

Tihei KAHUNGUNU

Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi
INCORPORATED

Marking 30 year milestone

Looking ahead to Kahungunu 2050

Ruth Wong

This year, Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated marks 30 years since the organisation was established in its current form on 9 December 1996.

Thirty years is an important milestone. It gives us an opportunity to look back at where we have come from, acknowledge the many people who have contributed along the way, and importantly, look ahead to where we want Ngāti Kahungunu to be in the future.

Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated is the Mandated Iwi Organisation and authority representing Ngāti Kahungunu.

Over the past three decades, the organisation has worked across many areas affecting our people, including iwi representation, whānau wellbeing, education, culture, economic development, te taiao, advocacy and relationships with government and other agencies.

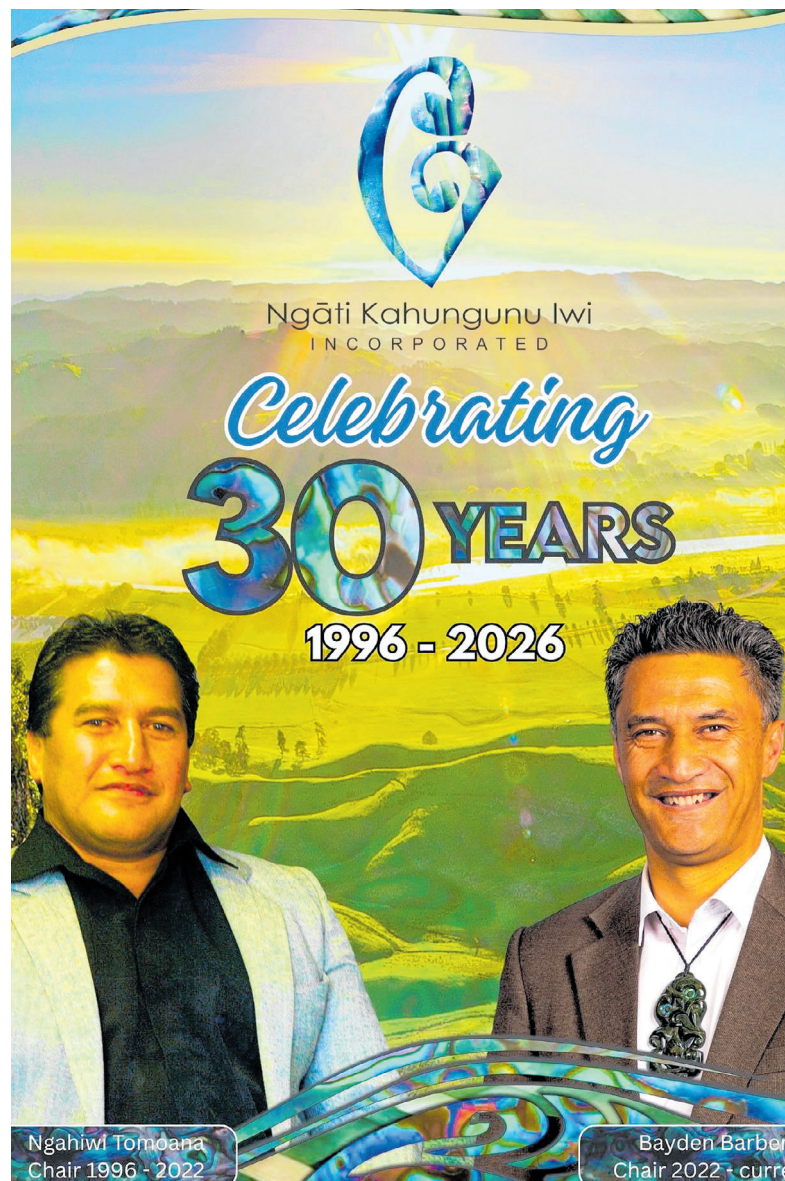
Like any organisation that has been around for 30 years, there have been changes, challenges, successes and lessons along the way.

Governments have changed, communities have changed and the needs and aspirations of our whānau have continued to evolve.

But our responsibility has remained the same – to represent Ngāti Kahungunu and support the aspirations of our people.

The strength of NKII has never been about one Board, one Chief Executive or one generation of staff.

It has been built over time



Ngahiwi Tomoana
Chair 1996 - 2022

Bayden Barber
Chair 2022 - current

by the many people who have contributed through governance, leadership, mahi, advocacy, tikanga, administration, manaakitanga and service.

As part of our 30-year celebrations, we are taking the opportunity to acknowledge 30 special recipients who were

nominated for their many years of service and contribution to Ngāti Kahungunu.

