



Annual Report

Orokohanga Hihiri

Dynamic Evolution

2025



He Kōrero Whakataki

Toia mai te waka kia tapohutu ki te moana ma wai e to...
Ma te whakarongo ake he Tarawai nuku he Tarawai rangi.

Kia tinia kia manoa, nau mai e Tane.

Kia kau taua i te awa tuatahi, te awa tuarua te awa tua toru.
Kia matakita koe e te tini o te tangata i te wao nui a Tane.

Mingoi e Tane! Rangahau e Tane! Koa Koa e Tane!

Turuturu ana haere ana ki te wai o te waha o Marama.

Takina ana mai e te komurihau ra runga mai ia waihihi...!

Turuki! .. Turuki! .. Paneke! .. Paneke!

Oi... oi.. OiOia mai te toki a

Haumie! .. Hui e! I taiki e!

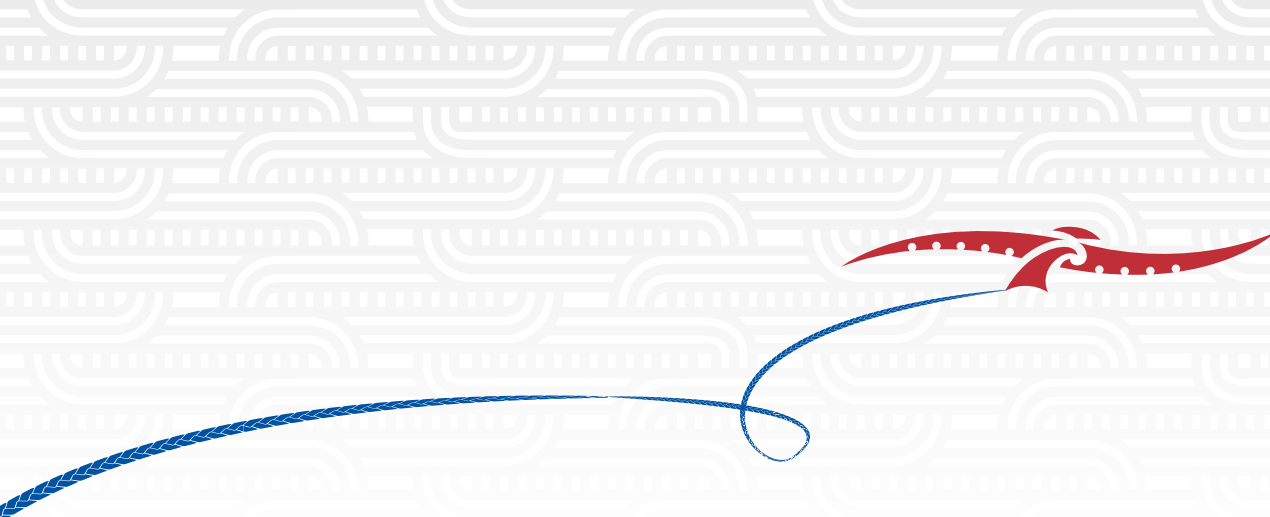
Tēnā koutou katoa,

E ngā mana whakatōpū, e ngā kanohi kitea o te Iwi, tēnei te mihi maioha
ki a koutou. Ka nui te mihi ki ngā iwi o te rohe nei, Ngāpuhi nui tonu,
mō tō rātou kaitiakitanga me te whakapapa ki te whenua nei.

E whai ana tēnei pūrongo i ngā mātāpono o Te Tiriti o Waitangi,
hei tūāpapa mō te mahi tahi i waenga i te kāwanatanga me
Te Ratonga Hapori o Ngāpuhi. Ko te whāinga, he whakakotahi i ngā
whakaaro, he whakakaha i ngā mahi, hei painga mō te katoa.

Mā te mahi ngātahi, mā te whakawhanaungatanga, ka taea e tātou te
whakatutuki i ngā whāinga mō te oranga tonutanga o Te Whare Tapu o Ngāpuhi.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.



During this reporting period, we have contended with a shifting political landscape that has challenged the foundations of social services and Te Tiriti-based practice. This includes legislative reversals that have called upon our deepest values to respond with integrity, unity and a steadfast commitment to the wellbeing of our mokopuna and whānau. When I reflect on this financial year, I do so with immense pride in the unwavering strength and aroha of our people. True to the whakataukī “E kau ki te tai e,” we are holding fast to our kaupapa and traversing these challenges guided by our values passed down through whakapapa.

In August 2024, more than 200 whānau members, iwi representatives and kaimahi stood together at Parliament, raising our voices against the repeal of Section 7AA. With the number 827 held high, our message was clear: Ngāpuhi mokopuna deserve better. Since then, NISS has seen an increase in whānau stepping forward to become Mātua Atawhai. This is a powerful reminder of the capacity within our own communities to care for and protect our mokopuna.

Despite a slight easing in inflation, many of our whānau continue to navigate high living costs, insecure work, and complex needs. In response, our kaimahi have worked tirelessly to provide practical, wraparound support to uphold te mana motuhake o ngā whānau and build pathways toward long-term stability. We have focused on implementing a number of new initiatives as part of our commitment to strengthen whānau wellbeing. A particular highlight was the opening of Whata Kai; our social supermarket located in Kaikohe. Whata Kai offers a mana-enhancing response to food insecurity by providing affordable, nutritious kai in a welcoming environment.



Erena Kara — Heamana / Chair
Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services Ltd.

I wish to acknowledge the collective effort of our kaimahi, community partners and all those who contributed their aroha and expertise that brought this kaupapa to life.

One of the most significant moments this year was the Āpiti Hono, Tātai Hono Ngāpuhi Roadshow, held over six locations across Aotearoa. These events brought together thousands of our whānau to celebrate our reo, pūrākau, and whakapapa. Āpiti Hono, Tātai Hono was a powerful demonstration of whanaungatanga in action, and an affirmation that Ngāpuhi pride is alive and well.

On behalf of our Board, I extend our deepest appreciation to all who contributed to this kaupapa – from the kaimahi behind the scenes, to our hosts, speakers, and whānau who attended.

This year also marked the launch of Haukāinga, our official podcast platform developed to reach whānau near and far. Haukāinga includes series that were recorded at the Āpiti Hono, Tātai Hono roadshow,

Waitangi Day and Te Matatini 2025 – so if you missed any of these events, or if you would like to catch up on the kōrero, I encourage you to explore these episodes, available now via the QR code inside this report on page 18.

Our annual report takes on a new form this year, guided by our Rautaki 2025–2029. We have chosen to frame our mahi through five Strategic Focus Areas: Hononga, Mana Motuhake, He Ao Hurihuri, Kia Tū Pakari and Ngā Taitamariki, each representing a pou in our vision to see Te Whare Tapu O Ngāpuhi standing strong.

