

**Mānawatia a Rehua te whetu o te aroha
Kia aro ki te hā (aroha) o Papatūānuku
Titirohia ngā tohu o te rangi, ngā tohu o te
moana, me ngā tohu o te whenua**

Embrace Rehua the cosmology of kindness
Direct our focus to the breath and essence
of Mother Earth

Observe the signs of above, aerial and
celestial, the signs of the ocean/seas and
the signs of the land/terrestrial

As we look to Rehua (constellation of kindness), we are reminded of our own pūrākau (oral histories) that outline the deeds and feats of atua Māori. Rehua is referred to by some iwi as the eldest son of Ranginui (Sky Father) and Papatūānuku (Earth Mother), known to have manifested first as lightening, then taking on human shape before travelling into the stars. Rehua had the ability to heal diseases, revive the dead and cure blindness. Rehua is also known for gifting Tane (God of the Forest) birds and fruit trees as a contribution to the eco-system.

We observe that Ranginui and Papatūānuku have for many years showed us signs that tell us of the imbalances that reside. We see increased frequency and

intensity of storms and cyclones, longer dry seasons, changes to the nature and abundance of mahinga kai, wāhi tapu destroyed by the elements, and marae, urupā and homes flooded.

We have also seen serious damage to infrastructure, which has disabled many communities. We know that certain fish that we are accustomed to eating will leave warmer oceans for cooler waters, that mahinga kai areas are increasingly becoming polluted, and that snow caps and glaciers are melting. We also know that Māori, alongside other indigenous people globally, have contributed the least to climate change, yet are highly likely to among the most negatively impacted communities.

For Māori, many of our communities live along coastlines and near water sources. These areas are high-risk with increased likelihood of extensive flooding. Our mountains, forests, birds, insects, waterways, oceans, whenua, mātauranga, communities, businesses, wāhi tapu and other taonga are all highly vulnerable.

United Nations

2.2 Sustainability Goals

Within the global context, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda champions the powerful call to action “leave no one behind.” This call to action acknowledges the persistent inequalities faced by many countries, communities, and peoples around the world.

It recognises that the playing field is far from level. Historical injustices, systemic barriers, and uneven access to resources have left many communities — including indigenous peoples — disproportionately vulnerable, especially as we confront an increasingly uncertain climate future.

For Māori communities, this message resonates. The impacts of climate change, natural disasters, and socio-economic disparities are compounded by the legacy of colonisation and the ongoing struggle for tino rangatiratanga. In this light, “leave no one behind” becomes a commitment to equity, inclusion, and culturally grounded resilience.

Our mahi aligns with this global vision. By centring Māori values, knowledge systems, and leadership in disaster response and recovery, we aim to ensure that Māori communities are not only included but empowered in shaping a sustainable and just future for Aotearoa.

Experiencing 2.3 Climate Change

In Aotearoa, the impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly visible and severe. Extreme weather events — including flooding, sea level rise, wildfires, and more — are reshaping our landscapes and communities. In 2024, Cyclone Gabrielle devastated large parts of the East Coast of Te Ika-a-Māui (North Island) and Te Tai Tokerau (Northland). At its peak, the cyclone left approximately 225,000 homes without power and caused extensive damage to critical infrastructure, including roads, water systems, and communication networks.

We acknowledge that many hapū and iwi are facing immense and often insurmountable challenges in the wake of such disasters. The impacts extend far beyond physical damage — they disrupt the economic, social, cultural, and environmental fabric of our communities. Businesses were destroyed, ecosystems severely disrupted, and vital infrastructure

including marae, homes, mahinga kai areas, and wāhi tapu sites suffered extreme damage.

These impacts are not short-term. We contend that the consequences will reverberate across decades and generations, given the scale of recovery required and the resources needed to rebuild. The loss is not only material but spiritual and cultural, affecting the identity and wellbeing of our people.

Yet, within this adversity lies opportunity. We see the potential to restore, protect, and reimagine our regions in ways that honour te ao Māori and build resilience for the future. By embedding Indigenous knowledge systems, values, and leadership into recovery efforts, we can do things differently — not just rebuilding what was lost, but creating stronger, more connected, and more sustainable communities.