These recipients represent many different areas of iwi life. They are leaders, kaumātua, cultural practitioners, educators, advocates, nannies, volunteers and community

Thirty years is a important milestone for Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated.

champions who have given their time, knowledge and energy to strengthening our iwi, hapū, marae and whānau.

They will be formally acknowledged at our Toitū Kahungunu Gala Event on Thursday 24 September 2026 at Toitū – Hawke's Bay Arts & Events Centre.

The response from our whānau has been wonderful.

The Gala is now sold out, with more than 900 registered members booked to attend

areas: being culturally strong; strengthening whānau wellbeing; achieving economic independence; growing mātauranga, education and succession; and protecting te taiao while building climate resilience.

By 2050 we want our whānau strongly connected to their whakapapa, pā and marae, with te reo Māori and tikanga continuing to flourish. We want healthy and thriving whānau, prosperous people

While this anniversary gives us an opportunity to celebrate our history, it is just as important that we look ahead at the next 25 years that will take us towards Kahungunu 2050.

and celebrate this important milestone together.

While we are acknowledging 30 recipients as part of our 30th anniversary, we know they represent the many hands and hearts that have served Ngāti Kahungunu throughout the generations.

See the double-page advertisement inside this edition of Tihei Kahungunu for our 30 recipients and a bite-sized snapshot of the contribution each has made to Ngāti Kahungunu.

While this anniversary gives us an opportunity to celebrate our history, it is just as important that we look ahead at the next 25 years that will take us towards Kahungunu 2050.

Our vision, "Ki te whaiao, ki te ao mārama – the continuous pursuit of excellence," remains central to that future.

Kahungunu 2050 focuses our attention on five important

and growing assets. We want strong Kahungunu leaders coming through and mokopuna who are confident in who they are, capable in the world they live in and able to determine their own futures.

We also want our people continuing to care for and restore our whenua, awa and moana, as our tūpuna did before us.

Thirty years has given NKII a strong foundation. The next 25 years are about what we build upon it.

As we celebrate those who have helped bring us to where we are today, we also acknowledge the responsibility we carry for those who will come after us.

Our job now is to ensure Ngāti Kahungunu continues to have a strong voice, a clear direction and the courage to pursue our aspirations, while keeping our whānau, hapū and marae at the heart of the journey towards Kahungunu 2050.

*"Tātou te Iwi o Ngāti Kahungunu,
kia awhina tia tātou katoa o te
Iwi o Ngāti Kahungunu"*

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AUNTY'S GARDEN

Remembering those we have lost this month

People who have given so much service to our local communities

Hanui Lawrence

There have been many passings this past month. We've lost some wonderful people who have given so much service to our local communities.

Nigel Bickle was one of those people. We welcomed Nigel on to our Waipatu Marae when he became chief executive of the Hastings District Council. He was a kindly man who always had a welcoming smile. Whenever he saw me, he would greet me with, "Hello Aunty", which always made me feel special. He will be sadly missed by many.

Then we lost Te Maari Joe, a wonderful woman who gave unconditional service to Māori and others throughout our community. I remember working alongside her at Māori

Affairs back in the late 80s and early 90s. She was a very talented woman with so much experience and knowledge in both Māori and Pākehā matters. I admired her greatly and was very saddened to hear of her passing.

Piki Rauhina Winitana, aged 88, was a very special friend. A mother of 11 children, with many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, she certainly leaves behind a wonderful legacy.

While she lay at Waimārama Marae, many people came to share their tributes, some serious and others very humorous, just as Piki would have liked.

Piki belonged to our Tahuri Whenua collective, our māra kai group, and over the years we travelled to many rohe, from Kaikohe in the north down to Kaikōura in the south, sharing our knowledge and



learning from others about growing kai.

We also shared many beds during our travels and stays at marae! One I particularly remember was at Marahau, just north of Nelson. We were staying in a tent, but inside was this huge, beautiful double bed which Piki and I shared. I had

never slept in such a gorgeous bed before, let alone inside a tent!

Piki was always the life of the party. She loved singing and dancing and was very good at making people happy. She taught many people how to knit, weave and sing, but most of all, how to enjoy life.

Aunty's pasta salad is easy and delicious.

Her love for her children and grandchildren was unconditional.

Rest in peace, Piki Rauhina. You will never be forgotten.

There have been others who have passed too, far too many to mention them all. One was Kau, Ruth's uncle, as I always called him.

Another special person who has now left us, and my thoughts are with Ruth and her whānau.

Soon one reaches an age where you start wondering, "How much time have I got left?" Well, I'm still here, and sometimes I'm a little surprised!

Oh well, box on, I say, and continue doing the things you love for as long as you can.

And even though it is winter, I still like to have a salad with my meals. So here is a nice, easy one for you to try.

