

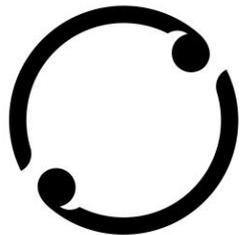
National
SCIENCE
Challenges

THE DEEP SOUTH

Te Kōmata o Te Tonga



UNIVERSITY
of
OTAGO
Te Whare Wānanga o Otago
NEW ZEALAND



Manaaki Whenua
Landcare Research

Innovations for Climate Adaptation

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Research overview

Track changes in practices and experiments across mana whenua and local authorities in three case study areas over two years (2022-2024)

Three regions:

- **Taranaki:** Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi (iwi); South Taranaki District Council, New Plymouth District Council, Taranaki Regional Council
- **Bay of Plenty:** Rereatukahia (kāinga); Maketu iwi led by Ngāti Whakaue; Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council
- **Otago:** Aukaha (Kāi Tahu consultancy), Dunedin City Council, Otago Regional Council

Research methods

Councils - Qualitative case study approach

- semi-structured interviews with Council staff every 6 months over 2 years (4 total)
- Supplemented with other information (grey literature, websites, reports)

Mana whenua organisations - Kaupapa Māori methods

- Kōrero or semi-formal/informal discussions (online and kānohi ki te kānohi) at least every 6 months over 2 years
- Hui with representatives from all mana whenua organisations
- Supplemented with other information (meeting notes, emails, formal submissions)

Climate change impacts experienced by mana whenua

- Erosion of coastal urupa
- Flooding of marae
- Damage to roads and other infrastructure
- Heavy rain causing silting, flooding, erosion
- Loss of water quality in rivers and streams
- Severe water shortages for households during droughts
- Impacts on food sources - mahinga kai and maara kai

“One hapu off their own bat have already been through the process of moving a marae that has been flooded in the last few years, and the writing’s on the wall.

So they’ve taken things in their own hands and moved their marae off the river and up on to a hill” MW3

Future concerns include ...

- Worsening of all impacts over time
- Impacts on the health of te taiao
- Marae, urupa, housing under threat – what to do?
- Uneven understanding of CC amongst the iwi/hapū
- Data on likely impacts at a local level is hard/expensive to get
- Climate change is just one of multiple challenges

“A lot of our whanau live along the river in low lying areas and the housing is substandard. They’re entirely off grid”.

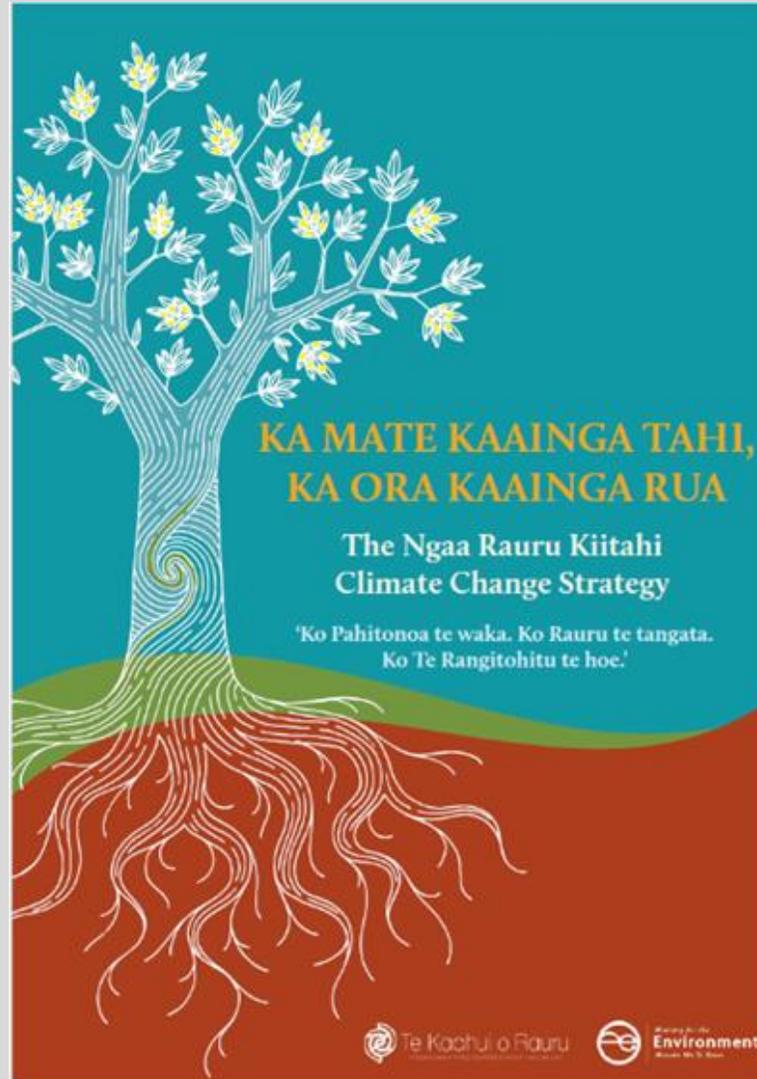
“There’s only one way in and one way out and in the event that there was to be a serious catastrophic event, our people are all stuck. ... In the event we needed to move, where can we move to because we’ve got nowhere to move to.” MW1

