

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

---

Kā mihi nui to all the participants who gave their time and knowledge to this research, it would not be possible without their kōrero and valuable insight.

A funding contribution for field work was provided by the Deep South National Science challenge, Innovations in Climate Adaptation project, led by Professor Janet Stephenson and Professor Merata Kawharu, with Associate Professor Sophie Bond and Dr Gradon Diprose.

Ko Hikarora te mauka  
Ko Waikouaiti te awa  
Ko Takitimu te waka  
Ko Kāi Tahu te iwi  
Ko Kāti Huirapa me Kāi te ruahikihiki kā hapū

Ko Puketeraki te marae

Ko Paul rāua, ko Fiona ōku mātua Ko Anahera tāku mahaka  
Ko Ella tōku ikoa

## CITE AS:

---

Acheson E., and Bond, S. (2024) Mana whenua, local government and climate change adaptation in Ōtepoti Dunedin. Findings report from a thesis undertaken for Ella Acheson's Master of Arts in Te Iho Whenua School of Geography, Ōtakou Whakaihu Waka University of Otago, Ōtepoti Dunedin.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

---

Acknowledgements .....	1
Table of Contents.....	2
Introduction .....	3
What is working well .....	5
Engaging with mana whenua as more than a stakeholder .....	6
Mana to mana partnership.....	7
Funding .....	8
What is constraining moving forward: .....	9
Regulatory burden .....	9
Capacity and resourcing .....	10
Climate change legislation.....	11
Differing worldviews.....	13
Moving forward .....	14
Building on existing mechanisms.....	14
Significant shifts.....	14
References cited .....	17

## INTRODUCTION

---

A common whakataukī used in te ao Māori, and by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu is “mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei” which translates as “for us, and our children after us.” In tikanga Māori whakapapa is everything. We walk into the future looking backwards, thinking intergenerationally and how we will impact future generations is of the utmost importance. In local government, and for some of the wider community, this is not necessarily the prevalent way of thinking or working. Planning intergenerationally for climate change adaptation that meets obligations in Te Tiriti o Waitangi will require a change from business as usual that focuses only on the immediate and short term, to future focused thinking and a deeper understanding of tikanga Māori.

The aim of this research was to better understand how local governments are engaging with mana whenua on climate change and how a tika transition (after Bargh (2019), Bargh and Tapsell (2021) and discussed further below), could improve these engagements<sup>1</sup>. This was done by investigating the relationships between Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki, Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou, Aukaha<sup>2</sup>, Otago Regional Council (ORC) and Dunedin City Council (DCC)<sup>3</sup>. To explore this aim, the research answers the following four research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the relationships between mana whenua and local government?
2. What constraints do mana whenua face in their relationship with local government and climate change adaptation?
3. To what extent are the current relationships between local government and mana whenua enabling a tika transition?
4. How can a tika transition improve the ability of local government to engage with mana whenua on climate change adaptation?

---

<sup>1</sup> The project was completed to fulfil the requirements of Ella Acheson’s Master of Arts in Geography at the University of Otago, and was also aligned with the Ōtepoti Dunedin case study in the Deep South National Science Challenge project ‘Innovations for Climate Adaptation’, led by Janet Stephenson. The Ōtepoti case was led by Sophie Bond, who also supervised Ella’s thesis.

<sup>2</sup> Aukaha is a regional environmental entity, providing representation for Ngāi Tahu, specifically the Rūnanga within or with connection to Otago, and the regional council and local authorities in Otago. Aukaha provides advice, and engages in statutory planning processes, liaising between Rūnanga and local and regional authorities. Aukaha also consults for Rūnanga in relation to cultural, health and economic development.

<sup>3</sup> Rūnanga and Rūnaka are used interchangeably in this report. For Ngāi Tahu, the southern dialect often replaces ng with k.