This month's recipe is:

Pasta Salad

Ingredients

- 2 cups cooked pasta, or enough for your family
- 1 large carrot
- 2 florets of broccoli
- 2-3 florets of cauliflower
- ¼ cup cheese
- Salt and pepper
- Your favourite dressing, from a jar or homemade

Method

Cook your pasta and place it into a bowl. Grate the carrot, broccoli and cauliflower and add them to the pasta. Add the cheese, salt and pepper, then mix everything together with your favourite dressing.

Nice and simple. It's delicious!



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Scholarship supporting future skills

Fourth-year medical student has long road ahead

Ruth Wong

Ngāti Kahungunu is proud to support our taura as they pursue their studies and develop skills that will strengthen the future wellbeing of our whānau, hapū and iwi.

One of those taura is Ondre Hapuku-Lambert, a fourth-year medical student at University of Auckland who is working towards becoming a doctor.

Ondre links to Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga through Ngāi Te Rangikoanake and Kahurānaki Marae, and to Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa through Ngāi Tama te Rangi and Rangiahua Marae.

This year he is based at Waikato Hospital, completing clinical placements in cardiology, endocrinology, geriatric medicine, general medicine and general surgery.

He has received distinctions in some placements, with GP, Public Health, Anaesthetics and Orthopaedics still to come before his end-of-year clinical examinations.

But there is a much deeper reason behind Ondre's desire to become a doctor.

When he was just 3 years old, Ondre underwent life-

saving open-heart surgery to repair a hole in his heart.

"I am grateful for the healthcare I received and want to pay that forward to others," he says.

His desire is to serve, particularly underserved Māori and rural communities, believing medicine will place him in a strong position to make a practical and meaningful difference.

In 2025, Ondre stepped away from medicine for a year to strengthen his Te Reo Māori at the University of Waikato, achieving A grades across all eight Māori language papers. His personal aspiration is to return te reo me ōna tikanga into his immediate whānau.

He has also served as Tumuaiki of the Auckland Māori Medical Students Association and is now the University of Auckland representative for the National Māori Medical Students Association.

His experience includes Māori health research, work examining Māori engagement with health services, type 2 diabetes prevention research, and supporting rangatahi through Pūhoro STEM Academy.

Ultimately, Ondre wants to reduce health inequities for Māori and rural communities. This aspiration is timely.



Ngāti Kahungunu chairman Bayden Barber has called for a Kahungunu Health Authority, recognising the need for greater Kahungunu leadership and influence over

Ondre Hapuku-Lambert is a fourth-year medical student.

the health and wellbeing of our people.

To achieve better health outcomes, we must also grow our own doctors, nurses, specialists, researchers and

Ondre represents exactly what we hope for our Kahungunu taura: go out, learn, achieve, and when the time is right, bring that mātauranga home to our people.

health leaders, and encourage them to consider bringing their talents home.

Our scholarship support may be a small contribution towards Ondre's long medical journey, but we are incredibly proud of him.

Ondre represents exactly what we hope for our Kahungunu taura: go out, learn, achieve, and when the time is right, bring that mātauranga home to our people.



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Next generation of Kaitiaki Rangers lines up

Growing skills, knowledge and confidence of our rangatahi

Ruth Wong

A new group of Kaitiaki Rangers is beginning an exciting 12-month journey that will provide hands-on conservation experience, formal training and opportunities to explore future careers caring for our taiao.

The programme is about growing the skills, knowledge and confidence of our rangatahi while strengthening their connection to kaitiakitanga and the environment.

Over the next year, the Rangers will be involved in a range of practical conservation mahi, giving them valuable experience working within the taiao. Alongside their hands-on learning, they will undertake formal training through EIT, NMIT and other training providers, building their mātauranga and working towards recognised qualifications.

An important part of the programme is also opening doors to future employment



and career pathways.

Throughout the 12 months, the Rangers will have opportunities to undertake work experience placements with organisations including Ngā Whenua Rauhi, Department of Conservation, and other partners working across the conservation and environmental sector.

These experiences will give them the chance to learn alongside people already working in the field, experience different types of conservation mahi and

discover where their own interests and strengths may take them.

Our new Kaitiaki Rangers are:

- Maija Stephens – Ngāti Kahungunu, Rongomaiwahine
- Tūkotahi Tiakitai – Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, ki Heretaunga, Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Tūwharetoa
- Putahi Te Rongo Hawira – Ngāti Rangī, Ngāti Kahungunu, Atihaunui-a-Pāpārangi
- Isabelle Lawson – Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Rakaipaaka

For Ngāti Kahungunu, supporting opportunities such as this is about encouraging the next generation to see there are meaningful careers available within the taiao sector.

