

Ngāti Kahungunu Mātauranga Acknowledgement Dinner – Thursday 30 January 2025

RECIPIENT PROFILES

Wairoa Taiwhenua Tai-Awhi Alternative Education – Kahungunu Rangatiratanga Award

Te Taiwhenua o Te Wairoa is being honored with the Rangatiratanga Education Award for their outstanding work in assisting up to seven Wairoa youth at a time who were struggling in mainstream secondary schooling.

Their Tai-Awhi Alternative Education Programme, led by Aqua Ahuriri and Kiri Gilbert, with administrative support from Lisa Walker, provided a nurturing and empowering environment for rangatahi (youth) aged 13-15 years. This programme, funded by the Ministry of Education, receives referrals from Wairoa College and Wairoa Kura-Kaupapa.

The journey began in 2019 when the Ministry of Education, offered 'Whanau Engagement' contracts to the Taiwhenua. This led to the creation of the 'Te Haerenga Report,' highlighting the systemic failures in Wairoa's education system.

In 2021, the Wairoa Principals Association requested the Taiwhenua to take on the Attendance Service contract, which they accepted.

By late 2022, the Ministry of Education approached the Taiwhenua to manage the Alternative Education contract, recognizing their positive impact and proven ability to deliver.

The Tai-Awhi team, carefully selected for their ability to uplift rangatahi in a mana-enhancing manner, started in Term Two of 2023. They focus on creating a safe space for rangatahi, empowering them to identify and pursue their future aspirations.

The programme integrates life skills such as food gathering, cooking, and manaakitanga, ensuring a holistic approach to education.

Despite initial challenges, including Cyclone Gabrielle's impact on their facilities, the team has successfully supported rangatahi, achieving a return-to-school rate double the national average and helping many pursue further studies or work.

David Tipene-Leach – Kahungunu Mātauranga Award

Our next recipient comes from Pōrangahau in the Hawke's Bay and is of Ngāti Kere and Ngāti Manuhiri descent and is a member of Ngāti Kahungunu iwi. He is fluent in te reo Māori, accomplished in tikanga Māori and is an active member of his hapū.

He has spent his entire working life passionately promoting Māori health through general practice, public health and research. His general practitioner work has consistently been undertaken in underserved rural and urban Māori communities in Ruatoki, Whakatane, Opōtiki, Gisborne/East Coast and here in Hawke's Bay.

He is a distinguished Māori medical professional, researcher, and academic with expertise in general practice, public health, and Māori health equity. He has been instrumental in developing culturally resonant healthcare initiatives, including the Māori SIDS Prevention Programme, wahakura (woven sleeping devices for SUDI prevention), and cultural safety frameworks in medical education.

He has held leadership roles such as Chair of Te ORA (Māori Medical Practitioners Association) and led Treaty claim processes for Heretaunga Tamatea. As Professor of Māori and Indigenous Research at EIT, he has overseen numerous research projects focused on Indigenous health, food security, and cultural heritage. His contributions have been recognized with numerous fellowships, national awards, and a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit honour in 2018.

We are pleased to add to his list of his many awards and acknowledgements, welcome to the stage, our recipient of the Ngāti Kahungunu Mātauranga Award, Professor, David Tipene-Leach

Te Korou Whangataua – Kahungunu Te Reo me ona Tikanga Award

Te Korou Whangataua, a beacon of Māori language and culture, hails from Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, Rangitāne, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Porou, and Ngāi Tahu. Born and raised in te reo Māori by his parents in the Wairarapa, Te Korou moved to Auckland at the age of 11.

He is a proud graduate of Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngati Hamua, Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Wairarapa, Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Hoani Waititi, and Wharekura.

During his high school years, Te Korou achieved the highest score in the country for Te Reo Rangatira NCEA exams, earning him the prestigious NZ Top Scholar Award.

Te Korou's passion for te reo Māori continued at the tertiary level, where he pursued studies through Te Pīnakitanga ki te Reo Kairangi and Te Panekiretanga o te Reo. He holds a Diploma in Adult Education, a Bachelor of Māori Performing Arts, and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Māori Medium.

