

Te Kakara

Poukai and
Kotahitanga

Raukawa
Education Grant

Te Kakara
and Te Rau



Te Tātāwhāinga
Kaumātua o Raukawa



RST Chair Message

Tēnā tātou e te iwi,

As we arrive at the summer season and reflect on the year that has passed, I am reminded once again of the strength of our people and the depth of commitment that continues to guide our mahi. Across every space — from governance to grassroots — our whānau have shown resilience, unity, and a determination to uphold the aspirations of Raukawa.

This edition of Te Kakara highlights several kaupapa that speak to who we are. Our recent engagement with Minister Chhour was an important milestone. Her visit was not simply a courtesy call, but a genuine conversation about partnership, accountability, and the wellbeing of our tamariki. The alignment between our aspirations and her priorities was clear, particularly around iwi-led decision-making and the long-term design of services that directly impact our whānau. Strengthening this relationship will remain a focus for the year ahead.

The poukai at Ngātira reminded us that kotahitanga is not a passive concept. It requires courage, honesty, and the willingness to engage in the harder parts of unity. The kōrero shared on the paepae reflected our responsibility to uphold the integrity of our relationships while continuing to move as one people. I am proud of the steady and considered way our kaumātua and leaders hold this space.

In Tokoroa, we celebrated the unveiling of Te Kakara and Te Rau at Leith Place — pou that speak to our whakapapa and to the enduring partnership between Raukawa and the South Waikato District Council.

These pou are a reminder of how collaboration can uplift the identity of our community and ensure our stories remain visible for future generations.

Our kaumātua continue to be central to the heartbeat of our iwi. Te Tātāwhāinga Kaumātua o Raukawa once again showcased the energy, humour, and determination of our pakeke. Their presence anchors our work, and their commitment to each other is a model for all of us.

This season also brings an opportunity to acknowledge the many teams across Raukawa who continue to support whānau with professionalism and aroha — from hauora services and environmental services to education grants, distributions, and our wider community initiatives. Every achievement in this edition reflects the effort of kaimahi who show up for their people every day.

As we move into the new year, our focus remains clear: to strengthen our foundations, honour our tikanga, and continue the work that ensures our tamariki and mokopuna thrive. I wish all our whānau a safe, restful, and joyful holiday season. May this time bring warmth, connection, and renewal as we prepare for the year ahead.

Nā Kataraina Hodge
Raukawa Chairperson



He pou kōrero,
he pou tangata,
he pou whenua.

Year in Review

Te Whare Kōrero o Raukawa

January

In January, we gathered in Te Pae o Raukawa, at Mōkai Marae, for Whare Kōrero – a week that focuses on the culture of Raukawa and language revitalisation. We set foot in places we learned about through stories and waiata, and their effects to Raukawa and his descendants.



Ō-Rākau

February

Te Pire mō Ō-Rākau, Te Pae o Maumahara / Ō-Rākau Remembrance Bill passed in Parliament on February 18, 2025. The bill represented a deeply significant act of remembrance and restoration for the people of Ngā Ahi e Toru (Raukawa, Te Nehenehenui and Waikato-Tainui).

Te Koha a Raukawa

February

Raukawa trustees and developers gathered to break ground as a new housing development is set to start at the former Tokoroa East School. Raukawa Iwi Development Limited is set to begin work on 56 new housing developments.



Mōtai Tangata Rau

February

Mōtai Tangata Rau took to Te Matatini o Te Kāhui Maunga stage, much more than a performance, but a culmination of core principals by bringing our uri together, awakening our ancestral knowledge, teaching us our kōrero and disseminating it to the world.



Te Ara ki Raukawa 2050

March

In March, we hosted workshops around the takiwā and online asking our iwi to come and share their dreams and aspirations for our whānau, marae, hapū and iwi. We heard lots of whakaaro from our rangatahi to kaumātua, to help build our long-term vision and priorities for the next 20 years.