Our rangatahi bring their own whakapapa, mātauranga and connection to whenua into this mahi. By combining those foundations with practical experience, training and recognised qualifications, they can continue to grow as kaitiaki and contribute to the future wellbeing of our

A shot of the group that supported the induction of the next generation of Kaitiaki Rangers.

environment and our communities.

We are excited to support Maija, Tūkotahi, Putahi and Isabelle over the coming year as they develop their skills, gain valuable experience and build relationships across the conservation sector.

We look forward to following their journey and seeing where these opportunities may lead them. Kia kaha rā koutou. Tiakina te taiao mō ngā uri whakatipu – caring for our environment for the generations to come.

Let's go to Church!

Flaxmere Christian Fellowship
220 Flaxmere Avenue, Hastings
Main Sunday Meeting - 10:00AM

The Flaxmere Christian Fellowship is a local Church which has been operating since 1980. Situated on Flaxmere Avenue it draws people from around the Hastings and Napier area. This Pentecostal Church was birthed out of the Charismatic renewal of the late 1970's.

The main meeting is every Sunday morning starting 10:00. A Bible College also operates on Sunday evenings for those serious about advancing their knowledge of the Bible. Different groups run during the weekend which cater to youth and adults. Children's Sunday school

classes run on a fortnightly basis during the Main Sunday service.

The Fellowship aims at reaching people with the Good News of Jesus Christ and the transformational power that message brings. It is

involved with different programs in the community to help bring this to pass. The Flaxmere Christian Fellowship is also a strong advocate for the Jewish People's right to exist as an independent and sovereign state on their historical ancient land in Israel.

Feel free to come and try us out!

Flaxmere Christian Fellowship - 220 Flaxmere Avenue, Hastings

Main Sunday Meeting 10.00am - Phone 06 879 5588

Email: flaxmerechristianfellowship@hotmail.com Web: www.flaxmerechristianfellowship.com

Investing in education of our tauira

Looking to future of our whānau, iwi and people

Ruth Wong

Education has always been an important pathway for strengthening our whānau, hapū and iwi, and Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated continues to invest in opportunities that help our tauira Māori achieve their aspirations.

NKII chairman Bayden Barber is helping champion this kaupapa at both an iwi and national level through his role as chairman of the Māori

Our tauira are studying throughout Aotearoa and across an incredibly diverse range of subjects and institutions.

Education Trust (MET).

This month Bayden met with Minister of Education Erica Stanford at Parliament to discuss the future of scholarship support for Māori students and, importantly, the need for greater Government investment.

In 2025, the Māori Education Trust, together with its partners, provided an impressive \$5 million in

scholarships to 4441 Māori tauira. Of that overall investment, the Ministry of Education contributed \$664,000.

The purpose of Bayden's hui with the minister was to advocate for an increased Government contribution so that MET and its partners can reach and support even more Māori students.

For Bayden, this kaupapa also connects directly back home.

Ngāti Kahungunu is an iwi partner of the Māori Education Trust, with NKII maintaining a tripartite partnership involving MET and participating tertiary institutions. The partnership enables contributions to be combined, increasing the financial support ultimately received by our tauira.

This year, 96 Ngāti Kahungunu tauira received an NKII Scholarship, including 93 general scholarship recipients and three research scholarship recipients. Through the wider partnership funding model, approximately \$91,000 in combined scholarship support was available for these tauira, including NKII, MET and participating tertiary provider contributions.

Our tauira are studying throughout Aotearoa and



Bayden Barber's meeting with the Minister of Education Erica Stanford and the Māori Education Trust team.

across an incredibly diverse range of subjects and institutions. Health and wellbeing remains the largest field of study, followed by te reo, Tikanga and Mātauranga, alongside growing interest in environmental and natural resource studies.

Three tauira were also selected for \$5000 research scholarships, undertaking doctoral research in civil engineering and marae resilience, Māori approaches to kaumātua wellbeing, and Māori-medium education. Their research demonstrates the depth of talent coming through our iwi and the potential for education to create benefits well beyond the individual student.

For Ngāti Kahungunu, scholarships are more than financial assistance. They are an investment in our future leaders, researchers, teachers, health professionals and knowledge holders.

As Bayden continues this advocacy nationally through MET, the message is simple: when we invest in our tauira, we invest in the future of our whānau, our iwi and our people.