He ara hou kei mua ia tātou – kia tū, kia māia, kia manawanui.

As we close this year and turn towards the next, I wish to offer my heartfelt thanks to our kaimahi, board, partners, and most importantly, our whānau. Your aroha, resilience, and commitment have made this year's successes possible.

The road ahead will no doubt bring further change, but our direction is firm. NISS has developed a two-year plan that will deepen our digital presence, advance our strategic advocacy, expand care partnerships, and grow collaborative, kaupapa Māori responses to family harm. To read the plan scan the barcode on page 3

We remain grounded in our vision mā Ngāpuhi, me Ngāpuhi, mō Ngāpuhi.



The community comes together to celebrate Puanga mā Matariki

He pokeke Uenuku i tu ai, he tapui tamaka i tau ai.

Stand strong like Uenuku in the storm, while being anchored in something sacred and foundational.

Mauri ora,

Erena Kara

Chair, Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services Ltd.



Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services Board of Directors

Te Tūāpapa o Te Ratonga Hapori o Ngāpuhi

NISS exists to serve the aspirations of Ngāpuhi whānau, hapū and those living within our rohe. We recognise the strengths and potential within whānau, and our role is to support their journeys.

NISS was established in 1997 and has since grown into a leading iwi social work provider with over 28 years of experience responding to the needs of our communities. Our Rautaki Strategy 2024-2029 draws inspiration from the journeys of Kupe and the arrival of Ngātokimatawhaorua and Māmari waka to the Hokianga. These intrinsic navigation narratives reflect our own journeys of resilience, purpose and visions for the future – E Kau ki te Tai e – a call to move with bravery and intention. Our mahi is driven by the belief that when whānau are empowered to lead, we are collectively creating space for whānau to define their own goals and pathways, supporting transformation that is meaningful and sustainable for them.

The needs of our whānau are becoming more and more complex. Those needs are often shaped by intergenerational trauma, systemic inequities, poverty and disconnection from whakapapa. We also see whānau carrying deep resilience, knowledge, and aspirations for their taitamariki. Our response is grounded in Ngāpuhi tikanga and honours these strengths, delivering support across a continuum of care that reflects both the challenges and the potential within the diverse realities Ngāpuhi taitamariki and whānau face.

THIS CONTINUUM INCLUDES SERVICES WHICH OPERATE ACROSS THE KEY AREAS BELOW:

- **Prevention** focuses on strengthening identity and resilience through whakapapa reconnection, school-based programmes, and taitamariki leadership development
- **Early intervention** includes social work in schools and iwi-led intervention in family court and statutory processes
- **Intensive support** provides care placements, our Mahuru remand service, residential care and wraparound support for high needs whānau
- **Therapeutic support** includes access to hapū-led, marae-based restorative wānanga, clinical individual and whānau-based therapies.

Our approach ensures that we are both proactive and responsive, not only addressing crises, but investing in intergenerational wellbeing. Everything we do aims to support our vision – “Kia Tū Tika Ai te Whare Tapu O Ngāpuhi: the Sacred House of Ngāpuhi Stands Strong.”

Scan the QR code or visit our website at www.niss.org.nz to view and download our Rautaki Strategy 2024 – 2029 and our Annual Plan 2024 – 2026.

RAUTAKI STRATEGY
2024–2029



Ngā Pou Mahi: Our Strategic Focus Areas

The five Strategic Focus Areas, Nga Pou Mahi, reflect the heart of our mahi at Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services. Together, they serve as the foundation for how we plan, deliver and evaluate our mahi, helping us to respond to the evolving needs of Ngāpuhi mokopuna, whānau and hapū.

Hononga

“Me pakari, me mau roa ngā hononga ki ngā whānau, ngā hapū, puta noa i te motu me te ao whānui”.

We foster strong, enduring relationships with all stakeholders.

Mana Motuhake

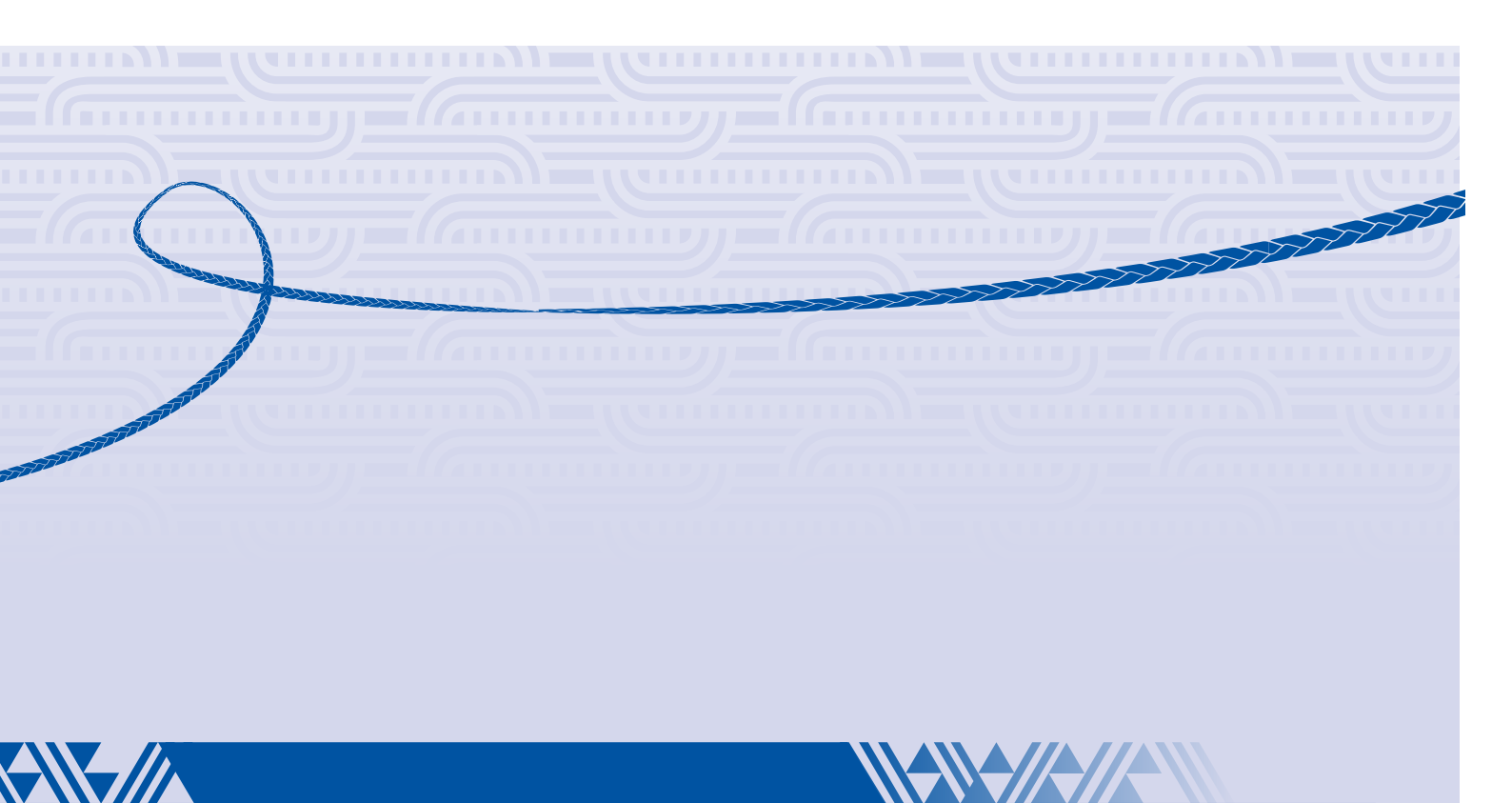
“Ko tā tatou he tautoko, he āki, he tuku rauemi ki ngā whānau me ngā hapū e taea ai e rātou te whai i tō rātou mana motuhake i roto i ngā kāinga me ngā marae.”