Te Kura Reo o Raukawa

April

Te Kura Reo o Raukawa is a week of reo Māori immersion wānanga that uplifts te reo within the Raukawa takiwā. This year it was held at Parawera Marae. Learners of all levels were guided by experienced kaiako through a programme of lessons, waiata and whanaungatanga.



Raukawa Kahu Taurima Pēpi and Tamariki Hub

April

A new hauora hub will support hapū māmā, pēpi, tamariki and their whānau through a combination of culturally grounded parenting programmes and accessible health and social services supporting the critical early years of life.



Papa o te Aroha Marae

April

The community of Papa o te Aroha gathered for a moment of significance. The occasion was not the opening of the marae, but the formal passing of the torch before the community, as kaitiakitanga shifted from the Tokoroa Māori Catholic Society to Raukawa.

Te Uru Ahupūtea

April

Our first graduates celebrated the completion of our Sorted Kāinga Ora wānanga as part of our Ka Uruora kaupapa – an 8-week programme dedicated to strengthening financial literacy and money management.



Te Mauri o Waihou

August

After three and a half years, Te Mauri o Waihou Jobs for Nature Project was completed, an initiative rooted in environmental restoration, cultural revitalisation, and community collaboration. A new viewing platform was added as well as cultural and environmental signage.



Te Mātātahi Tū

October

Te Mātātahi Tū is a holistic youth leadership development program where rangatahi came together over four wānanga, to form a deeper connection to their cultural heritage, enriched by valuable knowledge and experiences in cultural practices, nutrition, and physical wellbeing.

Te Tātāwhāinga Kaumātua o Raukawa

November

Te Tātāwhāinga Kaumātua o Raukawa was a celebration of hauora, whanaungatanga, and plenty of good-natured competition. Our kaumātua brought their A-game (and their best smiles) at the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre for a day full of laughter and whanaungatanga.



Te Poukai ki Ngātira

Kotahitanga In Action



Te Arikinui Kuini Nga wai hono i te po, Ngātira Marae

At Ngātira Pā, Hautere Maunga, and Ōraka Awa opened their ears to the generations of kōrero that were shared once again at this year's poukai. Ngātira's place within the poukai tradition has always been significant. Anchored in the tongikura of Kīngi Tāwhiao, "*Ka pai tēnei raorao hei kāinga mōku.*" The legacy is one of collective reflection and enduring manaakitanga. True to that vision, the 2025 poukai brought together not only uri of Te Kaokaoroa o Pātetere, but also the wider reaches of Raukawa, who all shared responsibility that continues to shape the story of the aroma of Raukawa.

Yet it was on the paepae that kotahitanga revealed its more complex face. In the hush of mid-morning, rangatira from the pae whakaeke rose with a challenge that caught the breath and attention of the crowd. "*Kua peke kē a Raukawa ki te ahi,*" said one speaker, questioning Raukawa's choice to attend the tangihanga of Tā Tumu Te Heuheu Tūkino VIII before the wider Tainui collective. The words, though pointed, came from care — a concern for the cohesion of the wider Tainui collective. It was a reminder that kotahitanga, while a unifying force, is also one that asks hard questions.

The reply of the paepae tapu was equally searching: "*Ka tīmata te kotahitanga ki whea?*" Where, indeed, does unity begin? Their exchange became a moment of stillness in the day — not silence, but a shared breath. The kōrero that followed did not fracture the space; instead, it deepened it.

Rather than debate behind closed doors or on digital platforms, here was a return to an older, more patient model of leadership — one that unfolds in the open air, at the feet of our tupuna whare, held together by tikanga and witnessed by all in attendance. The paepae became both a mirror and a compass, reflecting our truths and guiding our steps forward.

As the sun dropped low and the ope of Te Arikinui departed, the kaupapa of kotahitanga remained something lived. Ngātira once again became a binding thread, weaving together the diverse strands of our iwi, reminding us that kotahitanga is not the absence of tension, but the presence of commitment.

