



TE REO O TE REPO

THE VOICE OF THE WETLAND

CONNECTIONS, UNDERSTANDINGS AND LEARNINGS
FOR THE RESTORATION
OF OUR WETLANDS

EDITED BY YVONNE TAURA
CHERI VAN SCHRAVENDIJK-GOODMAN
AND BEVERLEY CLARKSON

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The Voice of the Wetland. Connections, understandings
and learnings for the restoration of our wetlands

2017

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CONTENTS

page

Acknowledgements

Foreword. Rahui Papa

Introduction. Yvonne Taura, Cheri van Schravendijk-Goodman, Beverley Clarkson, and Haimona Waititi

PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT 'KAPU TĪ'

1.	Kapu tī 101 – cuppa teas and cross-cultural conversations Cheri van Schravendijk-Goodman	13
2.	The Ake Ake Model – forever and ever Yvonne Taura, Lorraine Dixon, and Miriama Turner	23
3.	Toreparu Wetland – a research partnership journey Mahuru Robb and Taruke Thomson	41

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Indicators for cultural resources Garth Harmsworth	51
Flora	
4.1 Wātakirihi – te huakita o te wātakirihi – bacterial quality of watercress Lorraine Dixon	57
4.2 Kuta – the giant of freshwater habitats Mieke Kapa	65
4.3 Harakeke – weaving people together Sue Scheele	71
Fauna	
5.1 Noke – engineering our soils Scott Bartlam	81
5.2 Kōura – the ancient survivor Ian Kusabs	89
5.3 Ruru – he tangi na te ruru – conversations in the night Rangi Mahuta, Cheri van Schravendijk-Goodman, and Huriwai Paki	95
5.4 Kawau – te mokopuna a Terepunga – the offspring of Terepunga Tekiteora Rolleston-Gabel and John Innes	101
5.5 Matamata – eating with our tūpuna Rangi Mahuta, Cheri van Schravendijk-Goodman, and Cindy Baker	107

TOOLS AND APPROACHES

Tools – herbicide use – finding the balance Cheri van Schravendijk-Goodman	121
6.1 Impacts of willow control on terrestrial invertebrates Corrine Watts	123
6.2 Impacts of willow and willow control on zooplankton Yvonne Taura	129
6.3 Maurea Islands – a restoration journey Cheri van Schravendijk-Goodman, Jaedyn Falwasser, and John Brown	135
Mātauranga Māori – Māori Knowledge Shaun Awatere, Garth Harmsworth, and Mahuru Robb	151
7.1 Rākau preservation technique – unlocking dormant knowledge Yvonne Taura	155
7.2 Waitaki restoration Gail Tipa, Kyle Nelson, Mandy Home, and Myra Tipa	165
7.3 Hei whenua ora – Te Hākari Dune Wetland Huhana Smith	179
Glossaries of terms	
Ngā Whakamārama/glossary of Māori terms	193
List of flora and fauna species	198

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Iti ora flax.
Made by Amiria McGarvey

FOREWORD

Noo taatou te awa, noo te awa taatou

We belong to the river, the river belongs to us

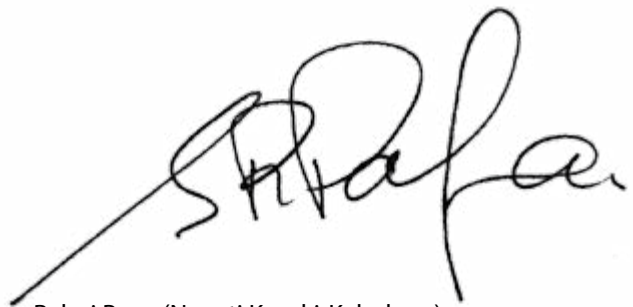
Sir Robert Te Kotahi Mahuta

Te Reo o Te Repo: The Voice of the Wetland, is the first handbook to focus on the importance of repo (wetland) values in Aotearoa New Zealand from a cultural perspective. This handbook is the culmination of several years of research partnership between the Waikato Raupatu River Trust (entity of Waikato-Tainui tribal organisation) and Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research. The editors of the handbook have successfully interwoven diverse knowledge, values, and perspectives (including maatauranga iwi (Maaori knowledge)) from kaitiaki (guardians) and kairangahau (researchers) to provide unique insights into the cultural significance of repo, that help define the priorities for repo restoration throughout both distinct tribal rohe (region) and the entire motu (Aotearoa New Zealand).

Repo have cultural, spiritual, historic, and economic value to tangata whenua (indigenous people). Despite this, more than 90% of repo throughout Aotearoa have been destroyed. For Waikato-Tainui (tribal people of the Waikato Region), repo are the kidneys for the Waikato River – they cleanse and filter out the toxins from the surrounding land catchment before entering into our tupuna awa (ancestral river). The Waikato River is more than a river: she is our tupuna (ancestor), giving sustenance to the whenua (land) that then feeds our people. Repo are also the food basket for the Waikato people – the resources on which Waikato-Tainui rely for hauanga kai (food gathering sites).

Repo are a major component within the whakapapa (connection) of our rivers and lakes, reflecting our values and providing significant spawning grounds and habitat for diverse, culturally important taonga, including plants, animals, fish, birds, and insects. The mauri (life force) of repo for Waikato-Tainui is linked to the overall ecological health and wellbeing of our whakapapa. Adverse impacts on the whakapapa of our repo will therefore have corresponding undesirable effects on mauri and the ability of the tribe to utilise hauanga kai. Our aspiration is for our tupuna awa to return to its pristine state. The awa and repo are the beneficiaries of our efforts to restore these important natural resources.

Te Reo o Te Repo reveals the rich connection that whaanau, marae, hapuu, and iwi have with their repo. It also highlights the collaborative efforts between tangata whenua and research providers to restore these unique ecosystems and increase the health and wellbeing of our repo for future generations.



Rahui Papa (Ngaati Koroki-Kahukura)

Chairman of Te Arataura o Waikato-Tainui

Ko te mātauranga he wai nō ruawhetū

Kia mahara koe i te puna inā inu koe i te wai

Ko wai koe?

Ko wai ahau?

Ko wai ahau

Māori knowledge flows from the cosmos

When you drink the water, remember the spring

Who are you?

Who am I?

I am water

Rangi Matamua