Te Tiriti o 2.4 Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty), 1840, is often referred to as the founding document of New Zealand as a sovereign state (Palmer, 2002). For Māori, the Treaty represented ongoing sovereignty and self-determination. The experience that followed for Māori, was an inter-generational process of dispossession through land alienation and cultural marginalisation (Barnes & McCreanor, 2019). Miller & Ruru (2009) argued that this was due in part to the English version of the Treaty being an expression of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Māori had an array of infrastructure (pā fortifications, burial grounds, trenching, large scale crop cultivation), and transport infrastructure (waka and portage), prior to, and following, European arrival (Layton, 2010; Gumbley & East, 2013; Irwin et al., 2017). However, the advancement of colonial transport infrastructure, like the North Island Main Trunk railway line provided a means for “securing and strengthening European authority over remaining areas of Māori independence” (Cleaver & Sarich, 2008).

The severance of access and barriers to proper use of the historical infrastructure furthered, among other things, the reliance of Māori on the new colonial economic system.

New Zealand’s first major colonial infrastructure projects benefited from the widespread land confiscation and the transfer of resources from Māori to British following signing of the Treaty, initiated in 1870 by colonial treasurer, Julius Vogel.

This investment programme involved the construction of some 1,600km of railways, telecommunication infrastructure, and port facilities with the purpose of opening up new trade routes, providing access to new resources, and settlements (Grimes, 2009). These projects initiated by Vogel were also seen to raise the economic productivity of the settler colony at the time (Grimes, 2009), a measure of New Zealand’s economic prosperity that is maintained today.

In a contemporary context, the Waitangi Tribunal established in 1975, provided means to remedy colonization and its impacts.

It was through the Waitangi Tribunal Act (1975) that the Principles of the Treaty were conceptualised and have subsequently been refined through a constitutional dialogue, now widely summarised as the principles of partnership, participation and protection (Ludbrook, 2014). The intent of these principles is captured in key infrastructure legislation such as the Resource Management Act 1991 (Sweeney, 2024).

¹ IPCC_AR6_WGII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf

² (PDF) Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change: Situating Culture, Identity, and Place in Climate Change Risk Mitigation and Resilience (researchgate.net)

Our 2.5 Purpose

He Rau Aroha is the first Māori infrastructure rūpū established with a primary purpose of service. Our immediate focus is concerned with supporting Māori communities who have been severely impacted by disaster events. We work alongside whānau, hapū, and iwi to help identify their response needs, connect them with the specialists within our network, and enable a coordinated industry response that is culturally grounded and technically robust. We aim to ensure that Māori voices, values, and knowledge systems are central to how infrastructure and recovery solutions are developed, designed and delivered.

Our rūpū is made up of Māori consultants, scientists, and engineers from across the private infrastructure sector, bringing together a wide range of expertise — from climate change, planning, and ecology to engineering, communications, and media and communications.

Our kaupapa is to 'give back to our own' through a service offering that leans into our professional skill sets. We offer as a group of professionals:

- **Highly qualified** industry leaders
- **Strong cultural and industry competency** and acumen
- **Extensive industry reach**
- **Mātauranga Māori and kōrero tuku iho** based value proposition
- The desire and drive to **advance mokopuna based, future focused** development

Figure 2.5.5 [Sourced from Stock Art Photography: ID 380] Tanekaha Dyed Muka and Pokinikini – NZ Flax Weaving



3 Our Point of Difference

Our lived experiences as Māori professionals affirm that tikanga, kawa, and whakapapa shape how we prioritise, what we value, and how we act. We acknowledge the significance of mātauranga Māori — our bodies of cultural knowledge — and its vital relevance to disaster response, recovery, and rebuild.

What sets us apart is our ability to work across technical disciplines while walking alongside whānau, hapū, and iwi, applying mātauranga Māori and kōrero tuku iho to support the restoration, rebuilding, and rebalancing of our communities. We also bring the capability to ensure cultural safety — supporting our people as they navigate disruption and forge pathways forward in ways that uphold their values, identity, and aspirations.