In that light, Ngātira's poukai stood firm: a pou of reflection, of challenge, of whanaungatanga.



Minister Chhour Visits Raukawa

Strengthening Partnership for Better Outcomes



Minister Chhour visits Te Tari o Raukawa

In November, Raukawa welcomed Minister Chhour to Tokoroa as part of her commitment to strengthening partnerships with iwi across the motu. Holding the portfolios for Children and for the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence, her visit carried significant weight for our people — many of the services that shape the wellbeing of Raukawa whānau sit directly under her leadership. What unfolded inside the Te Tari o Raukawa that day became a moment of genuine connection and shared intent.

From the moment the Minister entered the whare, the hui was described by kaumātua and staff as relaxed, respectful and genuine. The Minister arrived well-prepared, open to kōrero, and clear about her intention to build long-term strategic relationships with iwi. Rather than feeling like a standard political engagement, the discussion settled quickly into honest and practical territory.

One moment that stood out occurred at the conclusion of the hui, when Raukawa presented the Minister with a special taonga imbued with kōkōwai from our whenua. Offered beneath the whakairo of our boardroom, the exchange acknowledged our tikanga and the significance of the relationship being built.

The Minister responded strongly to Raukawa's aspirations for greater iwi-led decision-making. She spoke openly about her own upbringing, including experiences with family violence and her time in state care. Her willingness to share this added context to her commitment to preventing harm, strengthening whānau, and ensuring tamariki have every opportunity to thrive. This personal connection shaped the tone of the kōrero and reinforced the alignment between her priorities and ours.

A key outcome of the visit was a reiterated commitment to continuing the development of a strategic partnership between Oranga Tamariki and Raukawa. For our iwi, progress in this space directly impacts the sustainability, design, and effectiveness of services delivered to whānau, particularly across our health and social services team. Strengthening this relationship has real implications for how our communities are supported on the ground.

Those present left the hui confident in the direction of the relationship. The overall feeling was one of momentum, clarity, and opportunity. The visit signalled that the door is open, the kōrero is constructive, and the pathway ahead holds real potential for positive change for our tamariki and mokopuna.



Te Tātāwhāinga Kaumātua o Raukawa

Our Kaumātua in Action



In November, we had Te Tātāwhāinga Kaumātua o Raukawa at the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre – a vibrant celebration of hauora, whanaungatanga, and good-natured competition. Our kaumātua arrived with their A-game and their brightest smiles, filling the day with laughter, connection, and the uplifting spirit that makes this annual gathering so special.

The indoor facility was filled with cheers and excitement as the games kicked off with a march-past, where kaumātua waved their banners on their hīkoi around the pavilion, wearing their colours with absolute pride.

Over 150 people packed the arena, including most our Raukawa marae and our whānau from Pōhara and Maungatautari Marae. We had Raukawa kaimahi facilitating the activities, and rangatahi helpers for each marae from Te Wharekura o Te Kaokaoroa o Pātetere and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Hiringa.

There were various stations of activities set up for our kaumātua – obscure objects thrown into big buckets, golf putting, ten pin bowling, corn hole, soccer with noodle sticks and a modified badminton-esque style game with a balloon and fly swatters. There were also mind games, testing our kaumātua quick-thinking and memory.

Donna Deane from Ngātira Marae, was representing Whakaaratamaiti Marae with her friends. She said the Kaumātua Games is always a fun day with lots of laughs and the extended 55+ age category had brought in a lot of “young guns.”

“It’s about connection,” she says. “It’s the only time, for some, where we get out and come to something like this, other than a tangi.”

Her favourite activity was the Scattergories and the balloon badminton game – where things got very competitive between Whakaaratamaiti and Paparaamu Marae.

“I was getting told to sit down and stay in my chair! It was a lot of laughs.”