Mana whenua responses

Developing climate strategies and plans

“Te Rūnanga o Ngai Tahu’s strategy team went around each of the Rūnaka finding out what people knew about climate change, what impacts they thought would be priorities in their area, for each of the 18 rūnaka areas...

And then from that came the Ngāi Tahu climate strategy.” MW2



Each strategy is unique ...

... but some common characteristics:

- Seeing climate change as an opportunity as well as a threat
- Focusing on enhancing oranga tangata me oranga whenua (e.g. improving biodiversity, water quality, food security, housing quality and hauroa)
- Centring on core principles such as rangatiratanga, restoration of mauri, whānaungatanga, matauranga, kaitiakitanga
- Some talk about 'climate response' rather than separating mitigation and adaptation

“There was a very deliberate effort to centre our climate thinking around our own historical narrative in a way that would be engaging and digestible for uri.

The climate strategy guides our whole workstream and the next steps will be adaptation plans or climate plans for the marae.” MW3

Mana whenua responses

- Engaging with their own people

“I found today [at the hui] that there was a lot of people whose eyes were widened and they’re the very people who, six months ago were saying to me, it’s not going to happen in my lifetime.

“I’ve seen a transition from them and now they’re like seriously, they’re seriously interested in being a part of it.”

MW1

- Using social media to inform and engage hau kainga and those who live away
- Designing and carrying out surveys with their own people
- Collating local observations of climate change
- Hui to engage their own people on understanding climate change, sharing information, upskilling, planning for the future

Mana whenua responses

Taking practical action now

“We’re quite focused on biodiversity management and freshwater as those two things are really key in terms of survival. ..

... freshwater is obviously going to sustain us....

Climate change is synonymous with biodiversity loss so we need to work in that space.”

MW3

- Restoring biodiversity; freshwater quality; mahinga kai
- Redeveloping maara kai (vege gardens, orchards etc)
- Improving housing and infrastructure (e.g. water supplies)
- Building capacity and capability amongst their own people
- Working towards relocations or safeguarding valued buildings/sites in situ

Iwi/hapū can’t do all of this on their own after generations of disenfranchisement

Need resourcing, capacity, and to be at the decision-making table

- Seeking to work closely with regional and district/city councils

Working with councils on adaptation (and on other issues)

Mana whenua aspirations include

- Mana: Establishing recognition by councils, and engaging with councils at a mana-to-mana level
- Rangatiratanga: Gaining decision-making powers as guaranteed by Te Tiriti so that they can take desired actions to respond to climate change (and other issues)
- Kaitiakitanga: Implementing their enduring responsibilities to care for people and the natural environment
- Oranga: Rebuilding the strength and health of communities and places in a holistic way, building resilience of their own communities to future challenges

“There’s an importance to building a relationship with the council because you know, without having a relationship there or being at the table [you’re not] able to negotiate the possibilities of getting new land and what not.

There’s that other half of us that are like, well we already know what happens when we go and sit at the table with them. We get nothing.” MW1

Positive examples of relationships with councils

- Well defined formal partnership arrangements, and clear roles, established via a MOU
- Mana-to-mana relationships, e.g. where chief executives from Rūnanga and council meet formally and regularly
- Voting positions for mana whenua on council committees
- Advisory roles for mana whenua on council committees
- Māori commissioners appointed to RMA hearings
- Senior Māori staff or teams within council
- Particular staff members who are receptive to mana whenua concerns, first point of contact
- Councils reaching out to mana whenua for input into councils' own strategic plans, water management decisions

A council perspective:

“We’ve got our elected members that sit on particular committees, plus representatives from each district, plus representatives from iwi and we’ve now got our one Māori seat as well. Yeah, so there’s already part of a construct, but I wouldn’t say it’s co-governance. It’s just representation.”