KAHUNGUNU PHYSIO RETURNS HOME TO HAWKE'S BAY

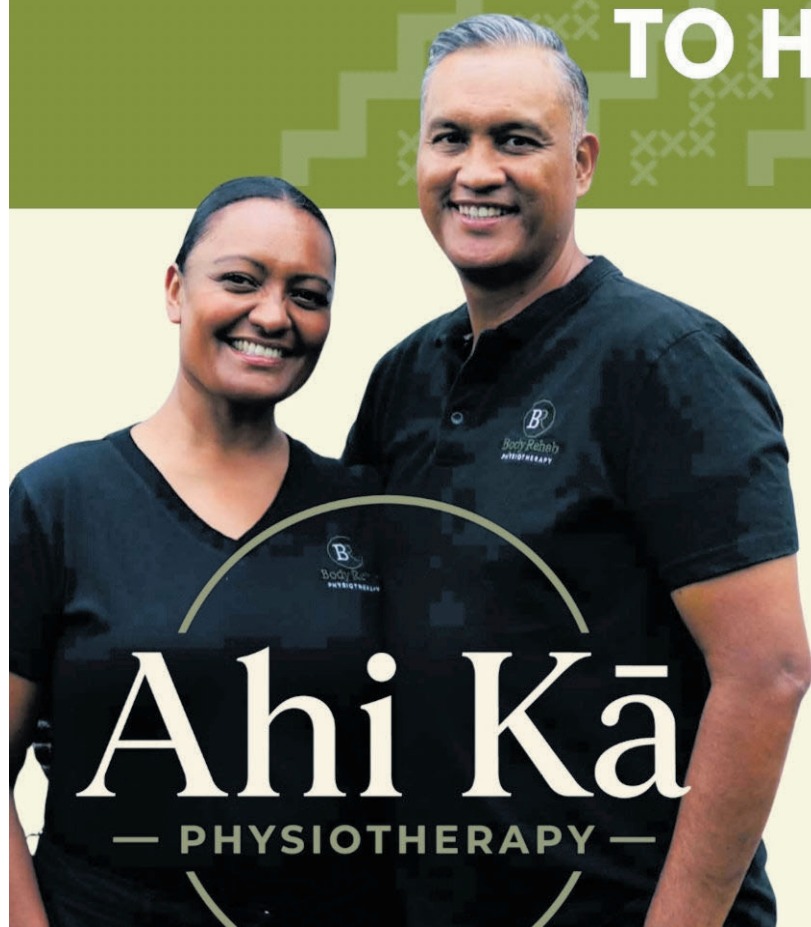
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Dedicated leadership advancing Treaty settlements for Ngāti Kahungunu over four decades.



**Henare
Kani**

Championing Te Tiriti, indigenous data sovereignty, taonga and cultural protection.



**Hira
Huata**

Devoted leadership championing te reo, mātauranga, performing arts and taiao.



**Jill
Munro**

Safeguarding harakeke traditions and fisheries through mātauranga, kaitiakitanga and service.



**Johnny Nepe
Apatu**

Empowering whānau through mau rākau, wellbeing advocacy and courageous leadership.



**Kara
Kire**

Uplifting whānau, rangatahi and kaumātua through decades of governance and service.



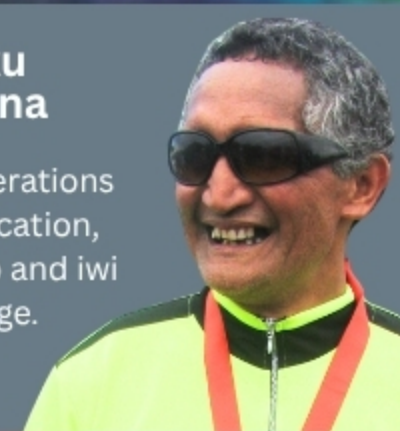
**Kathy
Mihaere**

Unwavering dedication uplifting, encouraging and strengthening Kahungunu kaupapa and people.



**Kotuku
Tomoana**

Inspiring generations through education, hauora, te reo and iwi knowledge.



**Lil
Stone**

A steadfast wahine toa, uplifting Kahungunu kaupapa with strength, aroha and wisdom.



**Maku Ropitini
& Tuhoe Huata**

Upholding Kahungunu legacy, inspiring rangatahi and championing kaupapa across generations.



**Marei
Apatu**

Over four decades championing culture, taiao, natural resources and whānau wellbeing.



**Mereana
Pitman**

Fearlessly championing Māori rights, Te Tiriti, whānau wellbeing and rangatiratanga.



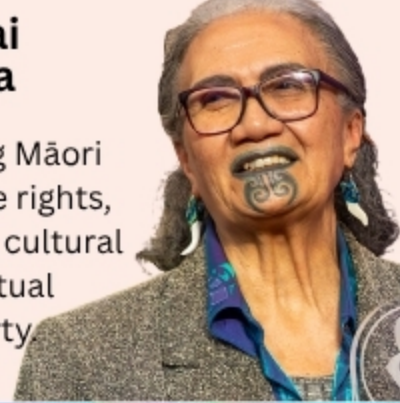
**Mike
Paku**

Ruahāpia strong, with enduring governance leadership across Kahungunu organisations.