We inspire whānau, hapū and communities to pursue their potential by providing access to resources and services they need, when they need them.

Te Ao Hurihuri

“Rapua tonutia, rangahaua he huarahi hou, he māramatanga hou, āta whakaarohia ngā rautaki kia hāngai pū tonu ai ngā mahi ki tā tātou e whai ana i te ao hurihuri nei.”

We continuously build, adapt, and improve our organisation to deliver our vision and contribute to whānau and indigenous development.



Kia Tū Pakari

“Kia takatū, kia koi, kia rite katoa, ngā kaimahi e tū ai rātou hei pou ramaroa mō ngā uri o Ngāpuhi.”

We develop innovative and competent Ngāpuhi iwi practitioners.

Ngā Taitamariki

“Manaakihia, poipoia te taitamariki kia tū rangatira ai ia.”

We support the holistic wellbeing of Ngāpuhi taitamariki to develop as leaders.



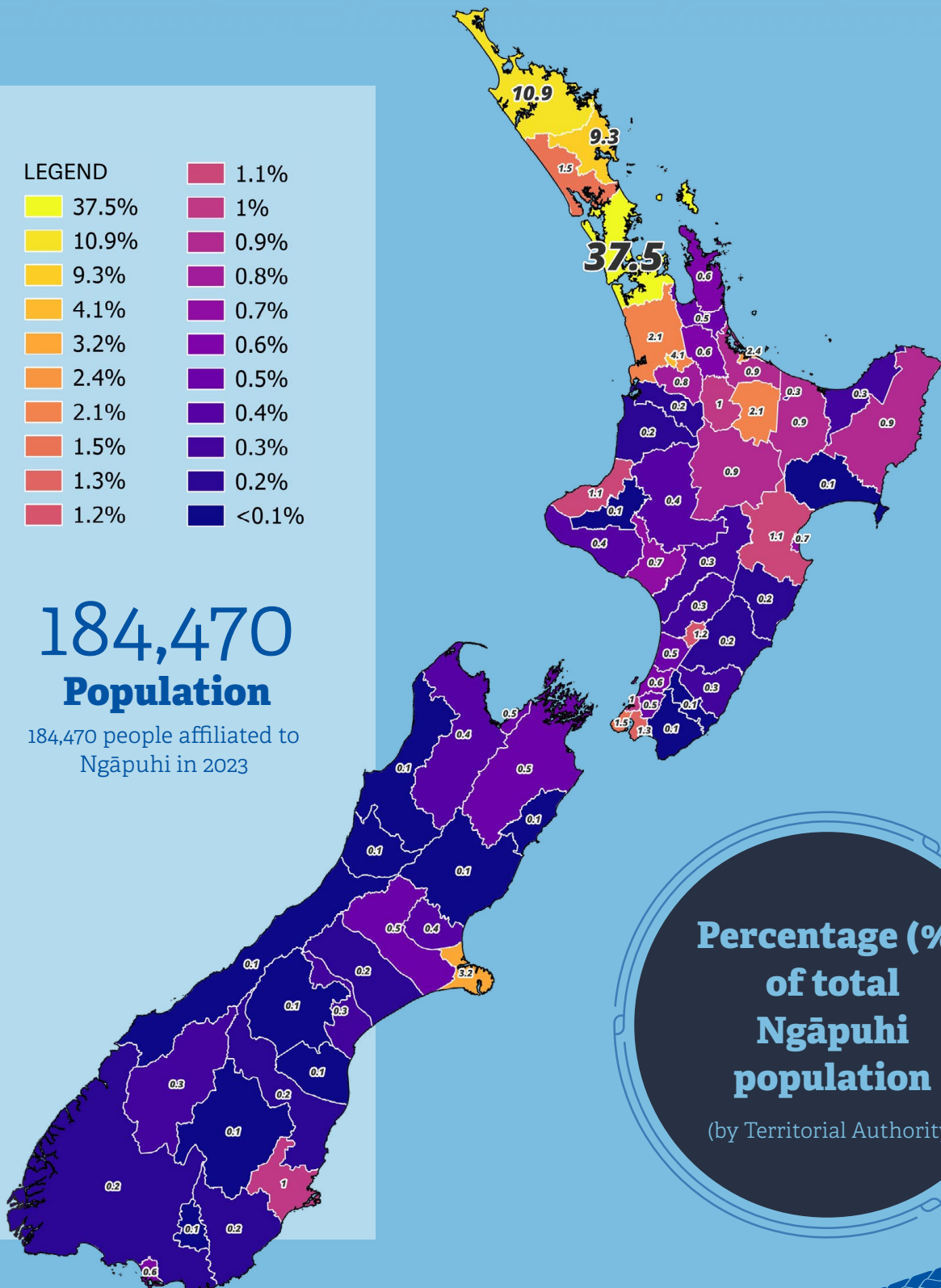
Ngāpuhi Census

2023 DATA



184,470
Population

184,470 people affiliated to
Ngāpuhi in 2023



**Percentage (%)
of total
Ngāpuhi
population**

(by Territorial Authority)

Hononga

“Me pakari, me mau roa ngā hononga ki ngā whānau, ngā hapū, puta noa i te motu me te ao whānui.”

We foster strong, enduring relationships with all stakeholders.

OVERVIEW

Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services is committed to building and sustaining deep relationships with whānau, hapū, and communities both in Te Tai Tokerau and across the motu. In a time where only 21.7% of Ngāpuhi live in the North, and 37% live in Tāmaki Makaurau (with at least 25,000 in Australia), connection is more important than ever. This year, we prioritised engagement through digital platforms, face-to-face hui, and collaborative kaupapa.