Our key points of difference include the capacity and capability to:

- **Working with whānau** where mātauranga Māori, tikanga, reo, kawa, pūrākau, and whakapapa are centred, valued, and prioritised
- **Embedding kaupapa Māori solutions** to strengthen community resilience and recovery
- **Leveraging our networks** to facilitate broader support from across the infrastructure industry and private sector
- **Inspiring and engaging rangatahi Māori** by exposing them to career pathways within infrastructure and related sectors
- **Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals** by supporting Māori communities disproportionately impacted and at further risk of being left behind
- **Promoting sustainable decision-making** that leads to positive environmental outcomes
- **Empowering Māori professionals** in the private sector to contribute meaningfully within their own communities
- **Upholding the status of Māori as Treaty partners** through corporate social responsibility and culturally grounded private sector initiatives
- **Contributing to the future of infrastructure development** in ways that align with Māori aspirations, traditions, and values

4 Vision Statement

The forest canopy He Rau Aroha refers to the many leaves of contribution that comprise the canopy of the forest and more broadly contributes to Te Wao-nui-Tane. The forest canopy offers a powerful metaphor for protection, contribution, and renewal. High above, the leaves form a sheltering layer that shields the forest floor from harsh elements, much like guardians or systems that protect communities in times of need. Over time, these same leaves fall, returning to the earth where they decompose and nourish the soil — feeding new life and sustaining the ecosystem. This natural

cycle reflects the intergenerational role of service and reciprocity: those who once protected now give back in a different form, enriching the future. It is a living example of resilience, connection, and the enduring strength of whakapapa.

Ko ngā rau a te tini, hei rau aroha mō Papatūānuku

The leaves of many, as leaves of love for Papatūānuku

5 Mission Statement

Our mission statement is

‘He Rau Aroha will be responsive to the challenges Iwi/Māori face, by strengthening trust and working collectively with the infrastructure industry to support the restoration, resilience and aspirations for a sustainable future.’

6 Our Conceptual Framing

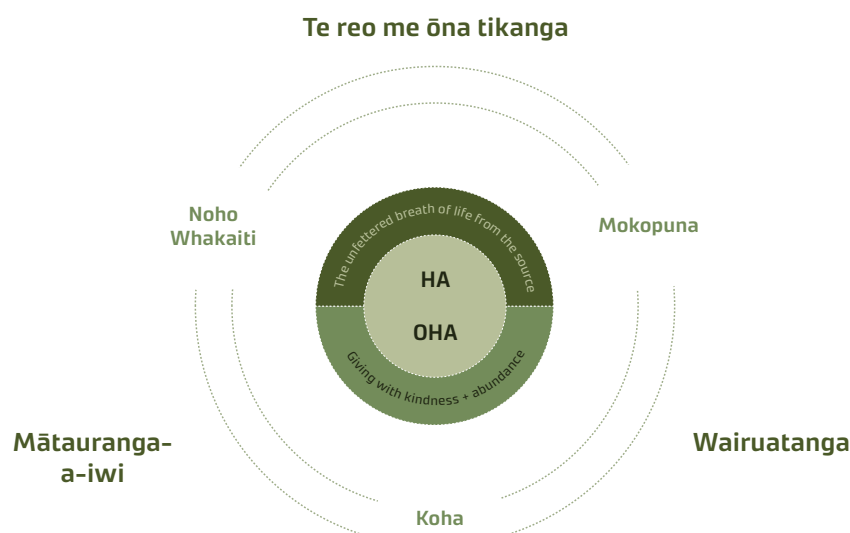


Diagram 6.1 He Rau Aroha: Te Ha/Oha Model

Our framing anchors **Te Reo Māori me ōna tikanga**, **mātauranga Māori** and **wairuatanga** as the key pou associated with our approach. Te reo me ōna tikanga acknowledges our language and our own ways of doing, knowing and being. Te reo me ōna tikanga is integral to who we are and that which we intend. This component of our framework speaks back to our identity of being Māori and is the component of our group that sets us aside from other groups within the industry.

Mātauranga Māori and **kōrero tuku iho** refer to bodies of cultural knowledge that are specific to tribal regions. We understand the importance of this knowledge base in the development of solutions.

We acknowledge whānau, hapū and iwi are custodians of this knowledge. We also recognize the connection we have with Ranginui and Papatūānuku, the environment, our tūpuna and mokopuna.