**Ngatai
Huata**

Trailblazing Māori arts, wāhine rights, Wai 262 and cultural intellectual property.



**Orine
Gillies**

Safeguarding karanga, tikanga and te reo for generations yet to come.



**Owen Jerry
Hapuku**

Steadfastly representing Kahungunu, ensuring our tikanga and kawa are upheld.



**Paremo
Matthews**

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**Patricia
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Serving Kahungunu through Māori Wardens, broadcasting, te reo and community leadership.



**Raina
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Nurturing the sacred art of karanga, passing mātauranga through generations.



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Championing constitutional transformation, Te Tiriti education, rangatiratanga and Māori aspirations.



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Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi
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Celebrating **30 YEARS** 1996 - 2026

*30 recipients being recognised for 30+ years
of outstanding service, leadership, and
contribution to Ngāti Kahungunu.*

Pickleball makes history in Heretaunga

Inaugural National Māori Pickleball Tournament a success

Ruth Wong

A new sporting kaupapa is making its mark in Aotearoa, and Ngāti Kahungunu is proud to have played a part in its growth. The Inaugural National Māori Pickleball Tournament, held on August 15 and 16 at Rodney Green Arena in Heretaunga was a huge success. Hosted by Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi, Māori Pickleball NZ and Sport Hawke's Bay, the tournament was an important milestone for Māori participation and leadership in one of the world's fastest growing sports. For Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated, there is a special connection to the kaupapa through board member Esta Wainohu, who has been a passionate advocate for pickleball and encouraging our whānau to give it a go. Through Esta's enthusiasm, pickleball was introduced into

our own Ngāti Kahungunu AGMPā Sports, giving whānau another fun and accessible way to get active together. What started as something new for many of our whānau is quickly becoming a sport enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities. That enthusiasm was certainly evident at the National Māori Tournament. Around 250 players registered, with more than 225 whānau and supporters coming from throughout Aotearoa, Australia and the United States. More important than the numbers, however, was the kaupapa. The tournament was proudly Māori led and grounded in whakapapa, whanaungatanga and manaakitanga. Māori and tauīwi competed alongside one another, creating an atmosphere of connection, belonging and mutual respect. NKII chairman Bayden



Barber said Ngāti Kahungunu is proud to support sporting kaupapa that encourage whānau wellbeing, participation and connection. "Sport has always been a powerful way of bringing our people together. What is exciting about Māori Pickleball is that we can take a growing international sport and create a space around it that reflects

our own values, our culture and our whanaungatanga. We are proud of Esta and all those who have helped champion this kaupapa." The tournament is the result of the passion and commitment of Māori Pickleball NZ representatives from marae, hapū and iwi throughout Aotearoa, who have worked collectively to

Tournament organisers (from left) Reuben Waihi, Esta Wainohu, Bayden Barber and Hine Flood.

turn their vision into reality. Following the success of this first national event, the hope is that it will become an annual fixture, continuing to grow participation and celebrate Māori excellence in pickleball. Ka mau te wehi, Esta, Māori Pickleball NZ and everyone who helped make this historic first tournament such a success.



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Whānau voice in hauora all important

Listening helps us to understand what matters most to our communities

Crystal Edwards
Health Hawke's Bay

As we continue our commitment to improving health outcomes across our region, we begin by acknowledging our interim CEO, George Reedy.

George's leadership, deep understanding of community needs, and commitment to equity continue to guide our organisation as we work towards better outcomes for whānau throughout Hawke's Bay.

This month, we reflect on the importance of whānau voice within hauora.

Whānau voice is at the heart of quality healthcare.

Every interaction, experience, and story shared by whānau provides valuable insight into how we can improve the services we deliver.

Listening to whānau helps us understand what matters most to our communities, identify opportunities for improvement, and ensure care is delivered in a way that is respectful, culturally responsive, and centred on the needs of the people we serve.

Meaningful engagement is about more than collecting

feedback. It is about building genuine partnerships where whānau feel heard, valued, and empowered to contribute to decisions that affect their health and wellbeing.

When we take the time to listen, we strengthen trust, improve relationships, and create services that better reflect the realities of everyday life.

George Reedy has spoken about the importance of connection and support within our communities, noting:

"TToH's reality is the need to connect with whānau and support them into a space where they can start to take control of their own lives and move forward."

This whakaaro reflects the role whānau voice plays within hauora.

By listening, learning, and acting on what we hear, we can create a health system that supports people to achieve better health outcomes and greater wellbeing.

Every kōrero shared contributes to a deeper understanding of how we can work together to improve health services for current and future generations.

