

# Te Reo Mata Rau – Te Whānau Hautapu

He kaupapa whakarauora  
reo Māori mō te whānau

*Kāhui: Te Tai Hau-ā-uru*





## INTRODUCTION

Te Mātāwai have invested in kaupapa to revitalise te reo Māori throughout Aotearoa. We are showcasing some of the initiatives supported by Te Whāiti, the body responsible for leadership of reo revitalisation efforts and determining funding priorities in Te Tai Hau-ā-uru. Nick Fonotoe (Te Iwi Mōrehu, Hāmoa, Ngāti Apa Ngā Wairiki, Ngā Rauru, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Whakauae) spoke with us about ‘Te Reo Mata Rau – Te Whānau Hautapu’.

### WHAT IS THE KAUPAPA?

‘Te Reo Mata Rau – Te Whānau Hautapu’ is a whānau-focused initiative to foster reo Māori as the primary language in homes and within whānau, and to strengthen and reinforce cultural identity. Nick and his wife Kiritiana Hautapu-Fonotoe (Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti, Muaūpoko, Taranaki Tūturu, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairarapa) were the main facilitators of a series of nine wānanga with her whānau. The objectives of the initiative were to:

1. “... ensure that te reo Māori remains the reo matua within the whānau...pakeke ki te pakeke, pakeke ki te tamaiti, tamaiti ki te pakeke, tamaiti ki te tamaiti ... kia whakawhanakehia ō rātou mōhio ki te reo me ōna tikanga ...”
2. “... to strengthen whānau links to their Muaūpoko heritage ... Kia kaha ake tō rātou hononga ki tō rātou Muaūpokotanga. E noho ana mātou ki te Papaioea, ēngari, nō Taitoko te taha ūkaipō, tō rātou māmā. Nō Muaūpoko, Ngāti Pāiri.”





In total 12 adults and 15 children participated in the initiative. The grandparents provided tautoko and five of their adult children and their families participated. “Some of the whānau are reo speakers with tamariki attending kōhanga reo or kura kaupapa. Two [of the family homes] were already Māori-speaking homes, so there’s the opportunity for them to share with the wider group how they make te reo Māori part of their everyday lives.”

One weekend a month from early 2019 the whānau gathered for a day-time immersion wānanga, normally at the grandparents’ home or sometimes at that of other whānau members. Having the wānanga at family homes helped to normalise te reo in those settings. There were also two weekend-long wānanga at their marae. Wānanga emphasised organic learning and were inclusive of the whole whānau, using games and activities that engaged babies, children, teenagers and adults. Together they learned and practiced pepeha, whakapapa o Muaūpoko, karakia, mihimihi, kīwaha, whakataukī and waiata-ā-ringa. The whānau took the time to discuss and extend the pepeha they use and composed their own karakia.

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*“We went through the process of wānanga to say, ‘What are the type of karakia we want to compose? Why do we want karakia?’ [We] had wānanga with the children to see what their ideas were. Most of the ideas for those karakia came from the children. If everyone plays a part in the composition of these pepeha and karakia, when we get together as whānau, they are all comfortable.”*

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The initiative also provided an opportunity for the whānau to connect to their Muaūpoko heritage.

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*“The journey is really cool, especially when we got to go back to the marae to put these things into practice ... we were able to go into some kōrero of local history, taught the children about ... Punahau [Lake Horowhenua]. When we got to go to their roto, their moana, see their maunga, talk about it, say their karakia to it, say their pepeha we had constructed with them, sing their waiata, it made it fulfilling.”*

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A whānau survey showed that following the initiative, there was increased engagement in te reo among the whānau. A further key benefit was that tamariki felt inspired. There was a sense of pride among tamariki in their Muaūpokotanga and a confidence to use the reo tools they had learnt, a desire among tamariki to speak te reo and among parents to want their children to be speakers of te reo. The wānanga also helped the whānau to use reo and tikanga in their time together “... ki te Māori ake nei te noho tahi a te whānau.”

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*“... tamariki went back to school with more pride in their Muaūpokotanga, but before, not so much, as their Ngāti Porou side was so strong. But now they are equipped ... are very confident to say their pepeha, participate in the karakia, stand to do our waiata, know some of the history of their marae, and they shared that ...”*

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## WHAT ARE THE LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED?

There are a number of issues to take into account when working with whānau. It's important to understand that not all families are ready to commit to the kaupapa at the same level, fully participating and getting the benefits. It is a journey that evolves over time. Further, as a group "... the whānau had numerous kaupapa going on. It added pressure having a monthly wānanga."

Lengthy learning times can be difficult for younger children. Short learning times and lots of games for tamariki, and intensives for adults can be helpful. The length of time between the monthly wānanga was also an issue, as it was easy to get distracted between times and forget the learnings. Weekly online hui between wānanga could be used to increase and reinforce learnings. There are also challenges in running immersion-style wānanga when only around half of the participants are reo speakers. "Me kaha te āwhina, me kaha te akiaki. They have to be given a lot of help and encouragement."

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*"The next step for our whānau is really thinking about the context in which you can use the reo on a daily basis in a natural way ... the thing is, we are fortunate enough to have a lot of options. Our whānau are a kapa haka whānau, the majority of parents are active members that perform, so we thought that would be the natural context. But we also have knowledgeable people in mau rākau. There's also fishing, mahi toi ... So, it's something for us to sit down and think about. What are the contexts that we are all involved in all the time, where reo Māori becomes a natural mode of communication?"*

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## WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE ASPIRATIONS FOR TE REO MĀORI?

“In the case of our whānau, it’s about the parents. Driving the parents to have that energy to fully commit [to te reo]. It’s a life changing decision if you want to do that. And that’s what we really encourage ...”

Nick shared their aspiration for te reo Māori:

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*“... to really entrench the reo within the wider whānau and their tamariki. So, it comes so naturally to all of us, rather than just a few whānau. The dream is that we can just talk Māori to everyone and anyone in the whānau ... te noho tangata whenua mai te reo Māori i waenganui i a mātou katoa ...”*

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