Raukawa Tāhuhu Rangapū Maria Te Kanawa said Te Tātāwhāinga Kaumātua o Raukawa is a highlight for us all, a day where we celebrate our kaumātua and the spirit of hauora, manaaki and kotahitanga they bring.

“Their energy, pride and laughter remind us why these connections across our marae are so important. It’s a truly special day for Raukawa.”

For the first time in the event’s history, marae could earn bonus points by jumping on the mic to sing waiata during the games. Some true NZ’s Got Talent-level kaiwaiata came out of the woodwork, filling the pavilion with beautiful renditions of classic hits.

After the points were tallied, we announced this year’s place getters – in third place, Ruapeka Marae, second place was Ōngāroto and congratulations to this year’s winner of Te Tātāwhāinga Kaumātua o Raukawa, Ngātira Marae. Homai te pakipaki e te iwi!



Aroha on the Block

A Community Coming Together



Block BBQ at Kāinga Ora development

At the heart of Tokoroa's newest Kāinga Ora development on Clyde Street, a simple act of manaakitanga brought the community together in a day filled with connection and care. The event was a Block BBQ organised by Raukawa kaimahi, Honey Kingi and the Whānau Ora team, alongside partners SWPICS, Kāinga Ora, Tātai Ora, Blue Light, TCOSS, Kōkiri Health, Rongoā Tuku Iho, and Brothers Collective.

Whānau who have recently settled into the Kāinga Ora development gathered to enjoy a day of connection, good food, and genuine hospitality. Each organisation arrived ready to support, bringing information, resources, and practical tools to help families settle in and access ongoing support from local community services. It was a simple idea that created real impact, showing the power of connection when services come together for the good of whānau.

Honey shared that she was deeply moved to see the level of collaboration between so many community groups. She said the kaupapa was about doing what comes naturally to Tokoroa people: looking out for one another and strengthening bonds through kai and kōrero. *"We wanted to reach out in a way that felt familiar and welcoming. Every whānau who came through left with something meaningful, whether it was a kai, a new connection, or a resource for their home and whānau,"* she said.

The block was filled with banter, laughter, and the smell of a good BBQ. Tamariki and adults took time to chat with service providers, connect with neighbours, and enjoy the day. The afternoon reflected a sense of community in our homes, with people coming together over kai, kōrero, and care for one another.

Honey extended her heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed their time and energy to the kaupapa.

"When we show up for our whānau like this, it reminds us that community is built through small acts of care and consistency," she said. "I am so proud of everyone coming together and the aroha that filled this space."



Building Together

Te Koha a Raukawa Trades Evening Brings Opportunity



Te Whare o Raukawa was filled with connection and purpose as more than 50 local tradespeople – builders, plumbers, painters, electricians, scaffolders and more – packed the room for the Te Koha a Raukawa Trades Information Evening.

Hosted by Raukawa, alongside project partners TW Construction, Koau, Egmont Dixon the event introduced the upcoming former Tokoroa East School site redevelopment – a 56-home subdivision set to breathe new life into the community.

TW Construction Project Manager Gareth Hawthorn said the goal of the evening was simple: connection and opportunity.

“We wanted to bring people together to explain the scope of work, but more importantly, to start building relationships, not just for this project, but for ongoing future work,” he said.

The turnout exceeded expectations, with a packed room of engaged and enthusiastic tradies.

Gareth added, *“you could feel the energy in the room.”* *“People were actively interested and listening. That tells me they see real opportunity here and want to be part of it.”*

Importantly, Gareth highlighted that the project is about more than just construction.

“This is about building community wealth and capability. By prioritising opportunities for Raukawa uri, Māori whānau and local businesses, we’re keeping the economic benefits local and creating pathways for our people.”

The next steps will involve one-on-one engagement with those who registered interest, as TW Construction

works to match local trades with upcoming work packages.

