

Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo

ANNUAL REPORT

*Maku te tītī, Maku te whewhera !
Nā Tiriwa*

2026

www.ngatihikairo.iwi.nz

MIHI

Tuia te rangi ki te whenua, tuia te whenua ki te rangi. Tēnei te Mātahi o Te Tau e tū mai nei.

Ko Puanga tū ki te rangi. Ko Te Arikinui, Kuini Nga Wai Hono i Te Po ki te whenua.

Rire, rire, hau. Pai mārire.

He aha tēnei mamae e kurutia nei te ngākau? Aue ko te mamae ki ngā mate mātinitini o te tau.

Haere rā e kui mā, e koro mā i te ara o Pōhutukawa, ki te uma o Ranginui. Tēnei Te Maru o Hikairo te tangi pōrutu atu nei.

Moe mai koutou, okioki atu rā.

Huri atu te pō, nau mai te ao. Papaki kau ana ngā tai o mihi ki a tātou ngā uri o Ngāti Hikairo, pari nui atu ana ki te ākau o Manako-nui, o Manako-roa. Tēnā, e kai ō koutou mata ki ngā kaupapa kua whārikihia nei e Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo mō te tau kua hori.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

CHAIR REPORT

Tēnā koutou katoa,

It is my privilege to present the 2026 Annual Report of Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo and to reflect on a year marked by both challenge and progress as we continue to advance the aspirations of our iwi.

First and foremost, I wish to acknowledge the passing of our respected secretary, Kurutia Seymour. His loss has been deeply felt throughout our rūnanga, across our iwi, and most importantly by his whānau. Kurutia made an extraordinary contribution through his expertise in governance, resource management, and leadership in preparing critical submissions on government legislation, as well as his wise counsel on a wide range of issues affecting our people.

Kurutia approached his work with dedication, integrity, and a steadfast commitment to the advancement of Ngāti Hikairo. We were fortunate to benefit from his knowledge and leadership, and his legacy will continue to shape our work in the years ahead. On behalf of Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo, I extend our heartfelt aroha to his whānau. He will be greatly missed.

Despite the challenges of the past year, our iwi has continued to make steady progress across a broad range of strategic priorities.

Treaty Claims and MACA

We have continued to progress our interests in the Kawhia Moana, Remaining Treaty Claims, and Marine and Coastal Area (MACA) processes. While these matters remain critically important to our future, progress continues to be frustratingly slow. Changes in government policy and legislation have created additional complexity and uncertainty, impacting the pace at which these matters are advancing. Nevertheless, Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo remains committed to ensuring that our rights, interests, and aspirations are protected and advanced for future generations.

Resource Management

Resource management remains a significant area of work for the rūnanga. Throughout the year, we have reviewed and responded to a substantial number of resource management applications and undertaken a review of our Heritage Management Plan. Protecting our whenua, wai, moana, wāhi tapu, and cultural heritage continues to be a core responsibility, and we remain committed to ensuring that the voice of Ngāti Hikairo is heard in decisions affecting our taonga.

Economic Development

Building a sustainable economic future for our iwi continues to be a priority. During the year, we commenced early-stage work exploring economic development opportunities, including potential funding avenues and partnerships with Waipapa Marae and other like-minded marae. While much of this work remains in its formative stages, it reflects our commitment to creating long-term opportunities that will strengthen the wellbeing and prosperity of our whānau.

Kaiewe

A Special General Meeting was successfully held for Kaiewe, resulting in the election of trustees and the re-establishment of governance arrangements. This marks an important step forward and provides a renewed foundation for the future of this whenua.

CHAIR REPORT

Government Submissions

The current government has introduced significant legislative reforms across a number of sectors. As an iwi, it is important that our perspectives are represented in these national conversations. During the year, we prepared and lodged submissions on the Regulatory Standards Bill and the Conservation Amendment Bill, ensuring that the interests of Ngāti Hikairo and the protection of our rights and taonga were clearly articulated.

Governance

Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo continues to operate effectively and responsibly. Through regular monthly hui, sound governance practices, and a strong commitment from trustees, we have continued to fulfil our obligations to iwi members and maintain effective oversight of our work programme.

Financial Management

I am pleased to report that Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo remains in a strong financial position. Careful financial management has enabled us to meet our commitments while maintaining the stability necessary to support both our current activities and future aspirations.

