

Eruera Beattie

Ko Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa tōna kāinga tūturu. Kaumātua Eruera Beattie has dedicated his life to leadership, service and advancing the wellbeing of Māori. From a successful career in building compliance, he moved into Māori health, establishing Te Waka Hauora, the first Māori Health Unit within Waikato District Health Board, and helping establish its pioneering Māori governance body. A graduate in Māori Studies and Human Psychology, Eruera is also an ordained priest of Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa, Hāhi Mihingare. Through iwi governance, kaumātua wellbeing and advocacy, he has strengthened kaupapa Māori and proudly maintained connections with Ngāti Kahungunu whānau throughout Aotearoa.

Hana and Ted Whaanga

For decades, Hana and Ted Whaanga have helped shape the heart and identity of Nūhaka through education, culture, history and dedicated community service. Hana's remarkable contribution to education spans more than 60 years, teaching and inspiring generations of Wairoa whānau, with her influence continuing long after her retirement. Together, Hana and Ted have strengthened the cultural grounding and community life of Nūhaka, preserving local history and giving generously of their time and knowledge. Their longstanding service, including support for the Nūhaka Rugby Club and wider community, reflects a lifetime commitment to their people, leaving a legacy that continues through generations.

Patricia Te Rangi

Pat Te Rangi has dedicated many years to serving Ngāti Kahungunu through broadcasting, te reo Māori, Māori Wardens and community leadership. Through her longstanding leadership at Radio Kahungunu, Pat has helped ensure the voices, stories and language of our people are heard across the airwaves, while supporting the growth and daily operations of an important iwi institution. Her service through the Takitimu Māori Wardens Association further reflects her commitment to the safety, wellbeing and mana of our whānau. Whether behind the microphone or out in the community, Pat has remained a steady and dedicated servant of Kahungunu. She quietly serves our people.

Te Huia Hamilton

Bill Te Huia Hamilton has dedicated more than 30 years to advancing Māori development, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, human rights and rangatiratanga. A former Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated Board member, Bill has held senior leadership roles with the Human Rights Commission, Te Puni Kōkiri and NZEI Te Riu Roa, alongside extensive iwi, trust and community governance. A respected facilitator, educator and strategic adviser, he has worked with organisations including Treasury, the National Iwi Chairs Forum and the Tindall Foundation. Through his knowledge, leadership and willingness to challenge conventional thinking, Bill has helped strengthen Māori voices and advance conversations about constitutional transformation and our future as tangata whenua.

Jerry Hapuku

Owen Jerry Hapuku has given decades of steadfast leadership and service to Ngāti Kahungunu, grounded firmly in his whakapapa, tikanga, kawa and Hāhi. A strong and respected leader of Kahurānaki Marae, Jerry has consistently represented Kahungunu at iwi, community and local government tables, ensuring the voice and values of our people are heard and upheld. His leadership comes from the heart, guided by his faith, his love for whānau and his commitment to tamariki and mokopuna. Jerry stands proudly for his people, carrying forward the mana of his tīpuna while helping strengthen the pathway for generations yet to come.

Ngatai Huata

Ngātai Huata is a trailblazer whose contribution spans Māori arts, waiata, mātauranga Māori, wāhine rights and cultural intellectual property. A composer, artist, curator, educator and member of Black Katz, she has spent decades creating opportunities for Māori voices and creativity to flourish. Ngātai has served Ngāti Kahungunu through iwi governance, Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga, communications, research and kaupapa supporting wāhine and whānau. As a Wai 262 claimant, she has championed the protection of Māori cultural and intellectual property and mātauranga Māori. Her fearless advocacy, creativity and leadership have strengthened the place of wāhine, artists and Māori knowledge within Kahungunu and throughout Aotearoa.

Bessie Manaena

Bessie Manaena is a courageous community leader, whānau advocate and one of the foundational kuia behind Nannies Against P. Drawing strength from her own experiences of mamae, Bessie has stood up for nannies and whānau whose lives have been devastated by methamphetamine. Her advocacy has helped bring national attention to the need for safer homes, stronger support and protection for kuia and mokopuna, taking that fight as far as the Waitangi Tribunal. Through community leadership, housing advocacy and social activism, Bessie has turned personal pain into purpose, standing fearlessly for whānau and giving strength and voice to others experiencing the same struggle.

Heke Huata

Heke Huata has dedicated many years to the growth and success of Te Kōhanga Reo, helping to nurture generations of tamariki through te reo Māori, tikanga and whānau. Her pioneering leadership and commitment have strengthened the kōhanga reo movement and supported whānau to provide their tamariki with a strong cultural foundation from their earliest years. Her service has been especially important within communities where Te Kōhanga Reo has remained a source of strength and connection through challenging times. Heke's contribution reflects a lifelong commitment to protecting te reo Māori and ensuring it flourishes for generations to come.