Wairuatanga is central to our identity, to our health and wellbeing and the spiritual connection that we may maintain. We understand that the mauri of the environment is important to the health and wellbeing of spaces, places and time. When our environment is of ill health so too is the mauri of those spaces, with cascading impacts on people and other living things. Working towards advancing balance within the environment is of upmost importance.

Our conceptual framing centres the notion of **ha** and **oha**. Ha refers to the unfettered breath of life from the source, whereas the concept of oha has a dual meaning that refers to the expression of kindness and the aspiration of abundance. The concept of abundance in this sense, re-centres our work towards overarching goals of restoration and protection, for future generations of mokopuna.

The concept of '**Moko**' refers to the spiritual blueprint handed down through generations, whereas the concept of 'Puna' refers to the well, the waters of the source. Often the term mokopuna refers to grandchildren, which within this context are the future kaitiaki of our people, lands, waters, forests and seas. The term also denotes intentions of thankfulness and aspiration.

The term mokopuna acknowledges that our work contributes to future generations and is an important connection to the source.

Koha is a concept based on intentions of reciprocity, and of 'giving back'. Koha also signifies the duality of exchange. Through the act of giving, the exchange recognises and affords respect to the receiver, simultaneously increasing the spirit of generosity and enhancing the notion of mana (status).

Noho whakaiti is a concept that signifies our small existence or significance in relationship to the broader universe. We understand our connectedness to Ranginui and Papatūānuku through our whakapapa. Noho whakaiti relates to our ability to remain humble and act with humility. Noho whakaiti acknowledges that:

- We are connected to Te Taiao through genealogy, we are only one small component where there exist inter-dependences for optimum health, and wellbeing
- Our actions and behaviours are considered and respectful and acknowledge the insurmountable challenges that are likely to reside
- We acknowledge as a group that skills and expertise exist within the communities we serve; we seek to be respectful in the ways we act and work
- Locally, within the communities we seek to serve, we acknowledge and support the developed forms of resilience



³ Pere, R. YR. Te Wheke: Infinite Wisdom

7 Our Wider Support & Commitment

We acknowledge the generous support of the companies we are employed by each of which upholds a strong commitment to sustainability and the advancement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Beyond our professional roles, we are whānau, hapū, and iwi members who remain connected to our whakapapa and driven by a shared responsibility to uplift our communities.

Engineering New Zealand Foundation has demonstrated support through a seeding grant, which helped bring Project He Rau Aroha to life. We also acknowledge ACENZ for their ongoing support, particularly through their facilitation of the industry's Māori Leadership Forum — a vital space for Indigenous voices and leadership within the engineering sector.

All of these parties recognise the transformative potential of Project He Rau Aroha to advance meaningful change across the lived experiences and landscapes of whānau, hapū, and iwi. Their support affirms the importance of Indigenous-led approaches in building resilience, equity, and sustainability for future generations.

The commitment that each company makes through support for this kaupapa include:

- **Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals** by supporting initiatives that address the disproportionate impacts of climate events on Māori communities
- **Promoting sustainable decision-making** that leads to positive environmental outcomes, guided by mātauranga Māori.
- **Empowering Māori professionals** in the private sector to contribute meaningfully within their own communities
- **Upholding the status of Māori as Treaty partners** through culturally responsible private sector initiatives
- **Contributing to the future of infrastructure development** in ways that reflect and uphold Māori aspirations, traditions, and values
- **Supporting Indigenous-led research and innovation** that delivers meaningful benefits for Māori
- **Promoting the integration of professional expertise** with mātauranga Māori, ensuring culturally informed and technically sound solutions

8 Organisational Structure

Various business models have been explored and discussed. The table below provides a high-level summary of options. Three main areas are outlined with key criterion- Community, He Rau Aroha and Home Organisations.

These criteria are ranked against business model options, which include for example,

charitable trust, incorporated society, company, limited partnership etc.

The ranking system is an initial evaluation of potential risks and opportunities.

Further work is required to more fully explore options.

