

Te Ara o Raukawa Moana: Active Kaitiakitanga in Response to Climate Change



Project Summary

Te Ara o Raukawa Moana is a research project of Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira (the mandated iwi authority of Ngāti Toa Rangatira) to enable active kaitiakitanga over our changing maritime environment. The research project is founded on tino rangatiratanga – iwi self-determination, leadership and autonomy to enable a proactive response to climate change. Te Moana o Raukawa (Cook Strait) is an integral part of the mana moana and mana whenua of Ngāti Toa Rangatira. It remains a site of immense cultural, historical, and spiritual significance to Ngāti Toa Rangatira.

The project is focussed on the importance of tangata whenua upholding their role as kaitiaki of the coastal and maritime environment amidst increasing climate change impacts. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining the presence of tangata whenua in the seascape to preserve mātauranga, identify tohu, and protect significant coastal heritage places. The research involves studying the fishing traditions of Ngāti Toa Rangatira, understanding climate change effects, assessing current and future climate risks, and taking active kaitiaki measures in marine and coastal areas. The project's framework includes exploring ancestral values, environmental changes, current values and uses, and actions that enable kaitiakitanga.

At the outset of Te Ara o Raukawa Moana, a number of key principles were established to guide the research approach. These include whakapapa, kotahi tātou, kaitiakitanga, tikanga, manaakitanga, tohu, wāhi taonga and mauri tūhono.

Research methods and analysis

Te Ara o Raukawa Moana has involved five main research methods undertaken according to Ngāti Toa Rangatira tikanga:

- Rangahau: Involved historical and archival documentary research exploring the environmental history of Ngāti Toa Rangatira.
- Wānanga and interviews: Facilitated kōrero and sharing of oral histories, memories knowledge and experiences with Ngāti Toa Rangatira whānau.



- Whakakaha hononga: The importance of living in and visiting significant coastal areas was emphasized to gain a deeper understanding of environmental changes and strengthen connections with the land. This resulted in two types of reconnections within the Ngāti Toa Rangatira coastal and maritime region: dedicated cultural health monitoring and sea crossings.
- Mahi tohi: The creation of artistic expressions of Ngāti Toa Rangatira aims to represent the research project in a physical and tangible way

Key learnings and themes

Although difficult to summarise all the learnings and key themes, the following gives an insight into some of the learnings throughout the research project:

Kaiwhakaatu

The crucial role of kaumātua in the research process and intergenerational transmission of knowledge. Kaumātua serve as pillars of wisdom and through the intergenerational exchange of kōrero creates a connection between the past, present, and future, shaping a shared history for Ngāti Toa Rangatira.

Footprints

Footprints represent the importance of living and being in places and areas of significance for Ngāti Toa Rangatira.

Observation and tohu

It is critically important to observe, listen and act on the tohu which te taiao is trying to show us and tell us. The tohu are natural indicators and are the first signs that something is wrong or if we have got something right.

Mahinga Kai

Understanding te taiao is gained by active hunting, fishing and gathering of kaimoana as part of mahinga kai traditions. By returning to significant sites on a regular or seasonal basis, the changes to te taiao are observed and key trends are recorded and shared around whānau.

Aroturuki te taiao

There are a large number of significant coastal and maritime places for Ngāti Toa Rangatira. These sites reflect the importance of the place for Ngāti Toa Rangatira and potential risks arising from environmental degradation and climate change. Many of these places are recognised under the Ngāti Toa Rangatira Claims Settlement Act 2014.

Taonga species

There are a number of important taonga species which are key tohu and are critical to the knowledge systems of Ngāti Toa Rangatira. These species are often positive indicators of the health of te taiao.

Witness to environmental change

The participants of the wānanga and sea crossings witnessed (and are witnessing) environmental degradation and change. This includes instances of pollution such as water contamination, deforestation along coastlines, overfishing, littering, wetland drainage, and reclamations. Climate change impacts were observed firsthand, with severe weather-related events affecting coastal



environments, leading to flooding, erosion, landslips, increased sedimentation, unpredictable weather, marine heat affecting sea life, and greater fire risks.

Active kaitiakitanga focus areas

In today's context, Ngāti Toa Rangatira's resistance has materialised in environmental action to restore degraded coastal environments. The wānanga traversed a range of potential actions and activities in response to climate change as outlined below:

- Protection of marae and urupā.
- Dedicated kaitiaki monitoring
- Rāhui and mātaimai reserves.
- Restoration of natural coastal edges and escarpments.
- Collaboration with other iwi, agencies, and research institutes.
- Adaptation and emissions reduction.
- Greater regulation of freedom camping.
- Wetland restoration.
- Restoration of seaweed and seagrass.
- Iwi environmental planning.

Changing with our climate

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