

JOBS | MAHI
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Pōhaturua Trust Project Profile



Purpose of this review:

**To highlight the positive social,
environmental, and community benefits
resulting from the Pōhaturoa Trust
freshwater management strategy project.**





Pōhaturua Trust Freshwater Management Strategy

A freshwater management strategy to identify the key pou (pillars) for Pōhaturua Trust to manage water on their whenua (land). Hapū (kinship group) members learn about freshwater management processes, data collection, and the skills for contributing to a long-term vision.¹ The Trust oversees eight significant waterways that flow through their land from Maunga Whakapūnake.

Region	Tairāwhiti Gisborne
Recipient	Pōhaturua Trust
Start date	17/01/2022
End date	30/11/2023
Approved funding	\$90,200
Intent	Capability development
Funder	Ministry for the Environment

Why is the project important for the region?

Reliable access to freshwater is very important for the Tairāwhiti Gisborne region, playing a crucial role in sustaining the health of local ecosystems, including rivers, streams, and wetlands. These ecosystems, in turn, provide invaluable services such as water filtration and flood control.²

Freshwater is a fundamental resource for the region's agricultural activities. For instance, it supports sheep and beef farming, a significant contributor to the Tairāwhiti Gisborne economy. The sheep, beef cattle and grain farming industry is the largest employer in the region comprising six percent of all employees.³

Producing a freshwater management strategy helps to contribute to protecting freshwater resources for the area. The region has also faced water crises due to natural disasters, such as Cyclone Gabrielle, which led to the failure of the region's water plant, leaving the city without clean water.

What difference is the project making to people?

The Pōhaturua Trust Freshwater Management Strategy has significant implications for the people living there, including for the local iwi and hapū (kinship groups). The strategy is required to address the complex and intergenerational concerns related to water management for the whenua.

Key benefits to people include:

Improved Māori participation in decision making for freshwater management⁴

The project has seen significant participation from the Māori community. The project has involved over 500 participants, with activities ranging from wānanga (meetings), strategic planning, to hands-on fieldwork.

The combination of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and western science was a first step towards a broader conversation about long-term preservation planning. This collaboration led to participants delving deeper into the details of protecting fauna and flora habitats.

The project has seen greater inclusion of marginalised groups. In the University of Waikato Climate Change research group, the gender distribution was 55% male and 45% female, with an ethnic distribution of 80% Māori and 20% Pākehā (New Zealanders of European descent).

For the catchment group environmental workshops, the gender distribution was 60% male and 40% female, with an ethnic distribution of 75% Māori and 25% Pākehā.

In the catchment group Guardians of the Ruakituri River, the gender distribution was 60% male and 40% female, with an ethnic distribution of 61% Māori and 39% Pākehā.

“How might we build capability within Pōhaturua to participate in and make decisions for freshwater management, thus the implementation of the New Zealand Government’s Essential Freshwater Reforms.”⁶

Mātauranga Māori Master,
Richard Niania

Improved capability in knowledge, tools, and resources in the freshwater management space⁵

The Ahu Whenua Trust identified a gap in understanding the potential risks associated with not having a strategy for managing and protecting their freshwater resources.

The project provided opportunities for members of the hapū to learn about freshwater management processes. This contributed to the community’s capacity to manage its freshwater resources by upskilling individuals in this area.

Tangata whenua (local people) have gained increased confidence in articulating their aspirations and needs in freshwater management. They have also gained experience in what works and doesn’t work when restoring and preserving freshwater. The project has also helped to create collaborative relationships with other whenua entities, catchment groups, iwi, hapū, and Government agencies.

The project has also improved collaboration with other entities such as the Hawke’s Bay Regional Council, Gisborne City Council, and the Tairāwhiti Whenua collective of 70 Māori authorities. This collaboration has enabled the sharing of knowledge and resources, contributing to the overall success of the project.

Support to community resilience

The project worked towards ensuring the long-term preservation of waterways and the protection of fauna and flora habitats. It sought to balance the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The project has built resilience in the community by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to manage their local waterways. This has left the community better prepared to deal with potential challenges and changes in the future, such as climate change.⁷ The sense of unity and relationship building among the community is crucial for the social and cultural wellbeing of future generations.

How is the project contributing to the wellbeing of Māori?

These waterways are crucial to the hapū whānau (kinship group and family) as they are used for daily living requirements such as drinking, cooking, and cleaning. Historical data highlights the waterways' importance as a resource for the hapū whānau, with strong spiritual and cultural connections for Hapū Ngāti Kōhatu and Ngāti Hine-Hika.⁸

Investments such as the freshwater management strategy made under Te Mana o te Wai provide a holistic approach that not only benefits the environment, but also ensures the wellbeing of the community and future generations.



“Our Te Mana o te Wai journey for us in Te Reinga, starts in the Maunga. Ki Uta Ki Tai, from the maunga to the awa, out to the moana. The rest of whanau along that journey will become part of it. They are on their journey of discovery, and one day, we will protect our waterways”⁹

Mātauranga Māori Master,
Richard Niania

Impacts on the environment

Contribution to the protection of freshwater health

The strategy prioritises the health and wellbeing of the eight significant waterways. This helps to protect the freshwater ecosystem and supports biodiversity health.

The project has led to the development of 20 Farm Environment Plans, which aim to meet environmental outcomes in freshwater management systems. The plans have been implemented into daily farm operations, contributing to the improvement of water quality. The project has also established baseline data for the health of waterways through eDNA testing, which will be used to benchmark the freshwater management framework.¹⁰

Sustainable water management

The project focused on the importance of maintaining freshwater sites of significance on the whenua which will help fulfill the aspirations of stakeholders for the future. The integration of Māori knowledge with western science in the management of freshwater bodies can lead to increases in biodiversity and habitat protection and considers benefits to the whole ecosystem.

Economic benefits

Contribution to improving the productivity of Māori owned assets

The freshwater management strategy has the potential to indirectly boost the productivity of Māori agricultural assets and contribute to the local economic goals of the hapū in the future. The Trust manages Pōhaturoa Station, which spans around 4,050 hectares near the lower parts of Maunga Whakapūnake at Te Reinga.

This land includes 1,570 hectares for sheep and beef farming, 840 hectares of forest, 920 hectares of native ngāhere (forest) in partnership with Ngā Whenua Rāhui, and 720 hectares of bluffs and waterways.

Implementing the strategy is important as freshwater resources are critical for ongoing farming operations and agricultural land developments. The freshwater management strategy can help with identifying economically and environmentally viable opportunities for optimising freshwater usage and can reduce costs for improving the efficiency of water use.¹¹

References

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