Table 8.1 Exploring Business Options

Functions and features / Organisation Types		Charitable Trust	Incorporated Society	Company	Limited Partnership JV	Subordinate Panel	Alliance	Sub-Alliance	Dual structure
Community	Flexibility and adjitity								
	Mana motuhake								
	Rangatiratanga								
	Ture / Terms								
	Transparency								
	Consistency								
He Rau Aroha	Administration								
	Ownership								
	Risk management								
	Tax								
	Holding funds								
	Complexity								
Home organisations	Liability								
	Responsibility								
	Perseived monopoly								
	Poaching staff								
	Ease of transaction								

9 Exploring Options

As we look to the future, a thorough exploration of potential pathways and partnerships is essential for the growth and sustainability of He Rau Aroha. We recognise that there are significant opportunities to create meaningful synergies between our kaupapa and a range of organisations — including government agencies, private sector entities, philanthropic organisations and international bodies.

These partnerships have the potential to amplify our impact, extend our reach, and embed Māori-led resilience and recovery approaches within broader systems of disaster response and climate adaptation. By aligning with organisations that share our values and commitment to equity, sustainability, and indigenous leadership,

we can co-create solutions that are both innovative and culturally grounded.

Securing sponsorship and investment will also be a critical step. Financial support can enable us to scale our operations, build capacity within Māori communities, and develop tools and infrastructure that support long-term resilience. This aspect of our journey is still in its early stages and requires dedicated effort to identify aligned partners, build trust, and establish mutually beneficial relationships.

We envision a future where He Rau Aroha is not only a recognised leader in Māori disaster response and recovery, but also a catalyst for systemic change — influencing policy, practice, and partnerships across Aotearoa and beyond.

Potential Opportunities:

9.1 Partnerships/Sponsorship

The following pathways have been explored.

- Locating government organisations and private sector companies (nationally and internationally) to support and advance He Rau Aroha. For example, explore potential opportunities with Civil Defence Emergency Management, International Aid Organisations, New Zealand Transport Agency and others.
- Exploring other indigenous infrastructure collectives to develop and strengthen relations, share experiences and create momentum. Potentially to partner to form an international collective.
- Locate national and international sponsorship to fund working alongside communities
- Explore subscription options
- Industry partnership programme

Exploring Options for Services

- Early responders Planning (Resource Consent)
- Critical Lifeline assessments
- Early warning systems and Iwi/Māori
- Engagement expertise (Iwi/Māori)
- Climate change, risk assessments, planning
- Mitigation Planning
- Air quality assessments, monitoring
- Media and Communications
- Ecology – assessments, monitoring, and evaluation
- Marine assessments, monitoring and evaluation
- Evaluation and Monitoring of projects
- Strategic Planning
- Off-the-shelf engineering solutions integrating mātauranga-ā-hapū
- Support rangatahi to consider infrastructure as a career
- Provision of thought leadership

9.2 Next Steps

Co-develop an implementation Road Map, detailing agreed direction, key pathway and timelines.

- Refine and develop services and concept to be market-readiness.
- Define roles and responsibilities and assign roles

- Risk management and contingency plan
- Agree on partnership avenues and potential sponsorship pathways
- Create milestones, KPIs and monitoring
- Plan for long-term sustainability
- Branding and market positioning

10 Concluding Comments

The project has contributed to a series of key outcomes within the infrastructure sector, enabling Māori infrastructure professionals to co-jointly develop goals that contribute back to whanau, hapū and iwi activity. The project has built and strengthened connections across company boundaries and associated services contributing to a strengthened alignment towards serving both Iwi/Māori and Aotearoa as a country.

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Images

Title page – [Tile page. Sourced from Shutterstock 2268721847] Blue Spring waters

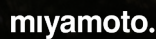
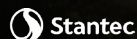
Acknowledgement Page - [Acknowledgement page. Sourced from Shutterstock 20348597512] Flora beside the Kepler Track

Banners – p 3-21 [Sourced from Shutterstock 2268721847] Blue Spring waters

Final page - [Final page. Sourced from Shutterstock 2268721847] Blue Spring waters

**Hīnana ki uta, hīnana ki tai
Eke panuku, eke tangaroa!
Rangatiratanga me te mana motuhake
Ahuwhenua, Ahumoana
Ū ki te tika, ū ki te pono!
Amohia ake te ora o te taiao
Rapua te tōnuitanga
Onamata me te anamata
Hīkaia ngā ahikā me ngā ahi kōmau
Aroha tētahi ki tētahi!**

Lee-Morgan, Eruera (2024)



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