Growing Our Leadership Capacity

During the year, we welcomed Malcolm Ormsby, Mahina-a-rangi Manuel, and Tiriana Anderson as co-opted members of the rūnanga. Their appointment strengthened our governance capacity and provided valuable support as we managed an increasingly demanding work programme. We appreciate the energy, skills, and perspectives they have brought to the table.

As Chair, I would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank all members of the rūnanga for their continued commitment, leadership, and service to Ngāti Hikairo. The achievements of this year have only been possible because of the collective efforts of our trustees and the many hours they willingly dedicate on behalf of our people.

My heartfelt thanks go to Pipi Barton, Lees Seymour, Duncan Robin, Thomas Tai, Tiriana Anderson, Gareth Seymour, Mahina-a-rangi Manuel, Hamua Gilmore, Queenie Te Hae, and Malcolm Ormsby. I also wish to extend our appreciation to Frank Thorne for his expertise and advice and all those who have contributed throughout the year. Your dedication to our iwi and our future is greatly appreciated.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on protecting our interests, strengthening our governance, creating opportunities for our whānau, and ensuring that the legacy of our tūpuna continues to guide our path forward. While challenges remain, I am confident that through unity, resilience, and collective leadership, Ngāti Hikairo will continue to grow stronger and achieve the aspirations we hold for future generations.

Nāku iti noa, nā

Susan Turner

Chair

Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Tēnā koutou katoa

It is my privilege to present the Resource Management Committee Annual Report for the past year. The role of the Resource Management Committee is to protect the environmental, cultural and historical interests of Ngāti Hikairo across our rohe. This responsibility includes responding to resource consent applications, engaging with local and central government agencies, protecting our wāhi tapu and taonga, contributing to environmental policy, and ensuring that the voice of Ngāti Hikairo is heard whenever decisions are made that may affect our whenua, wai and people. Over the past twelve months the committee has continued to grow in both its responsibilities and its influence. While much of our work happens quietly behind the scenes, every submission written, every meeting attended, and every relationship developed helps strengthen our ability to fulfil our role as kaitiaki for future generations.

Honouring the Legacy of Kurutia Seymour

This report would not be complete without acknowledging the passing of Kurutia Seymour, whose contribution to the Resource Management Committee, and to Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo more broadly, cannot be overstated. Kurutia brought a wealth of knowledge and experience from his years working within government. More importantly, he brought integrity, patience and an unwavering commitment to ensuring that the work of the committee was undertaken professionally, respectfully and with mana.

Many of the systems and processes that guide our work today were developed through Kurutia's leadership. He standardised our correspondence, strengthened our record keeping, established consistent consultation processes with government agencies, and ensured our communications reflected both professionalism and manaakitanga.

One of his lasting achievements was helping negotiate and establish formal contractual relationships with both Waipā and Ōtorohanga District Councils. These agreements have strengthened the recognition of Ngāti Hikairo as kaitiaki within our rohe and have provided a stronger foundation for our ongoing engagement with local government. Personally, I miss Kurutia's wisdom and guidance. There are still moments when I find myself wanting to pick up the phone and ask his advice before remembering that he is no longer with us. His legacy lives on through the systems he established and the standards he expected of us all.

On behalf of the committee, I acknowledge with gratitude everything Kurutia contributed to our iwi. E moe mai rā e te rangatira.

The work outlined throughout this report reflects not only the efforts of the committee over the past year, but also the foundations that Kurutia helped build.

Protecting Our Whenua and Taonga

Resource Consent Applications

The committee continues to receive an increasing number of referrals from both Ōtorohanga District Council and Waipā District Council regarding resource consent applications within our rohe. We continue to rely on the policies contained within Te Tahuanui: Ngāti Hikairo Heritage Management Plan to guide our responses and ensure decisions are consistent with the values and aspirations of our iwi.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Engagement with the Department of Conservation

The committee continues to receive a steady stream of consultation requests from the Department of Conservation, universities, research organisations and private groups seeking approval to undertake activities within our rohe. These requests have included research involving the monitoring and banding of native bird species, environmental surveys and other conservation projects.

Rather than considering each request in isolation, the committee continues to apply a principles-based approach that balances scientific research with our cultural responsibilities as kaitiaki.