A true Māori language enthusiast, Te Korou is an experienced subtitler, kapa haka exponent, and dynamic te reo Māori kaiako at various kura reo throughout Aotearoa.

He translated the Kings song 'Kei Aro Atu Koe / Don't Worry Bout' It', featured in the 2019 Waiata Anthems, and a Marvel Avengers vs X-Men graphic novel.

At Te Matatini 2023 in Tāmaki Makaurau, Te Korou placed first equal for Best Male Leader, and the group he led, Te Rangiura ki te Wairarapa, placed second equal in Haka, making every Kahungunu supremely proud.

Te Korou teaches at TKKM o Hoani Waititi Marae and Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. He has a passion for translating and creating new phrases and sayings – 'Ko te reo kia mūrere, kia taiea, kia rangatahi.' "Keeping te reo fresh, cool, and youthful."

A passionate leader, Te Korou challenges Māori to take control of their own future, starting with te reo Māori. "He reo hapa e taea te whakatika, he reo ngū e kore e taea" – You can fix a language that has mistakes, but you can't fix a language that is not spoken.

He encourages all to start and stay on their reo journey, not letting the fear of making a mistake prevent them from speaking, learning, and growing.

Tonight's recipient of the Ngāti Kahungunu Te Reo me ona Tikanga Award is Te Korou Whangataua

Mereana Pitman – Kahungunu Whakaputanga & Tiriti o Waitangi Award

Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa, Ngāti Porou
Recipient – Whakaputanga me Tiriti o Waitangi Award
E te tī, e te tā, tēnei te mihi ki a koutou.

Tonight, we honour a true toa, a wahine Māori whose mahi has shaped the fight for our rights, our reo, and our rangatiratanga.

Whaea Mereana Pitman, of Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa and Ngāti Porou, has carried the torch for Kotahitanga for over 40 years. Inspired by her kuia, Whaia McClutchie, who stood to whai kōrero when she was just nine years old, Mereana embraced her own fearless voice to challenge injustices.

Known as one of the ‘OG Māori activists,’ she has stood shoulder to shoulder with the likes of Hone Harawira, Annette Sykes, Ken Mair, and Tame Iti. Mereana’s legacy includes her pivotal role in DOVE Hawke’s Bay, the national Mauri Ora framework, and the Ministerial Task Force on Family Violence. She has chaired Women’s Refuge at a national level, contributed to Kaupapa Māori research, and led Ngāti Kahungunu’s Violence-Free Iwi Strategy. More recently, she was a driving force behind the 2024 Toitū te Tiriti Hikoi to Parliament.

Unrelenting, humble, and unwavering in her aroha for our people, Mereana embodies the spirit of Whakaputanga me Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

It is my privilege to present this award to a wahine toa who continues to light the fire of Kotahitanga across the motu.

E te mareikura, Mereana Pitman, tēnei te mihi maioha ki a koe.

Evelyn Ratima – Kahungunu Tipurea te Aroha Award Recipient

Evelyn Nukumai-te-Mangai Ratima, QSM, is a distinguished Kahungunu leader and community advocate from Kahungunu ki Te Whanganui A Orotu. Her extensive contributions to Māori development and community well-being have been recognized with the Queen’s Service Medal in 2019.

Evelyn has been instrumental in various community initiatives, notably co-founding Whakatu’s beloved ‘Christmas in the Park’ in 2002 with her late husband, Des Ratima. This annual event was established to address rising domestic violence and suicide rates following the closure of the Whakatu freezing works and now attracts 500 to 600 whānau each year.

In her governance roles, Evelyn serves as a Trustee and Treasurer of Tangoio Marae and is an active member of Te Tira Toitū te Whenua, the Hastings District Plan Cultural Values Subcommittee, and the Hastings District Council Māori Joint Committee. She has also been pivotal in the restoration of Te Karamu at Whakatu.