ĀPITI HONO, TĀTAI HONO: NISS REACHES THOUSANDS THROUGH THE NGĀPUHI ROADSHOW

In 2024, Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services joined Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi-Ō-Ngāpuhi, Te Hau Ora O Ngāpuhi and the Ngāpuhi Asset Holding Company on a nationwide haerenga designed to connect with Ngāpuhi whānau across Aotearoa. Each stop offered whānau a space to kōrero, ask questions, and share their aspirations. For many, it was their first time engaging directly with Ngāpuhi Rūnanga.

In our work with taitamariki and whānau, we know that disconnection from whakapapa and te ao Māori can lead to identity struggles and other negative impacts on the individual and collective wellbeing of Ngāpuhi whānau. Furthermore, isolation, and the absence of strong social bonds is common in today's world and is linked to mental, physical and spiritual distress. Therefore, whanaungatanga and whakapapa reconnection are powerful healing practices that restore and sustain tapu and mana. In the health and social work field, these are known as “protective factors” that reduce the likelihood of harm or negative outcomes and enhance resilience.

The roadshow was an opportunity for NISS to connect with taitamariki and whānau outside of Te Tai Tokerau, where the majority of Ngāpuhi whānau reside. NISS kaimahi helped to welcome and support attendees and introduced whānau to our mahi. We also gathered and recorded whānau experiences through the Haukāinga Podcast, which was launched during the roadshow. Whānau voices were captured during kaikōrero in a mobile podcast caravan which has so far made it to Toi Mahara, Waitangi week and Te Matatini in Taranaki. NISS kaimahi were trained to use the podcast equipment and interview Ngāpuhi whānau, iwi leaders and more to gain a clearer collective understanding of the aspirations of Ngāpuhi while creating a repository for Ngāpuhi mātauranga, pūrakau and tikanga.

Haukāinga also gives voice to lived experiences that might otherwise go unheard, from stories of resistance to healing through whakapapa. As an ongoing initiative, the podcast caravan may be visiting an event near you. To stay updated or express interest in contributing, follow Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services on social media or contact us directly.

Strong turnout at
Āpiti Hono Tātai Hono
Tāmaki Makaurau
roadshow event



NISS kaimahi gather to begin the Ngāpuhi roadshow with a shared commitment to Ngāpuhi taitamariki, whānau and hapū



NISS Kaimahi gather at Te Tii in Waitangi for this year's Noho Marae

“

Our mana and our sovereignty are connected to our wellbeing and ability to thrive on our whenua.”

Our leadership must be bold, courageous and innovative. If iwi politics is preventing a Ngāpuhi presence from being in Tāmaki, that issue needs to be tackled first. Being bold enough to come in and be here.”

I saw a lot of seeds planted today. In the future, it's how we're going to nurture those seeds so they blossom.”

NISS LAUNCHES A NEW WEBSITE AND ONLINE SOCIALS TO STRENGTHEN CONNECTIVITY

This year, NISS launched a brand-new website and established our social media presence to strengthen digital connectivity with our whānau across Aotearoa and abroad. Visit these links below to find out more about our services:

Website:  www.niss.org.nz

Facebook:  [NgapuhiIwiSocialServices](https://www.facebook.com/NgapuhiIwiSocialServices)

Instagram:  [@ngapuhiwisocialservices](https://www.instagram.com/ngapuhiwisocialservices)

LinkedIn:  [ngāpuhi-iwi-social-services](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ngapuhi-iwi-social-services)

YouTube:  [NgāpuhiIwiSocialServices](https://www.youtube.com/NgapuhiIwiSocialServices)

Access our new website to find out more about our services, connect with our kaimahi and find out about work or volunteering opportunities. You can also apply to be a Mātua Atawhai (approved caregiver) through the website or enquire by contacting us at 09 401 5548 or emailing us at niss@niss.org.nz.

We thank Aka Productions, Taktix and Making Everything Achievable (MEA) Limited for their support with strengthening our communications over the past year. Our social media platforms allow us to building stronger online pathways to enhance communication, grow visibility of our mahi, and empower whānau with timely, relevant information. It also supports kotahitanga — connecting Ngāpuhi across generations, hapū, and locations through shared stories, kaupapa, and taonga tuku iho.

Our digital presence will continue to evolve in the coming year as our podcast grows and our haerenga to upcoming events gets underway. Watch this space!

NISS CO-HOSTS WHAKANUIA PUANGA KI KAIKOHE

Over the past year, NISS has been proud to stand alongside our partners and community in celebrating Puanga mā Matariki with taitamariki and whānau.

NISS proudly co-hosted the inaugural Puanga mā Matariki Festival at Memorial Park on July 13th, 2024 alongside Te Kotahitanga E Mahi Kaha Trust, Te Hau Ora o Ngāpuhi, and Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi-O-Ngāpuhi. The free event welcomed taitamariki and whānau to enjoy kai, free clothing, seedlings, giveaways and a Carnival Youth Space led by our kaimahi. The event also featured wānanga, where guest speakers shared their mātauranga and pūrākau that deepened our understandings of the winter solstice, Puanga mā Matariki and whakapapa. We wish to thank the Bald Angels Charitable trust, Makana Confectionary and Kainui Pack & Cool for their time and donations, along with Ngā Moko a Rahiri, who provided beautiful kapa haka performances. Ngā mihi aroha ki a koutou.

Due to its success, the kaupapa grew stronger in 2025 with Whakanuia Puanga ki Kaikohe held on June 14th, 2025, cohosted by NISS, Te Whare Awhina o Ngāti



Whānau gathered at Memorial Park to celebrate Matariki

Tautahi and Te Hau Ora o Ngāpuhi. Taitamariki enjoyed the free rides and art station as whānau gathered to watch live performances and share kai. The weather held up as the day filled up with laughter and Kotahitanga made possible by the aroha and hard work of many community members. We are especially grateful to all the generous sponsors — Northland Waste, Kaikohe ITM, Far North District Council, Kaikohe New World, The Warehouse Kaikohe, Regent Training Centre – Ngawha Innovation, Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi-O-Ngāpuhi, Lens Pies Kaikohe, and GC Entertainment — for their support in bringing this kaupapa to life.



Taitamariki soak up the happy atmosphere

NGĀPUHI SUPPORTS KAUMĀTUA VOICES AND LEADERSHIP THROUGH TE PUAWAITANGA

Te Puawaitanga o Te Pū o te Wheke is an elder abuse prevention initiative that is fast becoming a regional model of kaumātua and kuia wellbeing and community responsiveness. Our Ngāpuhi Kaunihera Kaumātua Kuia were supported this year to collectivise and attend the successful Ngāpuhi roadshow where kaumātua connected with whānau across hapū and takiwā, offering space for kōrero, advocacy, shared learning. The roopu were also supported by NISS to attend fortnightly mōteatea sessions led by Miss Heeni Lawrence. This allowed both groups to strengthen their engagement and provide a space for kaumātua and kuia to network.