The data for this research comprised 10 interviews with 13 key informants, including those who work at DCC, ORC, Aukaha and mana whenua. The focus of these interviews, undertaken in mid 2022, was to understand firstly the relationship between local government and mana whenua in Ōtepoti, Dunedin and secondly to understand constraints and challenges to working on climate change adaptation. Additionally, legislation such as the Resource Management Act 1991, the Local Government Act 2002, relevant literature, policy and council documents and media articles were reviewed to contribute to the findings of this research.

The research was guided by a Kaupapa Māori methodology and ethics as outlined in Box 1. It was important that the research approach was participant driven and beneficial for everyone involved.

Aroha ki te tangata	Respect for the people
Kanohi kitea	Fronting up to people who participate and doing in-person research
Titiro, whakarongo, kōrero	Look, listen and then speak
Manaaki ki te tangata -	Share and host people, having a collaborative approach to research where the researcher does not just conduct the research but learns from the participants
Kia tupato	Māori researchers being cautious, being culturally safe and reflective about their outsider/insider status as a researcher
Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata	Respect for the mana of people and make sure not to overstep and trample on the mana of others
Kia mahaki	Not to flaunt one’s knowledge as a researcher

Box 1: Kaupapa Māori ethics that underpinned the research (Brewer et al, 2014)

As noted, the research was also framed by the concept of a tika transition. Bargh and Tapsell (2021) argue that “a tika transition to a low emission economy embraces tikanga Māori, upholds Te Tiriti o Waitangi and is consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (p13). It also argues that constitutional change is needed, similar to those proposed in the Matike Mai report by Moana Jackson and Margaret Mutu (2016). Matike Mai refers to a constitution imagined by Te Tiriti o Waitangi as three spheres of authority – the rangatiratanga sphere (by Māori for Māori) as guaranteed in Article 2 of te Tiriti; the kawanatanga sphere (the Crown) as established in article 1, and a joint sphere of shared interest. There is increasing scholarship and support for a shift in the relative ‘size’ of these spheres to reflect greater balance between the kawanatanga sphere and the rangatiratanga sphere. Figure 1 below depicts the current constitutional arrangements on the left

alongside rebalancing authority in a constitutional transformation that is te Tiriti led on the right. For Bargh and Tapsell (2021), and in this research, a tika transition requires this rebalancing.

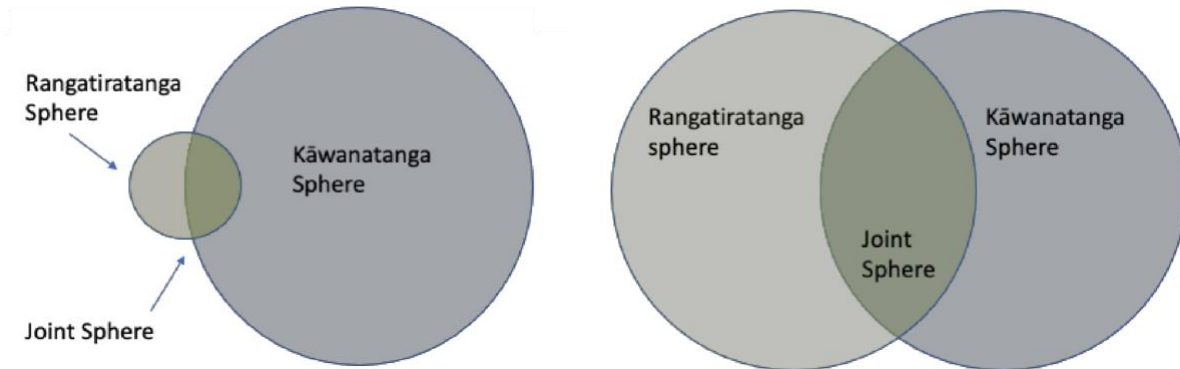


Figure 1: Spheres of authority as they currently exist and as imagined in a te Tiriti led future (Charters et al 2019)

The impacts of climate change are and will continue to cut across all spheres of life. Local government will have a significant role in decision-making and policy development for climate change adaptation. We argue that the principles underpinning a tika transition must also apply to the transition required in adapting to a climate changed future. This report outlines the key findings from Ella Acheson’s MA thesis, and attempts to summarise the findings that are most relevant. The report is divided into three parts. The first two are: ‘what is working well’ and ‘what constraints exist’ to achieving a tika transition and associated tika relationships. The third part provides suggestions for moving forwards.