Bevan Taylor

Bevan Taylor is a respected kaumātua, master carver and former Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated Board member. During his time on the NKII Board, Bevan was responsible for advancing the first Kahungunu Health Plan, developed in the early 2000s by Mara Andrews, providing an important foundation for iwi health planning. He has contributed through whakairo, taiao restoration and the ongoing protection of tikanga and kawa. Today, Bevan continues to pass his knowledge directly to his mokopuna, teaching them whakairo, tikanga and the knowledge he has gathered over a lifetime.

Lil Stone

Lil Stone is one of our eldest recipients and a much-loved wahine toa whose strength can be seen in her whānau and the wider community. A beautiful wife and steadfast supporter to her husband Dave Stone, and a great advocate for all things Kahungunu, Lil has always brought aroha, wisdom and warmth to those around her. She is well known for her wonderful smile, her sense of humour and her belief that laughter, friendship and a good social outing are important ingredients for a happy life. Lil has a way of lifting the spirits of everyone she meets. Her strength, positive outlook and love for people make her a wahine to be admired.

Orine Gillies

Orine Gillies is the embodiment of ahi kā, keeping the home fires burning and maintaining a strong presence at the marae. She is a respected exponent of karanga, tikanga and te reo Māori, sharing her knowledge so these practices continue through the generations. Orine gives confidence to those who are learning, particularly young wāhine, encouraging them to find their voice and stand their ground. Her strength has been forged through the battles she has faced and overcome in her own life, shaping the wahine she is today. A strong advocate for everything Māori, Orine carries herself with dignity, purpose and mana.

Jacob Scott

Jacob Scott is a proud Kahungunu artist, carver, architectural designer and educator whose influence on contemporary Māori art and design spans generations. A pioneer of Māori arts education, he founded EIT's Art and Design School and helped establish Maunga Kura Toi, New Zealand's first degree programme in whakairo and raranga. Jacobs creative work brings together mātauranga Māori, whakapapa, people and place. Jacob's Kahungunutanga is deeply embedded in his approach, ensuring our stories and identity are expressed through art, architecture and education. His lifetime contribution continues to challenge and inspire Māori artists to innovate while remaining grounded in who they are.

Jill Munro

Jill Munro is a talented wahine whose service to Kahungunu spans governance, customary fisheries, raranga and community. A former NKII Board member representing Tamatea,

Jill has long been a trusted voice for her people. She was appointed Tangata Kaitiaki for customary fisheries at Kairākau and has supported the protection and restoration of important kaimoana, including pāua, for future generations. Jill is also a skilled weaver who has shared her knowledge of harakeke and raranga with others. A musician and generous community woman, Jill brings talent, mātauranga and a lifetime of service to everything she does.

Kara Kire

Kara Kire is a treasured adopted Kahungunu kuia whose life reflects aroha, service and commitment to whānau. A lifelong advocate for te reo Māori, tikanga and the advancement of wāhine Māori, Kara helped establish Flaxmere's first Te Kōhanga Reo, Te Kōhanga Reo o Pāharakeke, in 1983 and was pivotal in establishing Te Aranga Marae. A Life Member of the Māori Women's Welfare League and long-standing Trustee of Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga, she has supported generations of whānau and rangatahi through social work, care and community leadership. Now at Brittany House, Kara continues to share her wisdom, humour and tikanga, enriching those around her.

Zac Makoare

Zack Makoare has dedicated decades to strengthening rangatahi, tāne and whānau across Ngāti Kahungunu. Through Te Taitimu Trust, he has become a respected leader in suicide prevention, rangatahi development and whānau wellbeing, using kaupapa grounded in whakapapa, whenua and te ao Māori. Zack has also championed papakāinga housing, helping bring Puke Aute Papakāinga at Te Hauke to life, creating homes and opportunities for whānau to reconnect with ancestral whenua. He willingly shares this experience to help others navigate their own papakāinga aspirations. Zack's leadership, determination and practical approach continue to create hope, belonging and stronger pathways for generations of Kahungunu whānau.