The initiative is not solely focused on the wellbeing of kaumātua and kuia; it reflects their deep intergenerational vision. Insights gathered through hui and roadshows revealed that many kaumātua see the wellbeing of mokopuna and vulnerable whānau members as central to their own. Their aspirations extend beyond personal support—they envision safe, connected, and thriving whānau.

This was beautifully captured in the whakataukī:

**“Ko koe ki tēnā, ko ahau ki tēnei
kīwai o te kete.”**

You take that handle of the kete and I'll take this one.

This whakataukī speaks to our shared responsibility to enhance oranga across generations and shows how our kaumātua seek not only to be cared for but to contribute actively to the collective wellbeing of their whānau and mokopuna.

Success story

A kuia who had waited almost seven years on the housing waitlist was supported into a warm, dry whare within seven days of connecting with our kaimahi. She phoned to express her gratitude, saying her “wairua felt uplifted” and wanted to personally thank the kaimahi who supported her. The kaimahi shared this as one of their proudest achievements to date.

Mana Motuhake

“Ko tā tatou he tautoko, he āki, he tuku rauemi ki ngā whānau me ngā hapū e taea ai e rātou te whai i tō rātou mana motuhake i roto i ngā kāinga me ngā marae.”

We inspire whānau, hapū and communities to pursue their potential by providing access to resources and services they need, when they need them.

OVERVIEW

At the heart of our mahi is a commitment to supporting whānau and hapū to realise their own potential and exercise mana motuhake in their kāinga, marae and communities. We do this by providing timely, culturally grounded support, resources and encouragement that uplifts rather than intervenes. Mana Motuhake is a broad and sometimes challenging pou to define, because it's where the full weight of our service delivery sits. Whether it's kai, care, advocacy or kaupapa Māori services, NISS ensures that whānau are met with manaaki, not judgment. By placing whānau at the centre and walking alongside them, we continue to nurture strength, connection and autonomy—restoring the right of whānau to thrive in ways defined by their own tikanga and aspirations.

Leading the Call for Change:

NISS Responds to Section 7AA Repeal

In 2024, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care revealed the widespread abuse suffered by survivors in state care from 1950 to 1999. Among the Māori survivors, 190 identified as sharing whakapapa with Te Tai Tokerau iwi. They revealed decades of violence, disconnection from whakapapa, and systemic failures. NISS kaimahi support whānau every day who are facing the impacts of intergenerational trauma caused by state care intervention, maltreatment and separation from whakapapa and whenua. In 2022, NISS joined concerned whānau and hapū members who came together to build a response to the alarming numbers of Ngāpuhi mokopuna in care.

Section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 was introduced in 2019 to uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and reduce disparities for tamariki Māori in state care. In May 2024, legislation was introduced to

NISS GOVERNMENT SUBMISSIONS



Oranga Tamariki
(Repeal of Section 7AA)
Amendment Bill



Oranga Tamariki
(Responding to Serious
Youth Offending)
Amendment Bill

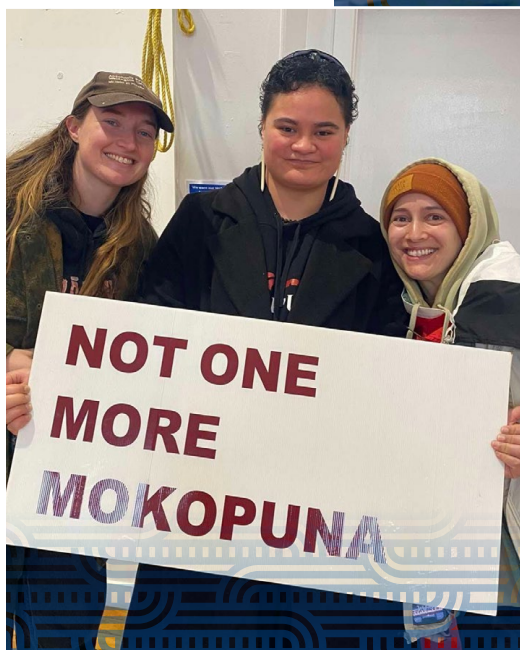


**Principles of the
Treaty of Waitangi Bill**



**Regulatory
Standards Bill**

▶ The March on Parliament drew whānau from all iwi backgrounds in support of Ngāpuhi mokopuna.
Photo – RNZ



◀ The message is clear — not one more mokopuna should be lost to the system

▶ Moana Tuwhare (Tumu Whakarae of Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi-O-Ngāpuhi), Mane Tahere (Chair), Ohomairangi Smith and Alva Pomare standing proud for mokopuna and whānau at Parliament

remove Section 7AA. NISS formally opposed the repeal during the written and oral public submission processes.

On August 5th, 2024, NISS led, alongside Ngāpuhi Rūnanga leaders and hundreds of supporters in a march to Parliament. The hīkoi was an emotional and unified stand for our mokopuna, described by one reporter as “tears in the crowd of 200, and not one smile.”

NISS Tumu Whakarae (CEO) Dr Moana Eruera was interviewed on the national television show Breakfast, where she shared the vision beyond state care for our Ngāpuhi mokopuna. She spoke about safe, non-institutional and culturally appropriate alternatives to care and youth justice, such as our Mātua Atawhai (approved Ngāpuhi caregivers). Following the interview, interest in Mātua Atawhai surged as whānau contacted us for information.

Although the repeal passed in April 2025, NISS will continue to lead the way in advocating for the wellbeing of Ngāpuhi mokopuna, whānau and hapū, and to support them to lead their own healing.

NISS opens Whata Kai in Kaikohe

NISS is proud to share about the successful opening of Whata Kai – our social supermarket, on 30th April, 2025. Whata kai is a NISS-led initiative established to address food insecurity in Kaikohe and the wider rohe through community collaboration. It strengthens the existing kai support network by working alongside partners like Foodstuffs and other key organisations to provide direct food relief to whānau facing economic hardship. Whata kai is more than just a place to access groceries. It offers a safe, welcoming space where whānau can pause, enjoy a kapu tī, and engage in kōrero.



Whata Kai Kaikohe opened in April 2025 with fresh produce on offer

Join us in supporting
Whata Kai

See how you can support or
contribute to Whata Kai to
help us reduce food insecurity
in the Mid-North.



How does Whata kai work?

Support is available to whānau through referral from one of our local service hubs: Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services, Te Hau Ora O Ngāpuhi, or Te Pūtahi-Nui-O-Rēhua. Kaimahi meet with whānau to understand their needs and ensure the most appropriate support is offered.