Evelyn’s dedication to education is evident through her role as a tutor at Whakatu’s Kōhanga Reo, where she supports the revitalization of Te Reo Māori at the marae and in her work place. Her leadership extends to her position as Deputy Chair of the Mana Ahuriri Trust, where she continues to advocate for the cultural and economic development of her iwi.

Evelyn is loved by her community and those she meets immediately fall in love with her chirpy nature. She has a strong Christian belief and has a beautiful wairua that depicts friendship, understanding, peace, and love. It is a pleasure to acknowledge tonight's recipient of the Tipurea Te Aroha Award – Evelyn Ratima.

Marei Apatu – Kahungunu Whakawhanaungatanga Award

Marei Apatu is a steadfast leader who has dedicated his life to fighting for Māori rights, te taiao, whanaungatanga, collaboration, innovation, and Kotahitanga (unity). Standing resilient in the face of political and environmental challenges is matched only by his unwavering commitment to his people. Marei's beliefs echo through the lyrics of his favorite waiata by Brotherhood of Man: "For united we stand, divided we fall, and if our backs should ever be against the wall, we'll be together, together you and I."

Marei believes the most valuable treasure of an iwi, is the wisdom passed down from our ancestors, since time immemorial. We stand on the shoulders of our tupuna. We all come from that one seed-birth – Rangiatea, and we will never be forgotten."

This September, Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga celebrates 40 years since its humble beginnings on 19 September 1985, operating out of a tractor shed at Waipatu Marae. Despite having no assets or resources, it was rich in vision and energy, embodying the hopes and dreams of Kahungunu ki Heretaunga to revitalise our language, culture, and future.

Marei was the first employee of Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga and now serves as Te Kaihautū, Te Manaaki Taiao, leading over 400 staff in working with whānau to achieve their goals and hauora (well-being). One of Marei's most cherished achievements is celebrating 50 years of marriage to his beloved Rongomaiwahine sweetheart, Karen, in September 2023. As his favorite song goes, "There's no one in this world I would rather be, than with you my love. And there's nothing in the world that I would rather see, than your smile my love."

Whakawhanaungatanga, in the context of this award, honors those who have dedicated their lives to uplifting others. Tonight's recipient of the Ngāti Kahungunu Whakawhanaungatanga Award is Marei Apatu

Ngatai Huata - Lifetime Achievement Award

Our first recipient tonight is Ngatai Huata, of Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa, Ngāti Pāhauwera, Kahungunu ki Heretaunga, and Ngāti Porou descent, is being honored tonight for her outstanding contributions to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Māori music.

Her lineage includes renowned composers and songwriters, her grandfather Paraire Henare Tomoana and her father Wi Te Tau Huata, which has deeply influenced her passion for traditional Māori music and composition.

Ngatai's life has been dedicated to creating spaces for kaupapa Māori, advocating for "Mana Māori Motuhake." She has been instrumental in movements such as the Hiko Movement Te Tiriti o Waitangi - Tino Rangatiratanga and Te Kākano o te Whānau, which later evolved into Tautoko Wāhine Māori Records (TWM Records). Through TWM Records, Ngatai composed over 150 waiata, himene, haka, and wānanga, and produced 24 albums and a film soundtrack.

In 1983, Ngatai co-founded the kaupapa Māori Pūoro Waiata Collective, Black Katz, which produced six albums. The collective's music aimed to educate, conscientise, decolonise, and heal.

Ngatai's advocacy for IPR was highlighted during the 1984 National Elections when she challenged the Prime Minister David Lange on the use of "Pōkarekare Ana" as a campaign brand. Her efforts led to the recognition of her grandfather Paraire Henare Tomoana's contributions to Māori music.

Ngatai's involvement in the Wai 262 claim emphasised the need for cultural and creative rights protection for Māori. She advocated for an indigenous model to safeguard Māori compositions, creativity, and Mātauranga Māori. Her work has been pivotal in reclaiming and protecting Māori intellectual property and cultural heritage.

