

# Hei Matapihi ki te Ao: Ngareta Timutumu

## Project Summary

### Project Overview

Hei Matapihi ki te Ao is a Māori-led research project to empower the Matapihi community to navigate the challenges of climate change. The research project is grounded in mātauranga, cultural practices, Te Reo Māori and its revitalisation. This enables us to celebrate indigenous ways of knowing and being about our whenua, our way and our moana. We will take an intergenerational approach to develop and empower ahi kā leaders to coordinate and guide action to the growing climate change threats facing our moana, our whenua and our people.



### Matapihi

The largely rural community of Matapihi is facing significant vulnerabilities due to its geographical location. The peninsula, located next to Te Awanui Tauranga Harbour, is surrounded by a rapidly growing urban population and subsequent demand for land, water, and infrastructure for residential, commercial, and industrial use. Our community have also observed changes to our taiao, driven by land use, natural hazards and the impacts of a changing climate. This includes altered habitats for mahinga kai and cultural resources; widespread areas of mangroves as well as erosion of significant tracts of our whenua (including whenua tapu).

We anticipate that these multiple threats on our whenua, wai, mahinga kai, communities and way of life will be exacerbated due to climate change.

### Research Questions

1. What is Climate Change? How will it impact on our community? How can our small indigenous community best respond?
2. Through our own mātauranga, how can we explain our relationships and experiences with sea, land and climate to provide insight into possible solutions?
3. How can Western Science and other knowledges explain Climate Change and provide us with the insights to limit its impact now and into the future?
4. Who are the potential leaders in our community to mobilise whānau and hapū to take action to mitigate or to adapt to the threats of Climate Change?

### AHO Framework

This research project is grounded by our AHO Framework, a tool developed to articulate and strengthen our Matapihi Ao Māori worldview. The Aho represent the threads or strands that weave together the fabric of our collective relationship with our taiao and each other.

These are:

- AHO Reo - Represents our language relating to our taiao, our people and our practices.
- AHO Hi Ika - Represents the Matapihi users of the moana.
- AHO Toi - Represents the Māori artists of Matapihi.



This framework is essential to guide how we navigate, communicate, and strengthen our collective understanding of climate change impacts on Matapihi

## Findings and Reflections

Our findings for Hei Matapihi ki te Ao are clustered in a way that weaves the research question outcomes with the strands of our AHO Framework themes:

### Intergenerational Knowledge and Practices

Highlights the role of Kōrero Tuku Iho to guide our Matapihi community in navigating the impacts of climate change together. This is exemplified through connection to place, cultural practices, and knowledge sharing.

### Community Understanding of Climate Change

Highlights the importance of fostering awareness and understanding within the Community on the impacts of climate change. This was actioned through kaumātua insights and experiences, insights from kaimoana gatherers and knowledge sharing.

### Identified Issues, Impacts and Vulnerabilities

This project emphasises the interconnectedness of our Matapihi community with our whenua, our wai, our tāhuna and our moana. Our wānanga, hīkoi and hui parakuihi highlighted the:

- cumulative impact of historical and contemporary land use and development on our taiao.
- localised impacts of natural hazards.
- exacerbation of the above impacts due to a changing climate.

### Collaboration and Community Leadership

Highlights the importance of collaboration, community leadership, and active engagement to build a stronger, more resilient Matapihi community. This was exemplified through kaumātua guidance, community connectivity, artistic expression, foster future leaders, empowered local leaders and expanding our network.

## Conclusion

Hei Matapihi ki te Ao is a Matapihi Māori-led research project to empower the Matapihi community to navigate the challenges of climate change. Our findings underscore that climate change cannot be viewed in isolation. It must be understood in the broader context of environmental change, including the historical and contemporary impacts of urban development on our taiao, practices, and people. This highlights the complexity of understanding and responding to climate change at a local level. Practical actions such as wetland restoration, mangrove management, and erosion control demonstrate the innovative and action-oriented approach of our community, even in the face of uncertainty.

Changing with our climate

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