Using a points-based system, whānau receive points based on household size, which they can use to select groceries ranging from 0 to 5 points. A small contribution is required to help keep the shelves stocked and ensure the kaupapa continues to support others.

Looking ahead, the development of our Mahinga Kai and Kāuta will open up new opportunities for community learning, workshops, and shared mātauranga about growing and preparing kai.



NISS collaborated with Foodstuffs NZ and New World Kaiakohe to make Whata Kai possible



Whata Kai uses a points-based system where whānau receive points based on household size. Support is available through referral from one of our local service hubs

“

I love how she heard me out to understand my needs and was quick to help. Thanks to you all, my kids are fed and we have gas to do our activities these holidays. Thank you to the NISS team.”

Feedback provided by a māmā supported by our care team.

Mātua Atawhai Campaign brings Ngāpuhi solutions to the fore

This year we focused on building awareness of our Mātua Atawhai initiative and continuously improving the process for those wanting to become Mātua Atawhai. NISS launched a social media campaign where our current Mātua Atawhai shared their experiences and the challenges of caring for Ngāpuhi taitamariki. At the same time, we ensured kaimahi received advice and support on statutory processes during the campaign.



Hear Fred and Paula Hohua encourage whānau to become Mātua Atawhai

“

There are no words that can explain how grateful I am to have such an awesome team beside me, guiding me through what was one of the lowest times of my life. Forever grateful.”

One of our Mahuru teina reflects on her experience with NISS.



Taitamariki support in Opononi

In response to concerns about homelessness in Opononi affecting taitamariki and their whānau, our Parirau team delivered a successful in-school support programme at Opononi Area School that centred on connection, safety, and identity. Taitamariki were supported through therapeutic group wānanga, shared kai, and mentoring that acknowledged their lived realities and explored whakapapa. What stood out to our mentors was not only their willingness to engage, but the strength shown by taitamariki who went on to seek further support through Parirau, each making significant progress across education, wellbeing, and whānau reconnection. Kaupapa such as this shows the power of early intervention and responses where taitamariki are supported to navigate addressing their own wellbeing rather than punitive approaches which do not work.

Collaboration achieves real change

One of the highlights this year was the successful transition of a Ngāpuhi taitamariki from Supported Bail to the Supervision with Activity (SWA) programme. The benefits of SWA is that it's a long-term, intensive wraparound programme designed to help taitamariki build life skills and positive relationships. SWA can also lead to employment and training opportunities. In this way, SWA focuses on development rather than a sole focus on compliance. Unfortunately, this is a shift which is rarely smooth in Aotearoa's youth justice system, however in this case, our Parirau team were able to support this taitamariki through a collaborative effort between NISS kaimahi, the taitamariki's whānau, Youth Aid Police, Oranga Tamariki and Youth Court.

He Ao Hurihuri

“Rapua tonutia, rangahaua he huarahi hou, he māramatanga hou, āta whakaarohia ngā rautaki kia hāngai pū tonu ai ngā mahi ki tā tātou e whai ana i te ao hurihuri nei.”

We continuously build, adapt, and improve our organisation to deliver our vision and contribute to whānau and indigenous development.

OVERVIEW

Under He Ao Hurihuri this year, NISS strengthened our clinical capability through Functional Family Therapy, launched Te Ao Mārama ki Kaikohe to support taitamariki and whānau in the Family Court, and created new pathways for digital storytelling through Haukāinga o Ngāpuhi. These activities are about developing strategies that deepen our impact, always guided by Ngāpuhi aspirations and mātauranga.

TE AO MĀRAMA KI
KAIKOHE



Our Te Ao Marama team working in collaboration to design pathways for preventing Ngāpuhi taitamariki from entering state care through whānau, hapū and iwi solutions

Enhancing support for taitamariki and whānau in Family Court

NISS has launched a new family court support service known as “Te Ao Mārama ki Kaikohe”, an initiative under the Ministry of Justice national Te Ao Marama programme aimed at improving court proceedings so that people feel seen, heard and supported. Over the year, NISS has been working alongside the Ministry to develop the service through the Kaikohe Family Court. This initiative is currently in its testing phase and is being led by an experienced NISS iwi practitioner.

NISS advocates alongside taitamariki and whānau to ensure their voices are heard throughout the court process. We can:

- Host whānau hui to help develop whānau plans and support with court preparation
- Connect whānau to the right services and work with any existing supports they might have
- Sit alongside whānau in court
- Support whānau to share their stories by providing cultural perspectives and reports to the court

Whānau can contact our office directly on 09 401 5548, email at niss@niss.org.nz and/or speak with their lawyer or court-based kaimahi.



Ngāpuhi pride on full display

Haukāinga O Ngāpuhi podcast available on Spotify, iHeartRadio and YouTube

This year NISS worked alongside MEA Mobile Ltd and AKA Productions to develop and launch Haukāinga, a podcast about Ngāpuhi identity, whakapapa and kaupapa from around the motu. Recording from a caravan podcast studio, Haukāinga has so far travelled to Te Matatini 2025, Waitangi Day and Toi Mahara to catch the action and listen to diverse insights, from every day whānau to well-known leaders such as Moko Tepania and Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku. This kaupapa encapsulates Hononga, Ngā Taitamariki and Mana Motuhake just as much, however Haukāinga O Ngāpuhi is also a strategic investment in digital innovation. NISS recognises that the protection and preservation of Ngāpuhi mātauranga for future generations requires us to create new platforms for intergenerational connection and kōrero. Looking ahead, we intend to build on these resources in collaboration with Ngāpuhi taitamariki.

CHECK
OUT
HAUKĀINGA



NISS kaimahi arranged for the podcast caravan to support Āpiti Hono Tātai Hono by providing a space for recorded kaikōrero under our new Haukāinga kaupapa



Pio interviews Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku for the Haukāinga podcast



Far North Mayor Moko Tepania joins Pio at Matatini to discuss the benefits of Kapa Haka

FFT: Strengthening clinical capability

This year, NISS took over the provision of Functional Family Therapy (FFT) services for Kaikohe and the Mid-North. This transition means whānau can now access FFT directly through our organisation. To support the successful establishment of the service, we onboarded an experienced Practice Leader, implemented regular supervision and clinical consultation processes, and delivered intensive training with an FFT USA consultant in May. These steps have helped strengthen our internal capability and ensure a seamless transition ahead of the contract's end in January 2025.

Kia Tū Pakari

“Kia takatū, kia koi, kia rite katoa, ngā kaimahi e tū ai rātou hei pou ramaroa mō ngā uri o Ngāpuhi.”