---

## WHAT IS WORKING WELL

---

In the last five years the way that local government engages with mana whenua has been evolving and in some areas, Councils and mana whenua have engaged in different innovative ways to work together. These innovations differ all over Aotearoa, New Zealand. This section will explore innovations specific to local government and mana whenua in Ōtepoti, Dunedin and more specifically the innovations that have been working well. These include engaging with mana whenua as more than a stakeholder, mana to mana partnerships and new funding arrangements.

In 2019 the Minister for the Environment requested Peter Skelton to undertake an investigation into whether the Otago Regional Council (ORC) was adequately carrying out its role related to freshwater management and allocation. This report includes a section on Kāi Tahu perspectives. In his investigation, Skelton writes that although Kāi Tahu have had a positive relationship with the ORC, their environment and partnership objectives have not been upheld or met by the Council. In the past, Kāi Tahu have often been treated as a stakeholder or interested party rather than a partner. When treated like a stakeholder or as Skelton writes “one party among many” Kāi Tahu’s voice is diminished and not held as mana whenua. However, Skelton notes that this may be changing as the then ORC Chief Executive Sarah Gardner supported a partnership role between ORC and Kāi Tahu and the Council had, at that time, begun to provide for mana whenua to have formalised roles on various committees (Skelton, 2019).

It was obvious from this research project that since the Skelton review, over the last three to five years there has been a shift in the way that both the Dunedin City Council (DCC) and ORC engage with mana whenua. Both are working towards building partnership. For example, in 2019, the ORC voted to invite mana whenua representatives, one from Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou and one from Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki, with full voting rights to their Planning and Strategy Committee (ORC, 2019). Additionally, in May 2022 mana whenua were also granted a seat at the governance table on the ORC’s Land and Water Plan governance group, which is a subcommittee of the Planning and Environment Committee. This seat is for Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku in Southland, and is a non-voting role (Maclean, 2021). In June 2021 the DCC appointed two Rūnanga representatives to be appointed on the Planning Environment Committee and the Infrastructure Services Committee with voting rights. These different initiatives in both the DCC and the ORC provide opportunities for mana whenua to engage in and be a party to policy development and operations in the Councils. They include a mix of voting and non voting rights. However, they tend to occur at the operational and policy development level, rather than within elected Councils at a decision-making level. While representation within elected Council’s is contested, it demonstrates how constitutional questions at the central Government level are also applicable to the local level. Another way in which Councils have been engaging with mana whenua as ‘more than a stakeholder’ is through their mana to mana partnerships.

## MANA TO MANA PARTNERSHIP

---

Mana to mana is a term used to indicate that appropriately senior representatives of all parties are around the table. Specifically, a mana to mana governance level agreement between Kāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnaka and ORC was first established in 2011. This agreement involves the meeting of representatives from all seven rūnanga who are mana whenua in areas that the ORC covers and elected councillors. Aukaha also has mana to mana partnerships with both the ORC and the DCC, discussed further below. One research participant who works at ORC reported that:

*The governance group and mana to mana are really important as I understand it from iwi's perspective, because it's about a way of doing and being a partner rather than a stakeholder. Those groups provide them with an ability to do that, in an environment where they are really resource constrained; so they can't be at everything and do everything. Those levels of participation and those structures allow us to work alongside the mana partnership arrangement, and just to have that different world view on the things that we are doing. - KI 10*

It is significant that the people in the executive leadership teams and elected council level are meeting with those at the upoko and leadership level of the Rūnaka, as this signifies mutual respect and acknowledgement of one another's positions and the place of mana whenua. It would not be a true partnership if mana whenua only ever met with operational level staff, because most of the power and authority is held by the councillors and executive leadership team. On the whole, research participants from Papatipu Rūnanga, Aukaha and council staff, seemed to agree that the mana to mana arrangement is both effective and a step forward for councils towards a more meaningful partnership. This is demonstrated in the quotes below:

*"Well the mana to mana relationship allows us to raise an issue of importance, have it heard properly, and addressed." – KI 12*

*"Yeah. I think that is the most important thing for us is, that there's a relationship at the mana level. That's fundamental. The only way we would have a partnership at this level is if there was that happening at the top. When you've got to have the separation between what sits up there and what sits in the middle and the top and then the operational level, you've got to be really clear about those boundaries. That means that they have to be clear too. So, there's all these ongoing conversations. With one council at the moment, it's been really muddled up together,*

*and it's really affecting the way we work together. We try to have like a strategic, exec level conversation and they're trying to tell us about all the stuff they're doing. We don't want to talk about what you're doing, we want to talk about how we do it. So, just getting them clear.” - KI 1*

The mana to mana partnership also involves considerations and discussion about funding and resourcing.

---

## FUNDING

---

In November 2019 the ORC and Aukaha entered into their first mana to mana partnership agreement. This agreement committed the ORC to covering 2 years of “partnership funding” with the purpose of supporting Aukaha to deliver on planning and consent activities as well as to support their joint work programme. For the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan, Aukaha and ORC reviewed this partnership and ORC agreed to fund \$100,000 per year in partnership funding for the next 3 years. In addition, for planning and consenting the Council funded three full time employees for Aukaha for a fixed term; two to work on specific ORC planning activities and one to cover non-chargeable aspects of consenting (Sorrell, 2022). Aukaha has also entered partnership arrangements with the DCC, Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) and Central Otago District Council (CODC). In a study done by the Ministry for the Environment it was found that these partnership agreements along with funding contracts on a 3 yearly basis, means that Aukaha can build capacity and capability to deliver on their work programmes (Sorrell, 2022). It was clear from interviews that this funding has been essential in enabling Aukaha to deliver on their mahi. This is demonstrated by key informant 12 in the quote below.

*“Yeah we have partnership funding arrangements for the Land and Water Regional Plan and it's bulk, so it allows us to plan forward. It runs over two years. And so that allows us to staff up and not be reliant on a 12 month contract. It allows us to build capacity and actually resource Rūnanga people to a degree to be engaged, so it's very important. We cannot be partners if we don't have resources to bring the people, hire them and build capacity across the board. That's the same with the City [Council]. Same with Queenstown [Lakes] and Central Otago District Council. So it's putting us in a place where we can build our capacity and respond to the demands, which are quite high.” - KI 12*

Overall, research participants who worked at ORC and DCC seemed optimistic and positive about the direction in which their relationship with mana whenua was going. Mana whenua research participants



similarly felt that there was a lot of ‘individual goodwill’ amongst Council staff to try to build better partnership with mana whenua. However, the sentiment that was clear from most key informants was that often one step forward in the right direction comes with two steps backwards and there is still a long way to go before partnership is reached.

---

## WHAT IS CONSTRAINING MOVING FORWARD:

---

Although there has been progress made in strengthening the relationship between mana whenua and local government, when interviewing it became clear that there were common constraints that both mana whenua and council research participants recognised. These constraints include the Papatipu Rūnanga’s lack of capacity and resourcing to be involved in climate change adaptation projects that sit outside of a regulatory framework, council’s lack of cultural capability, structural expectations from central government, weak climate change legislation and differing worldviews.

---

## REGULATORY BURDEN

---

One of the first constraints to working in the climate change adaptation space, is that climate change adaptation does not come under an explicit regulatory framework. If something is regulatory it relates to a responsibility, duty or power that is delegated to council by legislation. Much of climate change adaptation work is non-regulatory because it has not been built into the RMA or other legislation and rarely features in explicit planning instruments. For organisations such as Aukaha, who’s primary work is in response to statutory consultation under the RMA 1991, this makes non statutory climate change work a lower priority. This is demonstrated in the quote by key informant one below:

*“Just that the mandate is really built around the regulatory framework of the RMA, and so if it’s not within that, it’s kind of a question mark. It’s always a question of do the rūnanga want us to get involved or not? And then the first question they tend to ask is, “do you have capacity?” And it’s like, “not really.” It’s just hard. There’s stuff we cannot turn away, so we have to prioritise that, and then there’s everything else.” - KI 1*

This regulatory burden is further exacerbated with a lack of capacity and resourcing available to Rūnanga.