Ngatai Huata's dedication to preserving and promoting Māori music and culture through Intellectual Property Rights has earned her this prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award, recognising her significant contributions to the Māori and world Indigenous communities.

We welcome to the stage, not only our first award recipient tonight, but our first Ngāti Kahungunu Mātauranga Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient – Ngatai Huata.

Hayden Hape – Kahungunu Champion Award

Hayden Hape is a dedicated Māori leader and community advocate affiliated to Ngāti Kahungunu, through Ngāti Rangiwakaewa and Ngāti Pakapaka hapū. He serves as the Chair of Kahungunu ki Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua Taiwhenua, representing the interests of his iwi in the Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua region.

Born to the late Patrick and Christine Hape in Taniwaka, Hayden hails from a close-knit family committed to maintaining their ancestral lands and traditions. His involvement with Kaitoke Marae includes roles such as a former member of the urupā committee and former board member, reflecting his deep connection to his marae and community.

Hayden was introduced to Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated as a young man, nurtured by his Aunty's Kahu Pene and Linette Rautahi back in the early 2000's. He's been nurtured ever since and has been entrusted several leadership roles representing his whānau.

In his leadership capacity, Hayden has been instrumental in advancing the vision for his rohe: "To have a thriving community with strong and trusted leadership, building a better future for Kahungunu people, all Māori, all iwi, and all people in the Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua Rohe." His dedication to iwi development is evident through his active participation in various governance roles, including serving as a trustee on the Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua Settlement Trust and former director on their Post Settlement Governance Investment Trust. He is also Chairperson of the Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki-nui-a-iwi Development.

Hayden's entrepreneurial spirit is showcased through initiatives like Pure Heart Aotearoa, a company based in Dannevirke that sells ready to drink hemp milk and other hemp products. Hayden focuses on creating opportunities that benefit his community. His leadership was also highlighted when Kahungunu ki Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua Taiwhenua invested a million dollars in the HIDDEN experience, a fast-growing Singapore-based social enterprise specializing in immersive games, demonstrating his forward-thinking approach to economic development. Through his unwavering commitment, Hayden Hape continues to make significant contributions to the prosperity and cultural preservation of his iwi and the broader Māori community. During the worldwide Covid-19 lockdown, Hayden was continuously ensuring that his community stayed well. In many instances where he saw the safe opportunity to go

abroad, he did. He communicated with Fonterra and was able to secure dairy products, yoghurt and milk throughout the Kahungunu rohe. With Covid-19 during easter, Hayden phoned 'The Warehouse' and was able to arrange 33,000 easter eggs to be delivered to whānau throughout the Kahungunu rohe. Hayden's passion for his people goes beyond any boundaries and he has the enduring wisdom to think outside the square.

A passionate man for his whānau across Kahungunu, soon after the 2023 Cyclone Gabrielle event, Hayden and his team travelled to all affected parts of Kahungunu to lend his team of ox-men. Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua is well known for their Manaaki and strong men and women. This is evident as the Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua whānau are the Kahungunu AGM Pa Sports Tug of War Champions.

Hayden and his team were the first Taiwhenua to take on the event planning of Matariki Events in 2005. His team are always supportive of iwi initiatives. In recent years the need for lunches in schools brought an opportunity for Hayden to lead the purchase of the local popular café 'Sugar and Salt'. While the café provides delicious food for the regular customers, the back kitchen is used to prepare lunches for the children in Dannevirke.

Lastly, Hayden wouldn't be the man he is without the support of his whānau. Home is where the heart is, and evidently Hayden's home is where lamb tails and lamb chops are as well. But seriously, he is well supported by his sweetheart Stacey. Together they have 6 children, Branden, Riley, Jarrod, Shayla, Ashleigh, and Wikitoria. Hayden and Stacey live a very busy life, but life certainly slows down for time with their moko, Riley, Kaylin, Iva, Rongomau, and two on the way.

Tonight's Kahungunu Champion Award Recipient – Hayden Hape.