Submission on the Conservation Act

The committee prepared a submission on the Government's proposed amendments to the Conservation Act.

The submission emphasised the importance of recognising Te Tiriti o Waitangi, protecting culturally significant conservation land, strengthening the role of tangata whenua in decision-making, and ensuring that conservation policy reflects the long-standing relationship between iwi and the natural environment.

This submission was developed collaboratively with members of the wider Rūnanga and reflects Ngāti Hikairo's commitment to protecting our taonga for future generations.

Te Kauri-Waikūkū

Ngāti Hikairo continues to work alongside Ngāti Maniapoto and the Department of Conservation in supporting the ongoing management of Te Kauri-Waikūkū.

We thank Malcolm Ormsby for representing Ngāti Hikairo on the DOC-led management committee, ensuring the voices of those with direct whakapapa connections to the whenua continue to be heard. Malcolm will provide whānau with a further update during the AGM.

Te Papa o Karewa

After a number of delays, work is now progressing on the replacement support structure beneath the large limb of Te Papa o Karewa. Following specialist assessment by an arborist, a new support has been designed that will provide long-term protection for this important tūpuna rākau. The replacement support will incorporate traditional carving, recognising both the historical and environmental significance of the tree to Ngāti Hikairo and Tainui waka.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

I would also like to acknowledge Hano Ormsby, who has stepped down from his role as kaitiaki for Te Papa o Karewa and Tangitekorowhiti after many years of dedicated service. On behalf of the committee and the iwi, thank you Hano for your commitment to protecting one of our treasured taonga. We also welcome Tom Tai, who has accepted responsibility for carrying this important role into the future.

Responding to Local Government Change

The past year has seen significant changes proposed across local government. Many of these changes have the potential to affect how Ngāti Hikairo engages with councils and government agencies in the future.

Local Water Done Well

Ōtorohanga District Council has agreed to become a shareholder in Waikato Water Limited as part of the Government's Local Water Done Well reforms.

While ownership of local water infrastructure remains with the Council for now, decisions about future management may increasingly be made through this new regional organisation.

It will be important that Ngāti Hikairo establishes a strong relationship with Waikato Water Limited to ensure our interests and responsibilities as kaitiaki continue to be recognised as these reforms progress.

Removal of Māori Wards

Following the Government's requirement for binding referenda, both Ōtorohanga District Council and Waipā District Council voted to remove their Māori Wards.

This represents a significant reduction in guaranteed Māori representation within local government and reinforces the importance of Ngāti Hikairo continuing to engage directly with councils and decision-makers.

Local Government Reform

The Government has also signaled major reforms to local government, including reducing the number of territorial authorities.

Ōtorohanga and Waitomo District Councils are currently progressing a proposal to merge. If approved by Government, further work will occur during 2027, with any changes expected to take effect before the 2028 local government elections.

These reforms have the potential to significantly change how Ngāti Hikairo engages with local government, making it even more important that our planning documents and relationships remain strong.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Planning for the Future

Heritage Management Plan

One of the committee's major achievements this year has been the review and redevelopment of Te Tahuanui: Ngāti Hikairo Heritage Management Plan 2026.

The revised plan reflects current legislation, strengthens the protection of our cultural values, and provides clearer guidance for councils, developers and government agencies when engaging with Ngāti Hikairo.

The updated plan will be presented to whānau at this AGM.

Freshwater Management Plan

Work is also underway to review and update the Ngāti Hikairo Freshwater Management Plan.

Once both plans have received iwi endorsement, the committee will work with local authorities to ensure they continue to be recognised within council planning documents, particularly in light of possible local government restructuring.

Looking Ahead

It is becoming increasingly clear that the responsibilities of the Resource Management Committee continue to grow each year. Our work extends across both the Ōtorohanga and Waipā districts, while national policy changes are creating new challenges requiring ongoing engagement and advocacy. Despite these increasing demands, the committee remains committed to protecting the interests of Ngāti Hikairo and ensuring our voice continues to be heard in decisions affecting our whenua, wai and taonga. This work is only possible because of the generosity of many whānau who willingly volunteer their time, knowledge and expertise.