As we continue this journey, we are reminded of



George Reedy has spoken about the importance of connection and support within our communities.

By listening, learning, and acting on what we hear, we can create a health system that supports people to achieve better health outcomes and greater wellbeing.

They reflect the essence of whānau voice and the importance of nurturing relationships built on respect, kindness, and manaakitanga.

When we honour the voices of whānau, we strengthen our collective ability to create a healthier future for all.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.

the words of respected Kahungunu leader John Barry (JB) Heperi-Smith:

Atawhaitia ngā ringa atawhai Arohaina ngā ringa

aroa Manaakitia ngā ringa manaaki

These words remind us to value those who care, show compassion, and serve others.

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Take time to feel good about life

Reach out and stay connected to others

Ruth Wong

People in our communities are busy doing life. People are dying, babies are being born, relationships are changing and whānau are trying to keep everything moving.

There are people looking for work, struggling with money, dealing with rising living costs, family break-ups, long hours, tiredness and simply trying to get through another week.

Even when it is not happening directly to us, we feel it around us.

We care about our whānau, our friends and our communities, so naturally we carry some of what is happening around us too. Sometimes life is just heavy.

And when it is heavy, find the little things that help you keep moving.

Feel the sun on your face, or the rain for that matter. Feel the grass under your feet. Listen to the sound of laughter. Turn the music up. Have a laugh with someone you love. Smile at a stranger. Say hello to the person sitting beside you. Notice the people around you and remember that everyone is navigating something.

There is still so much good happening amongst all the hard stuff.

Try not to compare your life with somebody else's. We all do it, but we never really know what is happening behind



another person's front door. And while you might be looking at someone thinking they have it all together, chances are somebody is looking at you and admiring your strength, your kindness, your whānau, your humour or simply the way you keep showing up.

Give yourself some credit. You have already made it through so many difficult days.

And please, reach out.

Never feel like you have to carry everything alone. Sometimes we get so used to being the strong one, the busy one, the person everybody

Give yourself some credit. You have already made it through so many difficult days.

else relies on, that we forget we need people too. Talk to someone. Ring a friend. Sit with your whānau. Tell somebody, "I'm having a hard

time at the moment."

You don't have to have the right words and you don't need to explain everything. Just reach out and let someone walk alongside you for a while.

And if you notice someone else isn't quite themselves, reach out to them too. A simple "Hey, are you okay?" or "Do you want to have a hot chocolate?" might mean more than you realise.

Go for a walk. Sit in the sun. Get near the awa or the moana. Talk to yourself the same way you would talk to somebody you love. Remind yourself, I'm doing alright. I'll get there.

You can't carry every apple without dropping something along the way. It's okay to let go and just breathe.

Do one thing at a time. You don't need to have everything sorted today. Some days you will achieve heaps, other days getting through the day is enough. Be proud of your effort either way.

Life keeps moving. Babies will continue to be born, whānau will gather, music will play, people will laugh, the sun will come up and tomorrow will arrive.

So when life feels like a lot, look for the little bits of good amongst it all. Reach out. Stay connected. Let people love you and help you when you need it.

Keep going. You've got this.

Māori Language Week – what will you do?

Ruth Wong

Te Wiki o te Reo Māori returns from September 14-21, and this year the challenge is simple – take te reo Māori into our towns, our homes, our workplaces and our everyday lives.

Māori Language Week, known to us as Te Wiki o te Reo Māori, is a national celebration of the indigenous language of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Each September, it encourages all New Zealanders to give te reo Māori a go and, most importantly, to speak it proudly.

It is an opportunity to learn new kupu and phrases, share our traditional stories and connect with the rich Māori culture and heritage that belongs to Aotearoa.

The national focus for 2026 is Te Reo Towns, under the kaupapa Ake, Ake, Ake – A Forever Language.

It recognises those communities who have kept te reo Māori alive, while encouraging the rest of Aotearoa to think about what we can do in our own communities.

For Ngāti Kahungunu, this kaupapa makes sense. We have always known that the survival of our reo does not sit with one organisation, one kura or one week in September. It sits with all of us.

Last year we celebrated 50 years of Te Wiki o te Reo Māori. We reflected on how far we have come since the first Māori Language Week in 1975, and we acknowledged our kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori, wānanga, marae and whānau who continue to carry our language forward.

Te Reo Towns asks us to look at the places where we live. Can you hear te reo Māori in our shops? At the sports field? In our workplaces? At the supermarket? Around the dinner table? Are our place names being pronounced correctly? Are our tamariki hearing their parents and grandparents giving the reo a go?

You do not need to be fluent to participate. Kia Kaha – Be Strong, Karawhiua – Give it a go.

Start with kia ora. Learn your pepeha. Use Māori place names.