“[Partnerships] are going to benefit everybody. When you look at a lot of our values, a lot of the other members of our communities have the same or similar values anyway”
MW2

Positive examples of resourcing & capacity building by councils

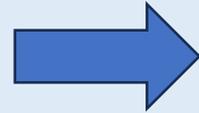
- Funding towards commissioned reports on climate change risks to rohe, marae or kainga
- Funding and capacity assistance with developing adaptation plans/strategies.
- Funding staff within mana whenua organisations who provide information or decisions to support council's processes (e.g. input into resource consent processes)
- Directly funding biodiversity work by mana whenua
- Mana whenua members 'hot-desking' within a council on a regular basis to improve information flows and skills development on both sides
- Collaborations between mana whenua, councils, government agencies (e.g. Waka Kotahi) and sometimes researchers to protect impacted places or plan for adaptation

"I guess the difference is that we've got that sense of kaitiakitanga, we're just there to look after it to pass on. It's not ours, we don't own it, it's the next generation and the ten, twenty generations coming that we're doing this for." MW2

A council perspective: *"Climate change is too big of a challenge for Councils to do it all by themselves"*

Challenges for Councils

- Lack of clarity



"We're still getting requests for building and resource consents right on the edge of cliffs... and at the moment based on our plan rules, some of them we have to approve"

- Capacity and resources



"It's a crazy work program [for] local government at the moment, and adaptation is just one part of that"

- Te Tiriti



"Yeah, [mana whenua are] totally overstretched and it's a big concern I have... going forward with local government reform"

Shifting Council practices

Council's are responding differently, but some broad themes:

1. Embed climate response in existing processes where possible
2. Distribute responsibility for climate response across teams/staff (rather than siloed)
3. Frame changes as collective learning – about bringing colleagues with you/us

Council's responses - mitigation

Carbon auditing for mitigation

- Moving from gas to electricity
- Electrifying Council vehicle fleets
- Feasibility studies for organic waste diversion from landfill
- Large scale native planting on Council controlled/owned land
- Nature based solutions and green/blue infrastructure for carbon sinks

Benefits

- Start with what you can control - Council's operational emissions
- Model mitigation before telling others what to do
- Use carbon auditing to embed climate considerations in decision making

Council's responses – data for decision making

Commissioning downscaled climate change projections, risk assessments and exposure screenings

“What we really had to do is to make sure that what comes out of the infrastructure risk assessments is in the right data form for them [asset managers] to be able to use... So lots to work in the background there around how you then integrate what comes out of the infrastructure risk assessment [into] useable data sets in the way that [asset managers] use”

Council's responses – data for decision making

Approaches

- Don't reinvent the wheel
- Start by using climate data to inform existing processes and committees
- Use climate data to help build relationships and shared understandings of potential impacts

Benefits

- Uses existing staff, processes and structures
- Distributes responsibility for climate adaptation more widely
- Can help build organisational knowledge

Council's responses – collaboration

Different approaches to cross-council collaboration:

- Taranaki and Bay of Plenty = informal regional climate change working groups

“We have a working group where planners and engineers come together to share projects. And that's where we identify things when we say, okay, we're looking at doing this. How does that feed into your work? How does it feed into your plan change? What are your timelines? These are our timelines... So we try to coordinate where we can”

Benefits

- Flexible
- Build trust and relationships
- Align operational aspects

Disadvantages

- Can only achieve so much
- Can limit involvement from elected members and mana whenua

Council's responses – collaboration

Whanganui District Council

- \$100,000 - funded 8 community-led projects

Bay of Plenty Regional Council

- \$70,000 per year - funded 8 projects

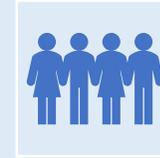
Benefits

- Working with communities – build on what already exists
- Community development-led approach (enable rather than dictate)
- Helps to build and share knowledge
- Work at local scales that resonate with how people experience climate change
- Helps build trust for more difficult conversations to come

Council's responses – enabling collaboration



Listening to what mana whenua and community groups need to progress actions



Allocating internal Council staff time to help mana whenua and community groups with technical climate data



Supporting mana whenua and community groups with aligned actions



Using funding sources (e.g. Long Term Planning funding and emergency response) to support action

Key takeaways

- A lot going of reform and disruption – people are tired and feeling overwhelmed (wellbeing of people really matters!)
- Council's are just one institutional actor in the wider societal transformations needed to respond to climate and biodiversity crisis
- Despite challenges, Council's, mana whenua groups, and communities have been taking climate action, but... all at different stages
- Actions may seem small or tentative, but provide useful examples to build on

Questions

Do the challenges facing Council's we have described resonate with your experiences?

- Lack of clarity
- Capacity and resources
- Te Tiriti

Are there any other major challenges you would add?

Questions

What have been your experiences in trying to integrate climate response into Council decision making processes?

What would help you integrate climate response more easily and effectively?

Questions

What has worked well for you when engaging with communities on climate action?

What would help you engage with communities on climate response more easily and effectively?

We're keen to hear from you

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