Raukawa kaimahi Phyllis Tahere also spoke on the night, offering cultural and historical insights about the land and its connection to Raukawa.

Her short kōrero focused on *‘Ko wai mātou’* – who we are as Raukawa – sharing the journey of our people and our Treaty settlement story. She also reflected on the history of Tokoroa East School and the return of the property to Raukawa through settlement, before touching on the aspirations of Raukawa Iwi Development Ltd and how those have led to the development of Te Koha a Raukawa. Overall, she said, it was a great night.

“It was heartening to see such strong community support, especially after what our people have been through with recent job losses. This project gives hope back to our community.”

Together, Te Koha a Raukawa represents more than homes – it’s about rebuilding, reconnecting and creating lasting opportunities for Tokoroa whānau.



Te Mātātahi Tū

Nurturing Tomorrow's Leaders



Over six transformative wānanga, a group of 11–13-year-old Raukawa rangatahi stepped into a journey of cultural reconnection, confidence building, and leadership development through the Mātātahi Tū programme. Centred on the theme 'He kākano ahau – I am a seed', the kaupapa was designed to nurture future leaders by grounding them in identity, tikanga, and holistic wellbeing.

The programme brought together uri from different kura across the rohe, many arriving shy and unsure of what to expect. But by the end of the first wānanga, the excitement was real – they couldn't wait to return. Across each noho, rangatahi experienced the full life of the marae: learning pōwhiri processes from front to back, helping in the kitchen, understanding tikanga, and becoming more confident in these spaces. They were also immersed in the taiao, harvesting watercress, preparing a hāngī from scratch, and exploring the natural world through the stories of our atua. Every morning began with hauora – running, relays, marae mahi, kapa haka, and movement – creating strong foundations of physical and mental wellbeing.

The programme was led by a team of four kaiārahi who each brought unique strengths – Turoa Tepana, Kauri Tepana, Kamaea Hakaraia and Daeja-Bernice Kaponga. With the support of other kaimahi and whānau involvement throughout, the wānanga quickly became a place where new friendships formed, confidence grew, and rangatahi learned from one another.

One of the most powerful outcomes was the growth seen back home. Whānau shared stories of their tamariki stepping up, taking initiative at tangihanga,

helping in the kitchen, sweeping floors, supporting aunties and uncles, and applying the values they learned without being asked. These moments showed that the kaupapa had reached beyond the marae and into the everyday lives of our uri.

The final graduation weekend was a celebration to remember. Rangatahi presented rotarota (poems) with videos created for each wānanga, performed kapa haka and tī rākau, and even put on a skit to cheekily "roast" their kaiārahi. One rangatahi stood to give a heartfelt kōrero about the foundations of Te Mātātahi Tū – rangi, moana, whenua – representing spiritual, physical, and mental wellbeing. Whānau were welcomed on through pōwhiri before sharing a huge hākari together. The next day, an "amazing race" from Tokoroa to Taupō ended with a flash-mob haka, lake swims, busking, manu competitions, and a final soak at DeBretts.

For many, the experience was life changing. As kaiārahi Turoa Tepana shared, *"The goal was for them to feel comfortable on the marae, to understand tikanga, and to experience the taiao the way we grew up with it. But the biggest hope is that they take these values home, to their own marae, their own whānau and carry them for life."*

Te Mātātahi Tū has planted strong seeds. And by the looks of it, they're already growing.

Te Kakara and Te Rau

Tokoroa's Latest Pou kōrero



Two new pou now stand watch over Tokoroa's Leith Place — Te Kakara and Te Rau — pou that speak of art, ahurea, and of the living partnership between Raukawa and the South Waikato District Council.

The unveiling drew kaumātua, council representatives, and whānau members who have carried the kaupapa for over five years. For Raukawa, the moment was deeply personal. These pou are more than civic artwork — they are tangible expressions of whakapapa, binding the story of our people to the whenua.