Ihaia Don Hutana & Annette Harris

Ihaia Hutana has dedicated decades to strengthening whānau through te reo Māori, tikanga, education and rehabilitation, with his wife Annette an enduring source of strength throughout that journey. Together since 1982, Ihaia acknowledges Annette as the backbone behind much of what he has achieved. His service has spanned leadership with Tamatea Taiwhenua and Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Kahungunu, 12 years as Māori Liaison Tutor at EIT, and project management of Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated's reo strategy, helping whānau reclaim, use and celebrate the distinctive reo of Kahungunu. He later served as Pou Tikanga for Te Oranga Hinengaro o Te Matau-a-Māui and continues as Kaihautū supporting prison kaupapa. Ihaia and Annette began their prison mahi voluntarily more than 30 years ago, with contracted services beginning in 1998. More recently, this

commitment has continued through Tēnei Au, a partnership between Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated and Ara Poutama Aotearoa, supporting rehabilitation, cultural reconnection and pathways forward. A talented composer, educator and advocate for mātauranga Māori, Ihaia's greatest kaupapa remains whānau. Alongside Annette, an extraordinary mother to their 10 tamariki and grandmother to more than 90 mokopuna and mokomokopuna, they have built a legacy grounded in aroha, reo, tikanga and service.

Raina Ferris

Te Raina Ferris is a respected Ngāti Kahungunu karanga expert, kaiako and lifelong champion of mātauranga Māori. For decades she has dedicated herself to protecting, revitalising and teaching the sacred art of karanga, empowering generations of wāhine to understand their voice, whakapapa, mana and responsibilities as kaikaranga. Through Kurawaka in Pōrangahau, she has created a place for this precious mātauranga to be nurtured and passed forward. Many wāhine in this room will attest to her extraordinary knowledge, strength and generosity as a kaiako. A longstanding leader with Tamatea Arikinui, Raina continues to ensure the karanga of our people remains strong for future generations.

Henare Kani

Henare Kani has been a strong and influential advocate for Māori rights, wellbeing and tino rangatiratanga. As a claimant in the landmark Wai 262 claim, he has championed the protection of taonga, mātauranga Māori and cultural intellectual property. Henare is also a respected voice in Indigenous data sovereignty, advocating for Māori authority over information about our people. His leadership spans health, wellbeing and whānau development, always bringing a thoughtful and courageous perspective. Most recently, Henare shared his whakaaro representing Tamatea at the 2026 NKII Fish Hook Summit, continuing his commitment to challenging thinking, strengthening Māori leadership and influencing positive change for future generations.

Johnny Nepe Apatu

Johnny Nepe Apatu has given decades of service to Ngāti Kahungunu through whānau, hapū and iwi leadership, particularly across Tamatea, Waipukurau, Waipawa and Takapau. A former Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated Board member, Johnny was among the first tauira of Te Whare Tū Taua o Aotearoa under Tā Pita Sharples. He became a driving force for mau rākau and taiaha training in Hawke's Bay, strengthening identity, discipline and wellbeing through tikanga Māori. His courageous advocacy has also extended to suicide prevention, methamphetamine harm reduction and supporting vulnerable whānau. Johnny's leadership continues to empower whānau through culture, connection, strength and service.

Kathy Mihaere

Kathy Mihaere is a much-loved kuia and community leader whose strength reaches further than she probably realises. Through her mahi and service to Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua, Kathy has spent years caring for, advocating for and strengthening whānau. Even while facing challenges of her own, Kathy carries herself with humility and holds the mana and wellbeing of others in the highest regard. She has a beautiful way of keeping her own concerns small while making space for everyone else. At our Kahungunu 2050 hui, Kathy spoke about ensuring our tamariki have a safe future in which to thrive. Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua is lucky to have you, Kathy, and so are we.

Dr. Jean Te Huia

Dr Jean Te Huia is a formidable leader in Māori health, midwifery and whānau advocacy. For decades she has challenged systems that fail Māori while creating pathways that strengthen whānau wellbeing. Her courageous leadership helped drive the call “Not one more child will be taken,” challenging the removal of Māori pēpi from their whānau. During COVID, Jean again led from the front, mobilising practical support for vulnerable whānau. Her commitment extends into deeply personal areas of wellbeing, supporting people to make choices that can restore health, confidence and quality of life. Jean’s courage, innovation and determination reflect one constant purpose: helping whānau live healthier, happier and longer lives.

Haami Te Whaiti

Haami Te Whaiti is a respected historian, cultural leader and dedicated servant of Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki nui-a-Rua. For more than 40 years he has worked alongside kaumātua, kuia and whānau to preserve, protect and share the histories and taonga of our people. His contribution includes supporting the return of wāhi tapu at Mātakitaki-a-Kupe and significant cultural projects nationally. Haami also carried enormous responsibility as a negotiator and Chair through the Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki nui-a-Rua Treaty settlement journey. His knowledge, perseverance and quiet leadership have helped protect our past, restore what was lost and create stronger foundations for generations to come.