## CAPACITY AND RESOURCING

---

A lack of adequate resourcing and capacity is a significant barrier to mana whenua participation in the climate change adaptation space. Mana whenua are constantly being pulled in every direction for their 'advice', 'opinion' or 'consent' in many different areas. This is demonstrated in the quote below:

*So we do tend to have a 360 degree focus at our rūnanga. And we've just been talking about climate change and councils here which is a slice but there are many other fronts and many of our people are heavily involved in those various areas. - KI 12*

One way that Councils have been helping to combat these capacity issues is through funding, such as through the partnership agreements discussed above. However, while the funding has been crucial to creating change toward partnership, it is also important to analyse the power associated with funding. Whoever is in control of the funding ultimately has the most power in the partnership.

For example, one project between a Council and a local hapū is focused on a restoration project of a river that is and has been an important mahika kai gathering site for many generations. The project was funded by MfE as an initiative during the early economic recovery of the covid pandemic with the expectation that the Council would partner with iwi to deliver it. In this instance the funding process involved two parts; step one to submit an expression of interest, later followed by a full proposal that would go into detail about the parties involved, the costing, any partnership arrangements and who is in charge of what. The Council had broad agreement from mana whenua on the first phase with a plan to co-design the second stage and identify the roles and responsibility each party would hold. However, the process was fast tracked, missing the full development second step involving the co-design and the Council received the full funding from MfE immediately. In this example there was a structural expectation by the funder that the Council would manage the finance, thereby implicitly if not explicitly taking a lead role, leaving mana whenua feeling at best like a junior partner and at worst, just another stakeholder. This was despite the efforts and intent of individual Council officers who were trying to operate as partners, and give effect to mana whenua status as kaitiaki. Participants from the Rūnaka reported:

*"that one was the ... Council basically put in a proposal with some light discussion with the Rūnaka, our particular Rūnaka and then was awarded [a significant grant]. In terms of a governance approach, I think it's fraught, and the reason I think it's fraught is that a partnership approach is quite easy to say and hard to do in practice. Because partners are not stakeholders*

*and partners are not contractors. Entities like ... Councils are set up for those types of relationships and that is everything running through their own governance right down to operational issues, such as how do we work together. So it really has been quite fraught and stressful, I'm sure for them, and a real pain for us in that trying to remind people that this is supposed to be a partnership agreement but then acting as if you're a subcontractor or a consultant doesn't work. So there are real issues for any entity that wishes to operate in this way because it does really require a different way of approaching the very practical things like risk, risk management, how you pay people, who does what, who does the decision making, how that decision making gets down, the communications, you name it. Organisations are not set up for a partnership approach, that is what I would say. Consequently, while the aspiration may be partnership, the actual practice is far from it." - KI 13*

This example highlights the structural constraints that exist, where it is assumed by funders (in this case central government) that local government will manage the funding, and lead the governance of a project. In turn Council officers reported their own frustration, *'we were actually confined by the Government processes ... we were fast-tracked through a funding process'* (KI 9) and that this compromised their relationships with mana whenua. There was a power imbalance, with the power shifting in favour of those who controlled the funding and the time scales, resulting from the structures and expectations in place in the relations from central to local government.

## CLIMATE CHANGE LEGISLATION

---

A study undertaken by Lawrence, et al., (2013) on institutional barriers and enablers to local government adapting to climate change found that the framework for adapting to climate change in Aotearoa New Zealand is weak. At that time, they found that the degree to which central government addressed climate change adaptation has a critical influence on how local governments address climate change (Lawrence, et al., 2013). There has been some movement to provide central Government guidance on climate adaptation, but it remains limited. The National Adaptation Plan, in effect from 2022, and legislation proposed by the previous Labour led Government are steps made to address this. However, at the time of the research and writing, the gaps in the legislative framework to support effective climate change adaptation remain, and there is greater uncertainty since late 2023 when a change in Government resulted in a significant shift in approach regarding the proposed legislation and climate response in general. In the quote below, Key Informant 7 explains that one of the main

challenges for moving forward with climate change adaptation at the ORC is not having the legislation in place yet.

