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Kaikohe Waterways Restoration Project Profile



Purpose of this review:

**To highlight the positive social,
environmental, and community benefits
resulting from the Kaikohe Waterways
Restoration project.**



TEKONA

Digital, Business & Learning Hub



Kaikohe Waterways Restoration

Te Kotahitanga e Mahi Kaha Trust (TKEMKT) had a strategic proposal to improve and restore waterways and ecological systems in Kaikohe.

Region	Te Tai Tokerau/ Northland
Recipient	Te Kotahitanga e Mahi Kaha Trust (TKEMKT)
Strat date	17/08/2020
End date	30/04/2023
Approved funding	\$2.2m
Intent	Freshwater restoration
Funder	Kānoa Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit

Why is the project important for the region?

The funding received during the pandemic was crucial for Te Tai Tokerau. It helped tackle economic and social issues, including job insecurities, that arose during the COVID-19 lockdowns in Aotearoa. “As a town we also experienced water supply challenges (specifically Kaikohe and Kaitaia).”

The project focused on restoring the health of mid-north waterways, including Wairoro Stream, Tahone Stream, and the tributaries of Kopenui Stream. These waterways are essential for the local community and their restoration can help secure water resources for the region².

What difference is the project making to people?

Employment opportunities

The project created 29 jobs for the local community, many of whom were youth and rangatahi. We also contracted many local contractors and businesses were supported through the procurement of resources and tools for the project.

Improved social inclusion and participation in employment

There was a strong focus on hiring local workers displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic, with an emphasis on employing Māori and Pasifika.

Three local businesses were contracted to support the delivery of the project, one of which is Māori-owned. This approach helped to support the local economy and promote diversity in and across the local supply chain.

Incorporation of Mātauranga Māori (traditional Māori knowledge)

Ensuring that traditional knowledge and practices were incorporated into the restoration process was very important to those participating. A local kaumatua (elder) was employed to support the team with their Māori knowledge base. Traditional Māori knowledge and practices were integrated into the ecosystem restoration process, through building whakawhanaungatanga and following a Te Ao Māori approach. This approach contributed to improving connections between tangata whenua to promote a lasting stewardship/kaitiakitanga.

Positive impacts on youth/rangatahi

The project provided Kaikohe youth with training, education, and employment opportunities, building confidence and skills to pursue careers that benefited them and their whānau. It was also the chance to give some of them their first working experience in a supportive environment that allowed them to work as a team.

A number of young people have now gone on to fixed-term employment contracts, providing them with a source of income and valuable experience to help develop their careers. We were able to retain four employees from that contract to continue working at the Trust. Some have moved on and we have even given their siblings the opportunity to fill their roles.

In environmental restoration projects, young people learn the importance of taking care of their environment and the consequences of neglecting it. This sense of responsibility can lead to long-term positive behaviors and attitudes towards the environment³.

Skills and training

Through a partnership with Te Pukenga, the project offered training in Primary Industries and Horticulture at Level 3, helping to build the capacity and capability of employees as well as the wider community⁴.

How is the project making a difference in the community?

The development of a commercial nursery on-site and associated services improved the service delivery aspect of the project while enabling The Trust to begin our own venture into Commercialising our Native Plants. The nursery now supplies plants for environmental projects, government contracts and to locals.

This in turn has built up our economic resilience and allowed us to become more independent while creating employment. We have also been able to support a number of community initiatives where our Native Plants have either been a prize, gift or koha.

The project also incorporated mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and provided opportunities for local youth⁵.

What are the environmental impacts of the project?

Improved water quality

This restoration work helps to secure water resources for the region and improve the overall quality of water for the local community.

For example The trust has planted along the Wairoro Stream, which provides most of Kaikohe's drinking water, Tahone Stream, which flows through Northland College's farm, and the tributaries of Kopenui Stream, which drains Ngāwhā Innovation Park.

Fencing and planting Otangaroa-Takapau Stream The trust's "crowning achievement" is the fencing and planting of Otangaroa-Takapau Stream from its source at Squires Lane/ Waikotihe, near Monument Hill/ Tokoreireia, to Rakauwahia Rd, 18km downstream.

As a result of the above efforts, water quality, clarity and flow have improved, and the smell has been reduced. The project has been recognised with awards, including the supreme winner of the Northland Regional Council Environmental Awards and the Environmental Action in Water Quality Improvement category.⁶

Improved biodiversity

The restoration work has led to improved water flow in the area and an increase in river life activity, such as the presence of tuna (eels), indicating a healthier ecosystem. Contribution to climate change resilience. This project contributes to climate change resilience by promoting healthy ecosystems and waterways that can better withstand the impacts of climate change.



References

¹ Inside Government Supreme award for Kaikohe waterways group. Insidegovernment.co.nz. <https://insidegovernment.co.nz/supreme-award-for-kaikohe-waterways-group/>

² Far North District Council. (2020). HE ARA TĀMATA CREATING GREAT PLACES (April 2020). https://www.fndc.govt.nz/files/assets/public/media/western-mailing/0360_fndc_rates-newsletter_april_2020_digital_fv.pdf

³ Provincial Development unit Kaikohe Waterways Restoration Project Monthly Report October 2022

^{4, 5} Northland Regional Council. (2022, May). Project Nga Wai Ora o Ngāpuhi named Whakamānawa ā Taiao – Environmental Awards supreme winner. <https://www.nrc.govt.nz/news/2022/may/project-nga-wai-ora-o-ngapuhi-named-whakamanawa-a-taiao-environmental-awards-supreme-winner/#:~:text=27%20May%202022%2C%2010%3A31,Whakam%C4%81nawa%20%C4%81%20Taiao%20%E2%80%93%20Environmental%20Awards>

⁶ Cousins, M. It's what we want to do: The youth training trust saving Kaikohe's waterways. NZ Herald. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/northern-advocate/news/its-what-we-want-to-do-the-youth-training-trust-saving-kaikohe-waterways/PAGCH2OTIC4RFJDPF2KNXF2W6Y/>

All images courtesy of Kaikohe Waterways Restoration project



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