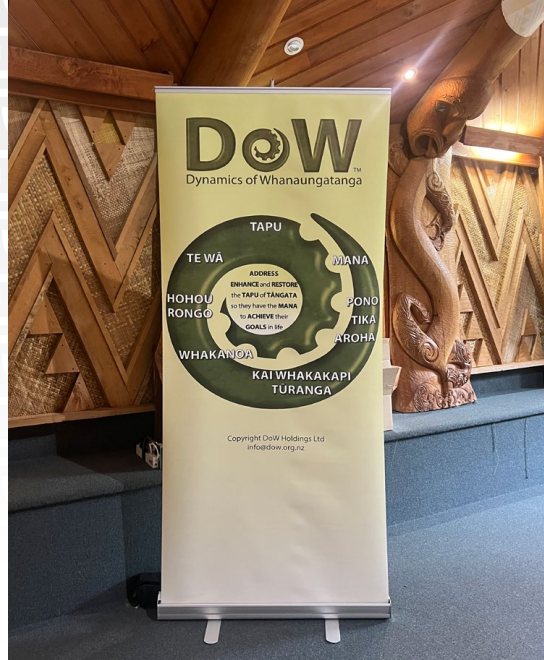
We develop innovative and competent Ngāpuhi iwi practitioners.

OVERVIEW

This year, we focused on our organisation-wide training in the Dynamics of Whanaungatanga (DoW) where kaimahi deepened their understanding of wellbeing and practice from a Ngāpuhi lens. We also prioritised oranga, delivering Tāne Ora and Wāhine Ora initiatives designed to support hauora, reflection, and connection. Our supervision practice was further strengthened to ensure kaimahi are well supported in their mahi, with spaces to reflect, recharge and uphold cultural safety.



NISS kaimahi reflect and learn together in the Dynamics of Whanaungatanga wānanga at Kohewhata Marae



The Dynamics of Whanaungatanga framework guiding whānau-centred practice

Embedding Ngāpuhi practice through the Dynamics of Whanaungatanga

A key focus for NISS this year has been strengthening our collective Ngāpuhi approach through the continued delivery of the Dynamics of Whanaungatanga (DoW) training. NISS kaimahi were introduced (and some were reintroduced!) to the DoW framework in wānanga at Kohewhata marae in November 2024, followed by further online wānanga. This kaupapa has become a foundation for how we engage and support whānau across all service delivery areas – offering a Ngāpuhi lens for practice that enhances and restores the tapu and mana of those we serve. The wānanga have made a difference in how kaimahi understand wellbeing from a Ngāpuhi lens and many kaimahi have since made reference to the meanings of ‘tapu i’ (internal) and tapu ‘o’ (external) in relation to their practice. This investment is growing the confidence of our kaimahi in Ngāpuhi-centred practice and reinforcing a unified way of working grounded in Ngāpuhi values.



Lucy Taurua-Mason stands before this unique paraikete honouring wāhine

“

“I enjoyed the day learning about Paraikete Whero and starting my own. Also enjoyed the mirimiri from the lovely wāhine, and the yoga. Reflecting on all of this, I learnt more about what Wāhine Ora can look like for me and taking that time out to focus on my own Wāhine Ora.”

Feedback from one of our kaimahi following a wāhine ora day at Ngawha Springs.

Kia Tau te Tinana, te Wairua, te hinengaro, kia tau te mauri.

Over the course of the year, NISS supported a range of wellbeing initiatives designed by and for our kaimahi. These included Tāne Ora wānanga exploring leadership, connection to Te Taiao, and rongoā, along with Wāhine Ora sessions at Ngawha Springs. These kaupapa provided time for reflection, learning and reconnection, while also creating relaxed spaces for whakawhanaungatanga. Kaimahi provided feedback on these initiatives, appreciating the time to reconnect with each other and listen to the healing journeys of guest speakers. Others reflected on their own wellbeing goals and what had inspired them to integrate oranga practices into their daily lives.

Elevating Supervision Practice

Supervision has been a clear area of focus this year, with NISS strengthening both internal and external processes to ensure all kaimahi are well supported in their roles. This kaupapa was further enriched through supervision wānanga exploring Mana Tangata Supervision, and our attendance at the national Toiora Whānau Symposium in Otaki.



NISS Tāne spend quality time reconnecting and restoring their hauora in Opononi

Our kaimahi work in complex, high-stress situations that require consistent opportunities to pause, process and reflect on these situations and their practice in a confidential space. Good supervision helps kaimahi to manage the physical, mental and emotional load in roles that are deeply relational and that carry trauma. Our supervision practice at NISS must also support cultural safety and continuous learning in kaupapa Māori and Ngāpuhi practice, therefore it is framed by Ngāpuhi values. In this way, supervision protects not only our iwi practitioners, but the pono (integrity) of their work with whānau and the community.



Kaimahi work in groups during a supervision workshop activity, September 2024

Ngā Taitamariki

“Manaakihia, poipoia
te taitamariki kia tū
rangatira ai ia.”

We support the holistic wellbeing
of Ngāpuhi taitamariki to develop
as leaders.

OVERVIEW

NISS supports the wellbeing of Ngāpuhi taitamariki in different ways – this has involved advocacy for taitamariki in state care, mental health support in schools and whānau support through our NISS iwi social work practitioners. We also hold events like the Puanga Matariki celebration and host youth programmes such as Above the Rim, a basketball programme promoting youth wellbeing and development. This year we chose to report on kaupapa which placed taitamariki at the centre, shaping the spaces and narratives that impact them most.

NISS partners with Mana Mokopuna at Waitangi 2025

For Waitangi week this year, NISS partnered with Chief Children’s Commissioner of Mana Mokopuna and the Ākau Foundation to create a dedicated space for taitamariki and their whānau to share their voices, aspirations, and concerns. This collaboration ensured taitamariki were not just present but central to the kaupapa and able to engage directly with Children’s Commissioner and NISS Chief Executive Officer in a safe environment. Taitamariki spoke about the return of Ngāpuhi whenua, the need for visible role models, and what connection to Ngāpuhitanga truly means to them. Our Haukāinga podcast caravan was stationed onsite, offering taitamariki the opportunity to be interviewed. A taitamariki was provided with the opportunity to co-host episodes and gain hands-on experience.

Ngāpuhi Proud: Taitamariki Make Semifinals

Above the Rim (ATR) is a unique sports-based youth development and programme that integrates Ngāpuhi values and tikanga and connects Ngāpuhi taitamariki to local, national and international pathways. Major highlights this year included:

- **Junior Summer Slam:**
our taitamariki competed in a seven-week basketball tournament across U12, U14 and U16 boys and girls teams.
- **Los Angeles and Las Vegas Tour:**
two taitamariki teams travelled to the USA and competed in age-grade tournaments, making the semifinals and finishing fourth in two of the three tournaments they entered. At the Las Vegas competitions, two players were selected for a high school basketball exchange opportunity. Sadly, US immigration policy prevented the offer from moving forward, however NISS still congratulates all players and recognise this honour.