*That's a real challenge especially when you haven't really got a legislative backing to say, well actually, I can't point to a statute that says "ORC has this responsibility and these powers." We can lean on certain things but there's nothing that gives you absolute certainty that we have a role to play and can be directive and make decisions. So that's one of the key challenges.... There is a heavy reliance on the National Adaptation Plan I think. Sort of waiting for legislation to catch up I suppose. I think that's an important point, sort of waiting for legislation to catch up so that it will give us that mandate to move forward. I think that's probably the key thing. - KI 7*

An example where the impact of legislation and national guidance can make a big difference in the way council engages with mana whenua is through the amendments made to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPSFM 2020) (also see Bargh & Tapsell, 2021). A fundamental concept in the NPSFM 2020 is 'Te Mana o te Wai', and a directive that water management must 'give effect' to it. Te Mana o te Wai literally means the authority, power, and importance of the water and in the NPSFM 2020 it means that the first priority of local authorities should be to maintain the health of freshwater. Prior to the 2020 amendment, Councils were required to more passively 'consider' or 'have regard to' Te Mana o te Wai. The change in 2020 had a significant effect, shifting water management away from weighing up a range of priorities, which differed in each context depending on the strength, capacity, and power relationships that existed between different interests. In giving effect to Te Mana o te Wai "local authorities must actively involve tangata whenua in freshwater management (including decision-making processes, and monitoring and preparation of policy statements and plans)" (MfE 2020, p3). In addition, "regional councils must investigate the use of tools in the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) such as joint management arrangements, Mana Whakahono ā Rohe, and transfer of powers as a way of involving tangata whenua." (MfE, 2020, p.3).

Several key informants indicated that the amendments to the NPSFM had made a real change to ways of working between council and mana whenua. For example, Key Informant 1 said *"That brought mana whenua right into that process not just as a stakeholder for the first time."* It also meant that local authorities had to improve their working relationships with mana whenua in order to undertake their statutory mandate in relation to water management. However, such shifts are precarious, as demonstrated by the current Government's proposal to once again, amend the NPSFM.

## DIFFERING WORLDVIEWS

---

Relationships or whanaungatanga are a significant part of tikanga Māori. Understanding how people are connected by whakapapa links is crucial to understanding how to honour each other's rights and responsibilities (Bargh, 2019). When working together it is important to spend time at the beginning to build relationships between council and mana whenua as part of building a stronger partnership. This often means that more time must be taken at the forefront of projects to establish strong relationships between the working parties. This will increase the efficiency and ease of working together in the long term. Unfortunately, taking longer at the front end of projects and setting aside more time for whakawhanaungatanga does not always fit within ministerial or project timelines that are bound by deadlines and funding allocations. This is demonstrated in the quote below from a Council officer:

*One of the biggest challenges I find in partnership, and it might be a symptom of the fact that ORC is currently operating under ministerial timelines, and so we are going ridiculously quick, but we are asking our iwi partners to be involved in the journey. But "you've [iwi] got to work to our timeframes, and you've got to get whānau to figure out a way to make them meet, and figure out a way to conform to the way that we need the information to come out". It's a really challenging space. We're saying, "Yeah, we want to help, but do it our way, and we've only got this amount of time. And, all sorts of [other] things going on". So I find that really challenging. -*

KI 10

The constraints to partnership between mana whenua and local government in the climate adaptation space span factors at a national level where stronger climate change adaptation legislation is needed, and different structural arrangements around how funding is allocated and supported for projects, all the way to an individual level where the cultural capability of council staff needs to be lifted. One thing that is clear throughout is that the current system under which local government operates is not the most effective way to approach climate change adaptation or partnership with mana whenua. Tackling the future of climate change adaptation is going to require a restructuring of current systems, and a strengthening of tikanga Māori.

