

Future Search Aotearoa New Zealand case study: Waiheke Marine Project

Challenge and place

Waiheke Island is centrally located in Tīkapa Moana (the Hauraki Gulf). The gulf is under threat from numerous factors, including population and tourism growth, increased sedimentation, overfishing, pollution, invasive pests, and climate change. These factors have degraded marine habitats, upsetting the natural biodiversity and balance, and significantly reduced kelp forests, shellfish beds and fish.

Purpose

To protect and regenerate Waiheke Island's marine environment.
Waiheke ki uta Waiheke ki tai Waiheke ki tua.

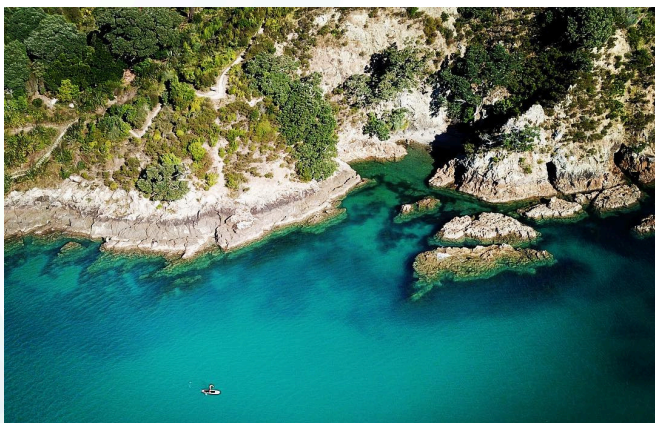


Image: Sup, image from Waiheke Marine Project by Martin Mac Mahon Photography

Host

Hosted by the [Waiheke Collective](#), the Waiheke Marine Project (WMP) is an initiative driven in partnership by Mana Whenua and the Waiheke community to protect and regenerate Waiheke Island's marine environment. [The Hauraki Gulf Conservation Trust](#) provides support to the WMP, providing treasury oversight and charitable trust guidance.

Funding source

The WMP team successfully applied for various grants to fund the community engagement, education, and planning needed as groundwork for the success of the Future Search hui. One-third of the total funds raised were dedicated to raising Mana Whenua capacity, demonstrating funders' enthusiasm for Treaty partnership in action.

Funders: Foundation North, The Working Together More fund, G.I.F.T Gulf Innovation Fund Together, Waiheke Local Board, Department of Conservation, Auckland Council, Hauraki Gulf Conservation Fund.

Supporters: Waiheke Dive & Snorkel, Waiheke Collective, Fuller360 Experiences & Cruises, Wild on Waiheke, By Sea, BLAKE, Creative NZ.

Voices of the system

Co-facilitated by Herearoa Skipper of Ngāti Paoa and Miranda Cassidy-O'Connell, the hui enabled the 76 participants to dialogue and develop common ground commitments.

76 people participated in the Future Search hui, bringing perspectives of:

- Mana whenua
- Locals/residents
- Youth
- Scientists
- Conservationists
- Fishers and Boaties
- Marine Business
- Agencies
- Land interests



Image: Participants mind mapping

“It’s hard work being mana whenua. When you can feel the ihi and the wana rise, the power of positive collaboration and respect for one another start to flicker in the most distant minds, then it is worth it. We are bringing our whole(some) selves into relationship with place, culture and one another.”

Lucy Tukua, Ngāti Paoa

“Prior to the Future Search, Waiheke was an unconstructed battlefield of ideologies that meant there was a crap feeling in the community. You could only have dangerous conversations and could not have exchange of ideas. This prevented participation in positive change.

We have now set a foundation for bravery. From this platform we can take deep dives. Individuals can have confidence to act knowing they are supported collectively.”

Matt von Sturmer, Fisher and marine business operator

Special features

- Covid-19 presented challenges and opportunities for the WMP Future Search. Challenges included having to twice postpone the Future Search hui, venue changes, and cancellation of key engagement events. Opportunities included the activation of Sea Stories, video and handwritten stories of people’s connections with the marine environment.
- Co-facilitation with Mana Whenua and dedicated resources of one-third of the project budget to raising mana whenua capacity. This demonstrated commitment to Treaty partnership in action.
- Public call for interest in participation in the Future Search hui. A selection process was run to decide on 76 people to bring the whole system into the room.
- Extensive community engagement prior to and after the event to truly make the hui come alive for the Waiheke community.

Key outcomes

Nine Common Ground [commitments](#) were developed and extensively discussed at the hui. All 76 participants unanimously agreed to these commitments as the areas to be pursued to achieve a healthy and thriving marine environment for Waiheke Island.

One month after the Waiheke Marine Project Future Search hui, a display expo was held at Morra Hall on Waiheke Island to share the outcomes of the hui. This was followed by a public meeting. A [film](#) of the hui, created by young Waiheke film maker Emile Inglis was launched at this community event.

A [report](#) was published summarising the Future Search hui.

“I’m feeling really positively charged for the future, hearing the kōrero that’s been going around the room and listening to the voices of the different sections or groups of our community, shows a real unity.”

Noa Clarkin, Mana whenua rangatahi

“The marvel of the Future Search hui to me was the amount of common ground it allowed us all to establish, and the amount of listening to other peoples’ perspectives that it allowed, in such a short period of time.”

Mark Russell, Conservationist

Post Future Search activities

WMP Website: www.waihekemarineproject.org

WMP on Facebook: www.facebook.com/waihekemarineproject

WMP on Instagram: www.instagram.com/waihekemarineproject

These digital platforms are windows into the extensive and multi-reinforcing actions to protect and regenerate Waiheke Island’s marine environment that have taken place since the Future Search hui in 2020.

In particular, the [Pipi page](#) of the WMP website gives details of the many hope-filled projects that are underway.



Image: Participants of the Waiheke Marine Project