Young Ngāpuhi leaders inspired all of us at Waitangi Day 2025



Taitamariki share their whakaaro with NISS and Dr Claire Achmad (Chief Children's Commissioner)

NISS, Mana Mokokuna and Ākau created a beautiful space for taitamariki and whānau to enjoy some activities, relaxation and kōrero

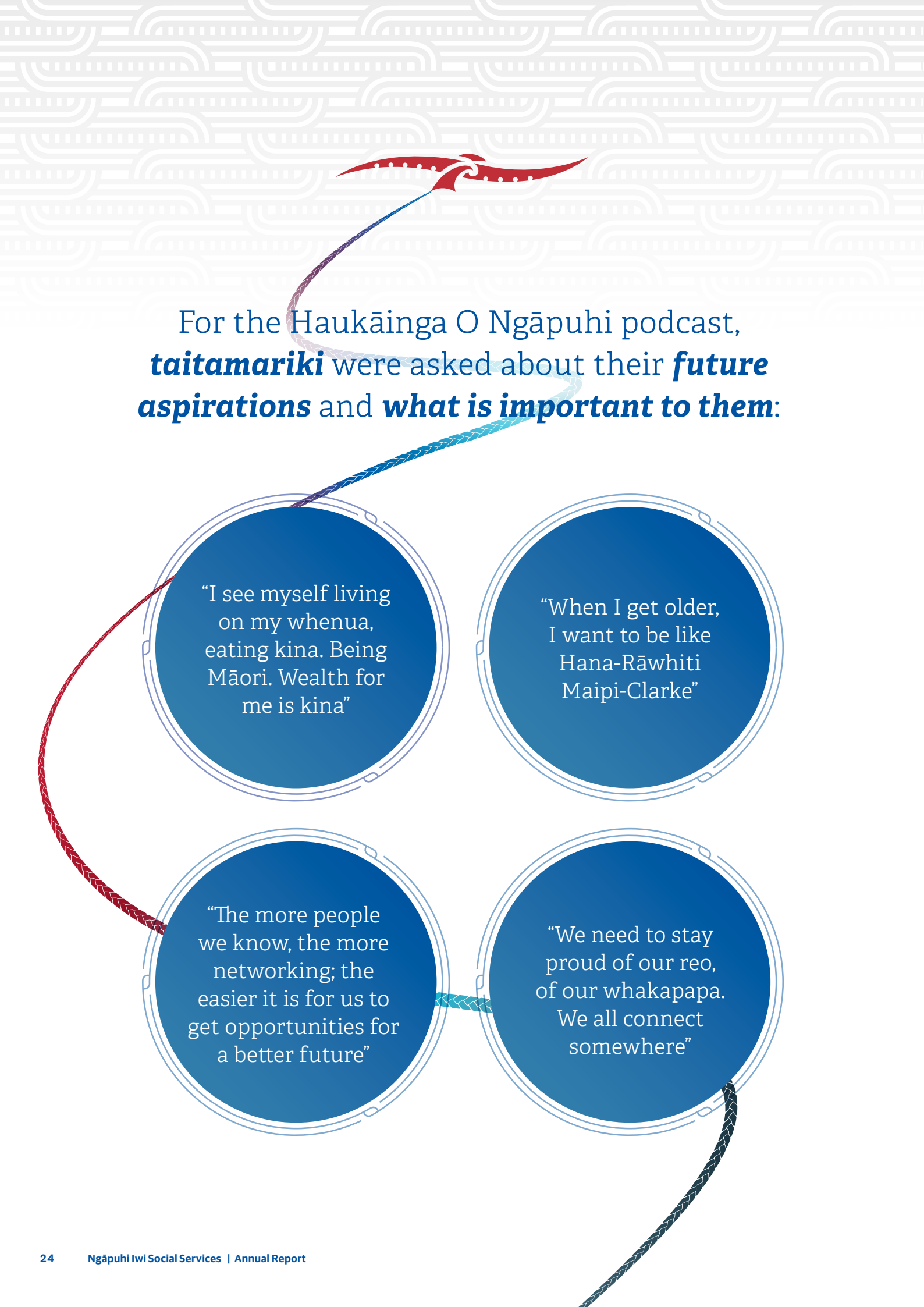
- Aotearoa Māori Poitūkohu Nationals:**

After winning gold in 2024, ATR's representation at the 2025 Māori Nationals was strong. The teams dominated early rounds, making it to the semifinals and ultimately taking home the bronze medal after an intense overtime battle.

Above the Rim continues to facilitate weekly competitions during terms 3 and 4, along with youth development sessions and marae-based wānanga. All ATR activities grow confidence, leadership and connection in our taitamariki, integral outcomes for prevention-focused programmes aimed at reducing youth disengagement and mental health challenges. This makes ATR more than a sports programme where taitamariki are showing growth not just in physical skill, but in oranga, identity, and future aspirations.



Honouring legends - stopping at the Kobe and Gianna mural in LA



For the Haukāinga O Ngāpuhi podcast, ***taitamariki*** were asked about their ***future aspirations*** and ***what is important to them***:

“I see myself living on my whenua, eating kina. Being Māori. Wealth for me is kina”

“When I get older, I want to be like Hana-Rāwhiti Maipi-Clarke”

“The more people we know, the more networking; the easier it is for us to get opportunities for a better future”

“We need to stay proud of our reo, of our whakapapa. We all connect somewhere”

Kupu Whakakapi

As we close another year of service to our whānau, I am filled with deep aroha and admiration for the kaimahi who show up every day with courage and compassion, for the whānau who let us walk alongside them, and for the many hands, hearts and minds who uphold the vision of a strong, self-determining Ngāpuhi. Let us remember that true strength lies not in resisting change, but in meeting it with courage, determination, and kotahitanga. Our whānau have done just that.

This year, we listened to the aspirations of Ngāpuhi whānau across Aotearoa, for a future where Ngāpuhi taitamariki and whānau are supported to thrive in ways that reflect their own goals, hopes and dreams. The future will call for continued innovation, unity, and bold advocacy. We look forward to continuing to enhance whānau voice, build resources and adapt to evolving needs as we go.

To our Ngāpuhi whānau and partners thank you for trusting us, challenging us, and standing with us. This mahi is not something we do alone, and these achievements are not ours alone.

“Ko te pae tawhiti whāia kia tata, ko te pae tata
whakamaua kia tina. Tihei mauri ora!”

“Pursue distant horizons until they are near and
hold fast to those that are close. The breath of life!”

Erena Kara

Chair, Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services