---

## MOVING FORWARD

---

There are a range of ways in which Councils can move toward better partnership working with mana whenua and being more Te Tiriti led. Some of these build on existing practices, others require a shift in thinking, while others are more significant structural shifts.

---

### BUILDING ON EXISTING MECHANISMS

---

As discussed under what is working well, there are already a number of innovations in the relationships between local government and mana whenua that are working well. It makes sense to build on what has already been successful and strengthen existing mechanisms.

For example, making voting seats on committees permanent, and ensuring the time mana whenua contribute to these processes is compensated is an obvious first step. Currently, these seats are contingent on the approval of elected council members in the voting cycle which only gives more power to the councillor's and creates uncertainty for mana whenua. If these seats were made permanent it would send a more positive message that councils are serious about their willingness to partner with mana whenua and value their input on issues.

Another way to build on initiatives that are already happening at ORC and DCC would be to increase funding to Rūnanga and organisations like Aukaha. Funding roles that can be planned for on a multi year basis helps iwi with their own staffing continuity, improving capacity and helps to keep qualified people in sustainable employment for their iwi (Sorrell, 2022). Furthermore, if the funding for a joint project is coming from an external source such as the Ministry of Environment, then it should not just automatically go to the council. Mana whenua and council should first mutually agree who will be in charge of the money and how it will be managed.

Both the DCC and the ORC have recently also drafted Māori Strategic Frameworks and one Council has provided opportunities for staff to build capability in te reo, tikanga and te ao Māori. These initiatives should be supported, encouraged and extended to elected Councillors.

---

### SIGNIFICANT SHIFTS

---

Key informants from this research project from both the mana whenua group and the council members were generally positive about the steps that both ORC and DCC are taking to build stronger relationships

with mana whenua and work towards a partnership model, one in which the spheres of authority indicated in Figure 1 are rebalanced. By establishing mana whenua voting seats on committees, mana to mana arrangements, and direct resourcing and funding to Aukaha it is obvious that ORC and DCC are moving away from the narrative that mana whenua are just another community stakeholder, and are instead working towards partnership with mana whenua. However, there was also a clear feeling that true partnership and rangatiratanga has not yet been reached and it will take a lot more before mana whenua can exercise tino rangatiratanga in these spaces. The two spheres of authority are not equal, and as shown above, there are structures and practices operating that constrain change. This is demonstrated in the quote below by key informant 13.

*The true mark of rangatiratanga is the ability to say no to something and then that thing does not happen. There are many many things that we say no to and it goes on regardless so 'why did you bother talking to us?' And the current RMA and consenting process is exactly one of those. 'Why did you bother asking us?' It was just a pro forma, someone has said 'you've got to do it' so 'why are you asking us? Because you're going to go ahead and do it'. So there's nothing really that's around rangatiratanga there. - KI 13*

It is important to note that tino rangatiratanga is about self-determination, it does not mean the Government doing things for Māori; it is about by Māori, for Māori and with Māori. How Māori want to exercise kaitiakitanga and rangatiratanga is for Māori to decide and non-Māori to listen. As Key Informant 13 says *"It is not up to others to strengthen rangatiratanga. It is up to us to do that."* However, in the current framework under which the New Zealand government (including local government) operates, Māori need to be given the opportunity, space and access to their own whenua and taonga to be able to exercise tino rangatiratanga. As pointed out by Key Informant 2, in the quote below, mana whenua need to be able to do things their own way instead of constantly trying to operate under a framework that does not benefit or recognise them:

*It's also being able to, for rūnanga, to be empowered and to be given the resources to build it their own way as well, not just fit within the framework that's been given to them. Again, just starting from page zero and looking at it through a lens that it's like 'what is important to this group in their area and for their people'. - KI 2*

Reflecting on the wider implications of this research we argue that the engagement between local government and mana whenua cannot strengthen tino rangatiratanga alone. It can and should create a

strong foundation with which to rebalance the two spheres of authority, the tino rangatiratanga sphere and the kawanatanga sphere, enabling true partnership to operate in the joint sphere. But only Māori can truly strengthen rangatiratanga.