Paremo Matthews

Nanny Paremo Matthews is a pioneering Māori educator whose lifelong commitment to te reo Māori has helped restore and strengthen the language across Wairarapa. From the early days of Kōhanga Reo, Paremo became a devoted kaiako, nurturing tamariki and whānau through Māori immersion education. She has continued this kaupapa across generations, teaching te reo through Te Ataarangi and contributing her knowledge to Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Wairarapa. At a time when fluent speakers were few, Paremo carried the reo forward with determination and aroha. Her many years of teaching and service have helped ensure that the reo once threatened with loss is spoken proudly by new generations.

Frances Reiri-Smith

Frances Reiri-Smith is a respected Māori educationalist, researcher, historian and lifelong advocate for te reo Māori. A descendant of renowned Māori scholar Te Whatahoro Jury, Frances has devoted decades to preserving and sharing the stories, language and mātauranga of Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa. She co-led the significant Wairarapa Claim Translation Project, helping preserve historical manuscripts, whakapapa and Māori-language records for future generations. A longtime teacher of te reo Māori at Hurunui-o-Rangi Marae, Frances is also a respected kuia and kaikaranga. Her contribution across education, research, iwi history and community service has ensured precious knowledge is not only protected, but continues to live through our people.

Kotuku Tomoana

Kōtuku Tomoana is a respected kaumātua, educator, researcher, broadcaster and sportsman whose life reflects a deep commitment to Ngāti Kahungunu. A fluent speaker and passionate teacher of te reo Māori, Kōtuku has generously shared his knowledge with generations, teaching reo, tikanga and the art of whaikōrero. He continues to uphold the paepae at Waipatu Marae, carrying the histories and kōrero of his people with mana and humour. A familiar voice on Radio Kahungunu, Kōtuku has also contributed to research preserving our iwi knowledge. A keen sportsman and health enthusiast, he leads by example, championing healthy living alongside cultural strength and lifelong learning.

Hira Huata

Hira Huata is a formidable wahine who knows her whenua, knows her people and is never afraid to stand for what is right. A teacher and passionate advocate for te reo Māori, mātauranga and Māori performing arts, Hira is equally fierce in her commitment to te taiao. Her deep knowledge of the Bridge Pā waterways and Te Mana o te Wai fuels her determination to protect and restore our precious wai. Hira does not accept injustice quietly. She speaks up, challenges decisions and demands recognition of what is rightfully ours as Māori, as tangata whenua, and as a nation of people with enduring rights and responsibilities to our whenua and wai.

Maku and Tuhoe Huata

Maku and Tuhoe Huata are brother and sister who have carried forward their whānau legacy with strength, purpose and an unwavering commitment to their people. Losing their father suddenly while still young, they held tightly to everything they had been taught: te reo Māori, tikanga, kapa haka, mātauranga Māori and service to whānau. Central to their journey has been their mother, Ngamoni, whose strength and guidance helped shape the people they became. She instilled in Maku and Tuhoe the discipline, commitment and high standards required in kapa haka, while ensuring they maintained strong connections to Ngāti Kahungunu and the legacy of their father. She encouraged them to know where they came from, to uphold what they had been taught and to continue in a way that would make their Dad proud. Both became teachers, passing that knowledge and confidence to

another generation. Maku is a natural leader who commands respect on the kapa haka stage, while her warmth and connection with tauira make her an inspiring teacher and mentor.

Tuhoe is HOD Toi Ataata at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngāti Kahungunu, an accomplished kapa haka performer and master carver. Through education, whakairo and performing arts, he continues to preserve and share mātauranga Māori. Together, Maku and Tuhoe embody the strength of their upbringing, honouring both their parents by strengthening te reo, tikanga, toi Māori and kapa haka for generations to come.

Marei Apatu

Marei Apatu is a steadfast voice for mana whenua, bringing a lifetime of knowledge, leadership and advocacy to the people and environment of Heretaunga. As Te Kaihautū for Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga, Marei has stood at the forefront of important battles for wai, whenua and te taiao. His knowledge of whakapapa, tikanga and our natural environment has informed councils, courts, iwi and communities, ensuring tangata whenua are heard. From preserving the kōrero of our kaumātua to serving through Te Rūnanganui and environmental leadership, Marei is never afraid to stand his ground. His mahi protects what our tūpuna entrusted to us and what our mokopuna deserve.

Mike Paku

Mike Paku is a respected leader whose strength lies in his grounded approach, strong governance and commitment to whānau and kaupapa Māori. As Chair of Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga, Mike has helped guide and strengthen an organisation dedicated to improving the wellbeing of whānau across Heretaunga. His leadership is firmly connected to the marae and the people, particularly through his longstanding service to Ruahāpia Marae. Mike brings calmness, experience and sound judgement to the many tables he serves on. He leads without needing the spotlight, putting service first and ensuring the voices and aspirations of whānau remain at the heart.