I would like to sincerely acknowledge the contributions of Frank Thorne, Hano Ormsby, Malcolm Ormsby, Susan Turner, Lees Seymour, Mahina-a-Rangi Manuel, Tom Tai, Te Papi, and Rangi Cunningham and the many other whānau who have supported the committee throughout the year. Without you all, there would be no Resource Management Committee to maintain our role as Kaitiaki, committed to protecting the taonga entrusted to us by our tūpuna. Together, we remain focused on ensuring that our land-based taonga are protected so that future generations of Ngāti Hikairo may continue to exercise their responsibilities as kaitiaki.

Nāku noa, na

Pipi Barton

Chair

Resource Management Committee

TREATY CLAIMS AND MACA*

(INCLUDING NGĀROTO AND MANGAKAWARE)

Introduction

It is my pleasure to present this report to the 2026 Annual General Meeting of Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo

Wai 30 and Remaining Claims

The year has been dominated by constant changing Government policy that has slowed progress immensely, created confusion and led to long delays between kōrero. Upokokōhua! Ahakoa te aha ka tū tonu te iwi o Ngāti Hikairo, Ana!

This process is still very complex; we still have a lot of work to do before a satisfactory position for Ngāti Hikairo can be achieved. The Deed of Mandate (DOM) does not allow for Ngāti Hikairo to represent itself or to negotiate its Treaty Claims directly with the Crown as part of the Wai 30 process. The DOM establishes a moana (harbour) by the moana approach with Waikato-Tainui as the lead negotiator.

Whilst Ngāti Hikairo has not signed up to the deed of mandate, we continue to work in the spirit of Kotahitanga to find a way for our interests to be represented and heard. We have been in discussions with other iwi and the negotiation team as we work to find a way forward.

Whilst not yet confirmed our efforts alongside other iwi have resulted in a revised negotiating structure being put forward for consideration by iwi. The major change is that the structure of each Moana negotiating team allows direct involvement of iwi representatives in this. There are still some details to work out; however, we are in favour of this structure.

We have discussed this revised structure within the TRONH executive as well as with several of our kaumātua, and there is support in principle for the new structure with the following exceptions:

1. We want Ngāti Hikairo/ Ngāti Mahuta to lead the negotiations with support from Waikato / Tainui.
2. We don't support Ngāti Apakura being part of this negotiation, as our view is that they have no valid claim to Kāwhia Moana, as of 1840, they were not resident in Kāwhia Moana.

These matters have been raised with other iwi and Waikato/Tainui and are still in the process of being resolved. We are looking to resolve them as soon as we can using the appropriate tikanga.

We have also been successful in bringing this back to an iwi-led process – previously, an ad hoc, unmandated group purportedly representing Kāwhia Marae was in the mix as a party that was to be involved in the

negotiations, this appears to have now been squashed. This was achieved with the support of Waipapa Marae, e mihi ana ahau ki ngā kaiwhakahaere o Waipapa. It is wonderful to see Waipapa and Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo working together on this important kaupapa, as well as many other kaupapa. This is a significant change from recent years, kia kotahi ai tātou.

In December 2025, a hui was called at Hopuhopu to discuss a possible “fast track” process to settle Wai 30. The idea was to work directly with Minister Goldsmith with a view to settling the Wai 30 claim by June 2026. Whilst we felt this was an ambitious task; we organised a hui at short notice with our iwi to discuss the proposal. All at the meeting agreed that we should explore this proposal to see if it had any merits.

TREATY CLAIMS AND MACA*

(INCLUDING NGĀROTO AND MANGAKAWARE)