There are plenty of examples of mana whenua already investing in innovative sustainability management projects all over Aotearoa, New Zealand (Bargh & Tapsell, 2021). Part of supporting and expanding the tino rangatiratanga sphere is helping to fund these initiatives, supporting mana whenua to develop and use tools such as a mataitai or rāhui to protect the environment, and supporting mana whenua in exercising kāitiakitanga. Living in accordance with tikanga means seeking balance and restoration in all relationships, including our relationship with papatūānuku.



## REFERENCES CITED

---

- Bargh, M. (2019). A tika transition. In D. Hall (Ed.), *A careful revolution: towards a low-emissions future* (pp. 51-77). Wellington New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books.
- Bargh, M., & Tapsell, E. (2021). For a Tika Transition: strengthen rangatiratanga. *Policy Quarterly*, 17(3), 13-22.
- Brewer, M. K., Harwood, L. N. M., McCann, M. C., Crengle, M. S., & Worrall, E. L. (2014). The use of interpretive description within Kaupapa Māori research. *Advancing Qualitative Methods*, 24(9), 1287- 1297.
- Charters, C., Kingdom-Bebb, K., Olsen, T., Ormsby, W., Owen, E., Pryor, J., Ruru, J., Solomon, N. & Williams, G. (2019). *He Puapua: report of the working group on a plan to realise the UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Working paper. Retrieved from <https://iwichairs.maori.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/He-Puapua-for-OIA-release.pdf>
- Lawrence, J., Sullivan, F., Lash, A., Ide, G., Cameron, C., & McGlinchey, L. (2013). Adapting to changing climate risk by local government in New Zealand: institutional practice barriers and enablers. *The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability*, 20(3), 289-320.
- Maclean, H. (2021). *ORC debates what sort of ‘-ship’ it’s in*. Retrieved from <https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/orc-debates-what-sort-%E2%80%98ship%E2%80%99-its>
- Matike Mai Aotearoa. (2016). *He whakaaro here whakaumu mō Aotearoa: The report of matike mai Aotearoa – the independent working group on constitutional transformation*. Retrieved from: <https://nwo.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/MatikeMaiAotearoa25Jan16.pdf>
- Ministry for the Environment. (2020). Essential freshwater: Te Mana o Te Wai factsheet. New Zealand Government. Retrieved from <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/essential-freshwater-te-mana-o-te-wai-factsheet.pdf>
- Ministry for the Environment (2023) National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020, New Zealand Government <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/National-Policy-Statement-for-Freshwater-Management-2020.pdf>
- Otago Regional Council. (2019). Otago Regional Council appoints two Ngāi Tahu representatives to policy committee. Retrieved from <https://www.orc.govt.nz/news-and-events/news-and-media-releases/2019/june/otago-regional-council-appoints-two-ngai-tahu-representatives-to-policy-committee>
- Skelton, P. (2019). Investigation of Freshwater Management and Allocation Functions at Otago Regional Council: Report to the Minister of Environment by Professor Peter Skelton. Retrieved from <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/section-24a-otago-investigation-report.pdf>
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonising methodologies: research and Indigenous peoples*. London, United Kingdom: Zed Books Ltd.
- Smith, L. T. (2015). Kaupapa Māori research - some Kaupapa Māori principles. In L. Pihama & K. South (Eds.), *Kaupapa rangahau a reader: a collection of readings from the Kaupapa Māori research workshop series led* (pp. 46-52). Te Kohati Research Institute.
- Sorrell, T. (2022). Appendix C: Case studies on funding Māori participation at the regional/local level. Item presented at the meeting of the RM Reform Ministerial Oversight Group Meeting, Tues 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2022, proactively released under the Official Information Act, pp117-123. <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/MOG-17-12-April-2022-Part-2.pdf>

