



Reconnecting Northland – He Ripo Kau Recovery and Employment Package Project Profile



Purpose of this review:

**To highlight the positive social,
environmental, and community benefits of
the Reconnecting Northland – He Ripo Kau
Recovery and Employment Package project.**





Re-connecting Northland: He Ripo Kau Recovery and Employment Package

The He Ripo Kau Recovery and Employment Package is a Jobs for Nature project funded by Kānoa Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit. He Ripo Kau represents a collective of iwi, hapū, marae, conservation groups and organisations across South Hokianga. The two-year \$3.2 million project aims to improve water quality in the Waimamaku and Whirinaki Valleys through 75 kilometres of riparian fencing and 75 hectares of riparian planting.

Region	Te Tai Tokerau
Recipient	Reconnecting Northland He Ripo Kau
Start date	17/08/2020
End date	30/04/2023
Approved funding	\$3.22m
Intent	Freshwater restoration
Funder	Kānoa, MBIE

Why is the project important for the region?

Intensive land-use in Te Tai Tokerau has damaged waterways and destabilised land. The He Ripo Kau Recovery and Employment Package received funding from Reconnecting Northland whose purpose is to connect communities, agencies and resources to support thriving ecosystems across Northland. This funding is aimed at promoting collective impact and driving a common vision for the Hokianga region in Aotearoa.¹

What difference is the project making to people?²

Employment opportunities

15 employment opportunities in Hokianga and Waipoua over two years were created. 10 of these roles have been embedded into existing biodiversity restoration projects, five roles make up a riparian restoration crew who fence and plant native plants onto Māori and private land. The training benefits participants who are employed or seeking employment in the environmental sector, landowners, or volunteers.

Improved health and wellbeing. Participation in this work contributed to improvement in mental and physical health of employees from the immediate connection to nature, as well as promoting a sense of accomplishment for those participating.

How is the project contributing to the wellbeing of Māori?

The project supports the collective vision of local iwi and hapū for more abundant local resources and cleaner waterways for the community, as well as directly employing 20 local Māori.

The project enhanced the health, wellbeing, and mauri (life force) of the area, helping to preserve and promote the unique cultural heritage of the Hokianga region. This focus on cultural values also strengthens the sense of identity and belonging among the local community.

Impacts from skills and training

The project developed local capabilities through targeted training, career plan development, and local business/contractor support, enabling individuals to acquire new skills and improve their future employment prospects. All participants create and

regularly update a Career Plan, which helps them identify the training they need to achieve their career goals.

The training offered led to improved productivity and performance, as well as uniformity of work processes among employers and employees. This has resulted in more efficient and effective ecological restoration outcomes. A capable environmental workforce helps attract and retain skilled workers in remote areas, reducing workforce shortages and increasing diversity.

How is the project making a difference in the community?

The project provided direct employment opportunities, stimulating economic growth in the region and led to increased incomes and improved living standards for remote communities.

Community engagement

Workshops and hui (gatherings) were organised by Reconnecting Northland to involve local communities in the project, improving collaboration among various groups in the Hokianga region and creating a sense of unity and shared purpose. This collaborative approach contributed to building strong networks and relationships among different stakeholders, which can lead to further opportunities for skills development and capacity building.

“This job means I can live at home. There’s almost no rentals around here. If the work is away from home, I’m away from home.”

Paewhenua Louthor,
Hauraki/Ngāpuhi

Building resilience

The project built resilience in the community by improving ecosystem health and providing valuable ecosystem services, such as pollination, erosion control, and contributing to climate change mitigation.

Environmental impacts⁴

The project considers integrated management approaches, taking into account water quality, water quantity, and the potential impacts of climate change. This holistic approach ensures the long-term sustainability and resilience of the region's water resources.

The environmental benefits are: Improved water quality, enhanced riparian habitats, and increased biodiversity in the Waimamaku and Whirinaki valleys.

This contributes to healthier ecosystems, supporting a diverse range of plant and animal species. Enhanced riparian habitats provide essential corridors for wildlife and help to stabilise riverbanks, reducing erosion and sedimentation.

Clean waterways are essential for the wellbeing of local communities, who rely on them for recreation, cultural practices, and sustenance. Ensuring the protection and preservation of these water bodies is also crucial for maintaining their cultural and social significance.⁵

“This is life changing for some of these guys. Being able to do this work has changed everything. The skills they’re learning will make them highly employable”

Te Maapi Simich-Pene, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Haua, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Apakura/Hikairo; Project Manager, Reconnecting Northland



References

¹ He Ripo Kau Collective Case Study. <https://www.heripokau.com/>

² Refer 1

³ Reconnecting Northland.Training & Development
<http://rnimpact.org.nz/training-and-development>

² Reconnecting Northland. He Ripo Kau <https://www.reconnectingnorthland.org.nz/the-mahi/he-ripo-kau>

³ Northland Regional Council. Te Mana me te Mauri o te Wai: A Discussion Document for Te Tai Tokerau. <https://www.nrc.govt.nz/media/lxcnbe0w/stage-1-report-te-mana-me-te-mauri-o-te-wai-a-discussion-document-for-te-tai-tokerau-final.pdf>

**All images courtesy of Reconnecting
Northland – He Ripo Kau Recovery and
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JOBS | **MAHI**
FOR NATURE | MÔ TE TAIAO