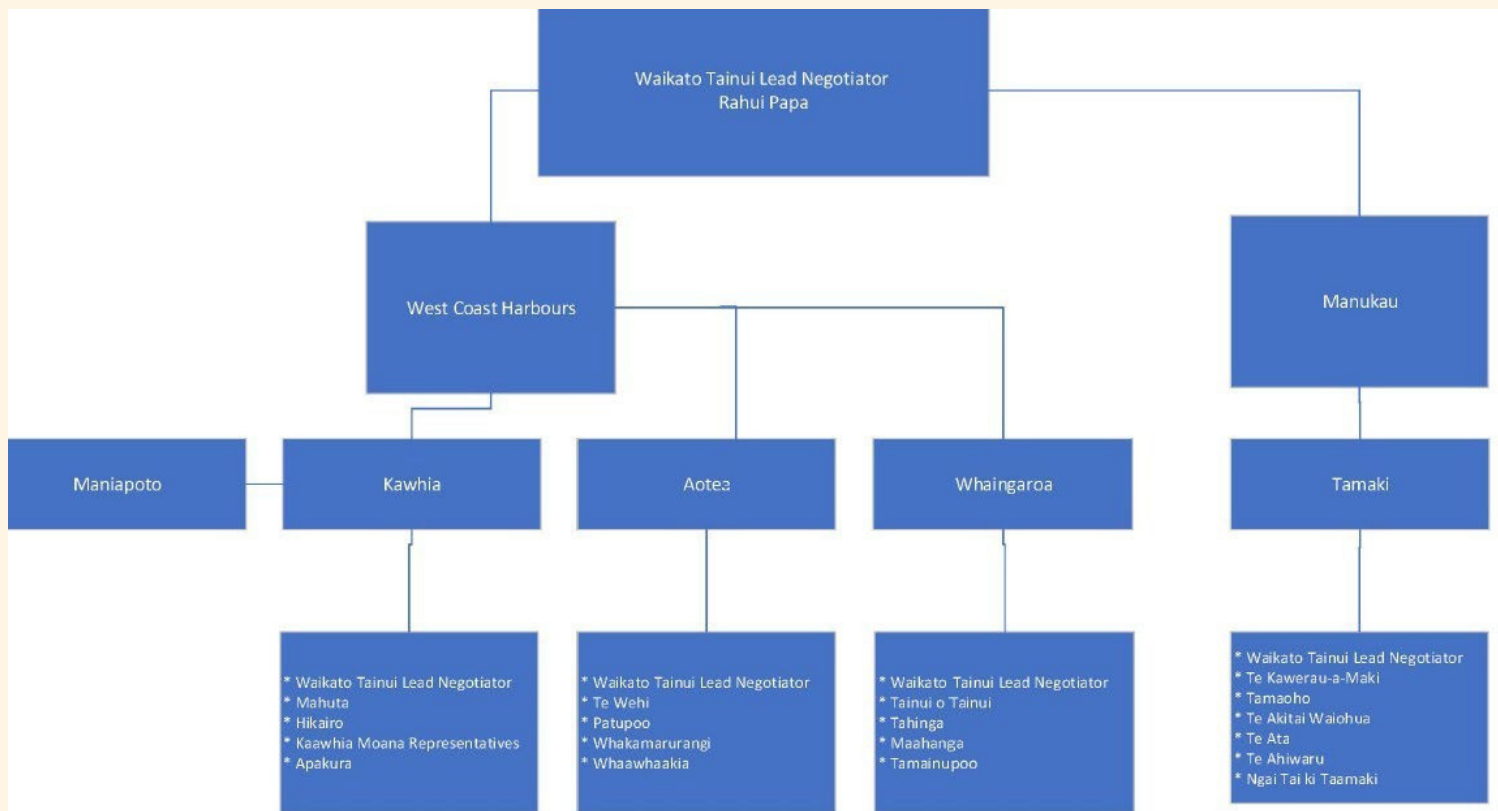


Figure 1: Revised negotiation structure

We have followed through to try and see if we could make this work alongside another iwi in Kāwhia Moana; however, e kore e taea, it didn't eventuate. Most importantly, because the Minister didn't agree to the fast-track process that was promulgated.

Our claimants have given the mandate to settle our claims to Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo, and many previous hui-a-tau have confirmed this mandate. For the record, we confirm that TRONH has the mandate to settle our claims and will continue working hard to get the best outcome for ngā uri katoa o Ngāti Hikairo. I wish to reinforce this position again by putting this motion at this hui-a-tau.

MACA

There has been very little progress over the last 12 months with our MACA application, as above, this is as a consequence of a significant change in Government Policy (slightly different to the policy changes to the treaty claims process); however, the changes in policy saw;

- All cases before the courts have to be reheard, creating significant delays in the court process. Many of these cases are still to be heard.
- No progress in negotiations for many applicants that were already in negotiations because of the change in policy, which made the threshold for being able to prove continuous customary use more difficult, and all this on the back of the significant changes last year that saw
- Te Arawhiti (the Crown entity responsible for MACA) was disestablished with the loss of a lot of knowledgeable people.

