

How mātauranga Māori and Science work together to assess health of the Toreparu wetland (MSc project at University of Waikato)

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Background: Working with Mōtakotako Marae at the Toreparu wetland along the Waikato west coast between Raglan and Aotea harbours. Project evolved due to my personal connection with the site and with the marae through mum's partner, and observing a lack of meaningful Māori involvement in environmental monitoring/management post-consultation during my job as a consultant ecologist – a concern that was raised by iwi/ hapū groups, local governing bodies and other clients. So there seemed to be a communications gap, a site in need of attention, and tangata whenua who wanted to do something about the decline in the health of their wetland.

The project: The starting place was the Mōtakotako Environmental Management Policy (EMP) (clearly defines values, sites of significance and priorities/goals). Used the Wetland Cultural Health Index (CHI) as a tool to incorporate these values/ priorities. My role was to be a facilitator in indicator development, help build capacity and carry out the scientific assessment. As an outsider, who doesn't whakapapa to the area, I cannot carry out any cultural value assessment.

The benefits: Being out there doing the research has led to dialogue and communication with landowners, council, Landcare Research Department of Conservation, Waikato Tainui and within whānau/hapū groups. There are currently talks of a catchment care group starting up and the Regional Council are investigating funding options. By putting this project into the public arena through talks, presentations, media interviews it has led to really positive discussion/moves towards restoration. Collaborative relationships are being built.

Evaluating collaborative processes: Multiple indicators can be used to evaluate success. Look at relationships being built – are they meaningful, ongoing, maintained? Is there formal recognition under the RMA (Resource Management Act) (co-management, voluntary, statutory or Joint Management Agreement? Are Mōtakotako recognised as mana whenua by governing bodies, with decision-making power? Is the health of the Toreparu increasing as a result of collaborative processes? Are CHI indicators increasing over time? Are there restoration efforts taking place and ongoing CHI monitoring? Is knowledge being transferred through the generations?

Key message: RELATIONSHIPS! These take time, especially if historically there has been tension between Māori and governing bodies. They need to be maintained, not just when you need something. Need to be a process of "passing the relationship baton on" when

people leave organisations, not reinventing the 'relationship' wheel. Capacity building within councils etc. Māori also need to be resourced to successfully carry out mana whenua duties (funding/capacity, etc.).

Glossary of Māori words

hapū	subtribe
iwi	tribe
mana whenua	territorial rights, power from the land – power associated with possession and occupation of tribal land
Mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge
Ngāti Awa	tribal group of the Whakatāne and Te Teko areas
Ngāti Ranginui	tribal group of the Tauranga area
tangata whenua	local people
Waikato Tainui	a term used for the tribes whose ancestors came on the Tainui canoe and whose territory includes the Waikato, Hauraki and King Country
Whakapapa	ancestry
Whānau	family