Put bilingual signs in your workplace. Learn the correct pronunciation of the names of the people around you.

Play waiata Māori in the car. Encourage our tamariki and mokopuna to kōrero, and most importantly, do not be whakamā about learning alongside them.

Businesses can also play their part. Rather than treating Māori Language Week as another promotion, use the opportunity to make



meaningful changes that remain after September.

Encourage staff to learn simple phrases, use te reo in signage and communications, and build relationships with

mana whenua.

Our language has survived because generations before us fought for it, protected it and refused to let it disappear. Our responsibility now is to use it.

Kohanga advocates Heke Huata and Matua Hook.

It is an opportunity to learn new kupu and phrases, share our traditional stories and connect with the rich Māori culture and heritage that belongs to Aotearoa.

If every kāinga, workplace, marae, kura, sports club and community adds a little more reo each day, imagine what our towns could sound like in another generation.

Kaua e whakamā – Don't be ashamed

Kōrerotia te reo – Speak the language

Ake, ake, ake – kia kaha te reo Māori!

Iwi and whenua roots of EIT ākonga pave path to national Ahuwhenua Young Māori Award

Te Rina Joe (Ngāti Pāhauwera, Ngāti Kahungunu) has won the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower Award and the 27-year-old's path to it runs straight through her own whenua.



Te Rina works as a supervisor and orchard hand at Pakuratahi Orchard in Tāngōio for Ngāti Pāhauwera Commercial Development Ltd, where she oversees teams of up to 60 workers across a 55-hectare apple operation. She is also in the second year of her Horticulture Apprenticeship Programme (Level 4) through EIT and is the third EIT ākonga to take out the award since the horticulture category was introduced.

Her horticulture journey began at the age of 15, working seasonally in orchards and packhouses in Central Hawke's Bay alongside her siblings, cousins and other members of her whānau. She later secured permanent employment in the industry before taking up the opportunity to work for her iwi, on iwi-owned land.

Her studies with EIT started in 2022 with the NZ Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills (Level 3), followed by the Horticulture Apprenticeship Programme (Level 3) in 2023.

"Horticulture is such a big part of my life, and just having the chance to be part of the competition has been an amazing experience", Te Rina said.

The award was presented in June 2026 at a gala dinner in Whangārei, in front of more than 700 people from across Aotearoa's primary sector, government and Māori communities. Each finalist received a \$5,000 scholarship, with Te Rina taking home an additional \$5,000 as the winner. Introduced in 2020, the award is contested every three years as part of the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower Award programme, which

rotates between the horticulture, dairy, and sheep and beef sectors.

"This competition continues to show us that the talent is there, young Māori who are grounded in who they are, serious about their craft, and ready to lead, quietly shaping what Māori horticulture looks like for generations ahead"

Nukuhia Hadfield, Ahuwhenua Trophy Management Committee Chair

EIT Horticulture Tutor Clare Buckner said Te Rina's success reflected years of commitment to both her studies and her career.

"She is incredibly deserving of this award. Te Rina has been a fantastic student and continues to be an inspiration to everyone who comes in contact with her".

"Over the past five years we have seen her grow in confidence and responsibility as she has progressed through her qualifications and taken on leadership in the workplace".

Looking ahead, Te Rina hopes to one day manage the orchard she works on, and to create opportunities for friends and whānau to build careers in the horticulture industry.

For Ahuwhenua Trophy Management Committee Chair Nukuhia Hadfield, Te Rina's story is one of real purpose.

"She had the opportunity to work for her iwi, on their whenua, and she took it. The connection between a person, their people and place is exactly what this award is about."

Karawhiua!

Explore your study options at:

**Rā Pārongo
EIT Info & Enrolment Day**
17 September 2026

Hawke's Bay Campus
in Taradale 9am–4pm

Trades Tour: 10am & 2pm
Nursing Tour: 12pm & 3pm

**Hastings, Maraenui
and Central Hawke's Bay
Learning Centres**
10am–2pm



Kya Joe
EIT STUDENT

"EIT is for me because I don't have to sacrifice being away from whānau and my culture to study something that I'm passionate about."

Te Aho a Māui Mōhou
EIT FOR ME



ME MANAAKI TĒTAHI I TĒTAHI

KIA ATAWHAI BE KIND

Smile, Say Hello,
Check on Someone



KIA TŪHONO STAY CONNECTED

Ring a friend.
Sit with your whānau



KIA TAU TAKE A MOMENT

Breathe. Walk. Feel the sun.
Find the awa.



KIA KAHA KEEP GOING

One thing at a time.
You've got this.

“Kahungunu living longer”

PROTECT YOU, PROTECT YOURS, PROTECT US