TREATY CLAIMS AND MACA*

(INCLUDING NGĀROTO AND MANGAKAWARE)

- Te Tari Whakatau is being established (the new Crown entity responsible for MACA), and all the teething problems associated with establishing a new department with a lot of new people.
- The Government's decision not to fund any MACA applications that were not being actively heard in the High Court. Noting that our application is still under development and is not ready to be heard in the High Court.

Alongside this, our historian is living in Israel and has been subject to the perils of war in that part of the world.

Given these challenges, we are now working up a plan to get the remaining work completed within the resources we have – our people and our aroha.

The next steps are to complete the historian's report and complete our own iwi report. Pipi Barton has kindly offered to support this process. We have the draft Historian report in hand. The report is very comprehensive and well written, and we thank all who have contributed, especially our Historian and our Iwi historian, Frank Thorne.

Regardless of Government Policy and the changing structures and processes, once the historian's report and the Iwi report are completed, they will be taonga for us to keep and share with all Ngāti Hikairo, alongside Te Maru o Hikairo and Te Tahuanui. They continue to assert our historical and current position as mana whenua

Summary of Wai 30 and MACA

Regardless of the difficulties that we are facing, we continue to work hard to gather the information and make the case that clearly states the history, the importance, and the place of Ngāti Hikairo in Kāwhia, Aotearoa and the world!

Ngāroto and Mangakaware

Ngāroto

TRONH has been involved alongside Ngāti Apakura in the review of the reserve status of Lake Ngāroto Reserve. This process fits under the reserve management process of the Waipa District Council (WDC), the review of the reserve status was overdue. Being involved in the process made me feel very sad as our taonga is not in good health.

Key outcomes

1. Reserve status maintained
2. Mana Whenua status of Hikairo and Apakura enhanced.
3. Relationships enhanced with Apakura, WDC staff and elected officials, local farmers, Ngāroto Rowing Club, Ngāroto Sailing Club, Waikato Regional Council, and other local community members
4. Joint understanding that Lake Ngāroto is one of the most polluted lakes in New Zealand. Everybody accepts this and wants to see this change.
5. To reduce pollution and improve the water quality is a very complex matter with no single answer, no current coherent view, and no clear idea of what to do.
6. Our taonga is in desperate need of some love and help.

TREATY CLAIMS AND MACA*

(INCLUDING NGĀROTO AND MANGAKAWARE)



Figure2: Lake Ngāroto

Mangakaware

Lake Mangakaware is a reserve within the Waipa District Council. Frank Thorne and Pipi Barton were involved several years ago and did a cultural impact assessment for the Waipa District Council (WDC). TRONH has this report.

WDC are looking to make some improvements at this reserve and has developed a plan to do this. I received this report on 2 July 2026, and the initial step is to share this with Pipi and Frank to review before coming back to TRONH.

We have also worked alongside Ngāti Apakura in this process. The initial findings/recommendations of the report are:

1. Reclaim the full reserve area back into reserve, as some of the land area is being grazed by local farmers (a historic, informal agreement). Positive sentiment has been received from farmers so far.
2. Provide better protection for known and identified wāhi tapu and have protocols in place if any more wāhi tapu are identified.
3. Plant a substantive area of the reserve in native plants to minimise contaminants flowing into the lake, to protect the whenua from unwanted human intervention, to beautify the area and to bring back birdlife. The planting will be done in a manner that honours and recognises the wāhi tapu and the lake itself.
4. We have requested an area where we can reinter taonga, and WDC has a favourable disposition. We have requested this for two reasons. The Waikato Museum has some taonga that were excavated from Mangakaware many years ago, and they want to hand them back to us, and we want to return them to the whenua. We also want an area where other taonga may have been uncovered/exposed/found in the coming years, and we want to reinter them.

TREATY CLAIMS AND MACA*

(INCLUDING NGĀROTO AND MANGAKAWARE)

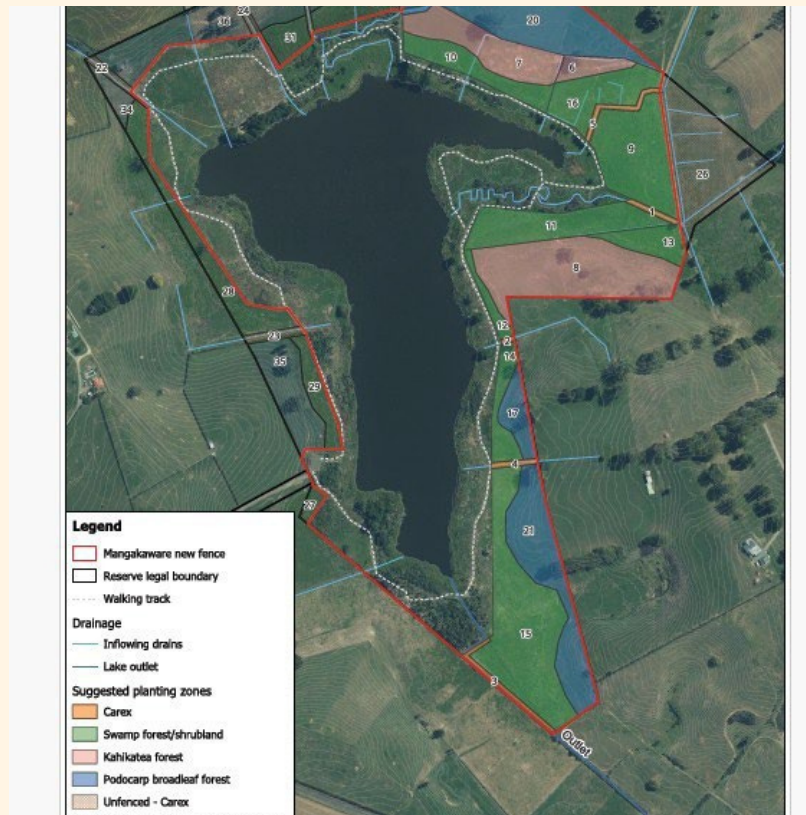


Figure 3: Lake Mangakaware

Ngā mihi nui anō ki a tātou katoa ki ngā huānga o Ngāti Hikairo, tū tonu, tū tonu, tū tonu Mauri ora

Lees Seymour
Project Manager

NOTE * MACA (Marine and Coastal Area)

FINANCIAL REPORT

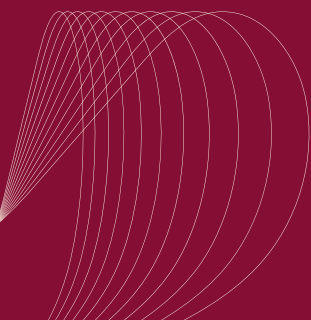
Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo

2025-26 Financial Statements

Prepared by Duncan Robin, Treasurer, Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti
Hikairo

Notes to the financial statements

1. The financial statements have been prepared by Duncan Robin, Treasurer, Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo.
2. The financial statements have been prepared on a cash basis.
3. The financial year under consideration is 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.
4. The financial statements have not been audited. This is optional. We have not pursued this due to the cost and our small size.



INCOME STATEMENT

Income Statement

as at 30 June 2026

		2026
Income		
	COGS	\$4,500
	Interest income	\$15.90
	Total income	\$4,515.90
Expenses		
	Operating expenses	(\$400)
	Admin expenses	(\$6,058.57)
	Kai-Ewe Capital Loss	(\$8,000)
	Total expenses	(\$14,458.37)
Net income		
	Net income	(\$9,942.47)

OPERATING & ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Operating and administrative expenses explained

as at 30 June 2026

	2026
Operating expenses	
• RMC	(\$400)
Administrative expenses	
• AGM	(\$3,081.13)
• Kai-Ewe General Meeting	(\$425.59)
• Website	(\$1,424.13)
• Charities fee	(\$51.11)
• Legal	(\$1,076.41)
Total	(\$6,058.37)

BALANCE SHEET

Balance Sheet

as of 30 June 2026

		2026
Assets		
	Cash	\$14,951.07
	Kai-Ewe Marae land	\$117,500.00
	Total assets	\$132,451.07
Equity		
	Total equity	\$132,451.07

NOTES

This section has been provided for whānau to record any notes for the AGM hui.

Kawhia Moana Kawhia Kai Kawhia Tangata

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