Each pou faces a direction rich with meaning. Te Kakara turns north toward the birthplace of Raukawa. Te Rau faces west toward Wharepūhunga and Rangīātea, where Raukawa was raised. Between them stands the existing Raukawa pou, now turned east to symbolise the journey of Tūrongo to Te Tai Rāwhiti, where he met Māhinaarangi — the beginning of the whakapapa from which our iwi descends. Together, the three form a triad of memory: birth, growth, and union.

Raukawa kaimahi, Phyllis Tahere, described the project as *"a labour of love"* — guided by tika, pono, aroha, and sustained by countless hands across both iwi and council. *"Though some of those who began this journey have since passed,"* she reflected, *"their voices remain in the woodgrain, in the lines carved by master carver Te Waamu McGrath and his team, in the stories we now have the privilege to tell our tamariki and mokopuna."*

To stand among the pou is to feel the mauri of Tokoroa itself, a community that has evolved through change yet continues to honour its foundations.

These carvings remind us that partnership is an ongoing conversation that grows stronger with each shared story and each generation that pauses to listen.

Here, beside the highway and before the eyes of the community, our pou pou stand tall, a commitment to one another as people and as a community.



Raukawa and The South Waikato District Council at the unveiling of Te Kakara and Te Rau

Raukawa Education Grant

Guided by Whakapapa, Driven by Loss

For Anastacia Parekawa Cuthers, her nursing journey has been shaped by whakapapa, resilience, and the life-changing loss of her father.

Raised in a close-knit whānau, Anastacia always admired her mother and aunty, both nurses. But it wasn't until 2022 during the Covid-19 epidemic, when her father passed away suddenly from a haemorrhagic stroke, that she knew nursing was her calling.

"That experience made me think hard about health, equity, and how our people are cared for. Sitting by Dad's side during Covid restrictions, advocating for him in an unfamiliar clinical environment, I realised how important it is to have Māori in those spaces – not just present, but leading."

As a solo mother of two teenagers, Anastacia has faced the challenge of balancing her whānau responsibilities with study. Her earlier mahi with Te Whatu Ora as an Equity Lead in the Covid Response Team strengthened her conviction about systemic change, but the grief of losing her father has remained her deepest motivator. *"Every time I struggle through an assignment or juggle late nights, I think of Dad. His passing keeps me grounded in my why, ensuring whānau like ours are seen, heard, and supported."*

Receiving the Raukawa Education Grant for her Nursing studies at Waikato University has helped ease the weight of this journey. The grant has made a *"huge difference"* supporting her with basics like petrol, stationary, and uniforms for clinical placements.

"The grant meant I could stay focused on becoming the nurse I want to be, instead of constantly worrying about how to make ends meet."

Anastacia is now in her second year of Nursing degree and carries inspiration from her whānau tūpuna into her studies. *"In many ways, I think of Ahumai Te Paerata. She stood with courage and conviction at Ō-Rākau. If she could stand firm in the face of war, I can stand firm in the face of inequity."*

Looking ahead, Anastacia is determined to use her nursing degree to help create health services that reflect Māori values and restore dignity to whānau. *"Dad's passing exposed the gaps in our health system. My dream is to be part of changing that – building care that's truly whānau-centred, culturally safe, and grounded in manaakitanga."*

When asked what advice she would give to other Raukawa uri thinking about study or applying for the grant, Anastacia says:

"Trust that your tūpuna are guiding you. You don't need to have everything figured out, just take the first step. This grant lifted a huge weight off my shoulders, and it can do the same for you."

"Remember your why and know that you're not walking this path alone. You've got your tūpuna behind you, your whānau beside you, and your iwi backing you."





Kuia Koroua Grant Recipient, Julieanne Barnett

Raukawa Grants and Key Dates

Education Grants

Depending on your studies, registered iwi members are able to apply for up to \$2000 in education related support.

Study Type	Period that this grant covers	Applications Open	Applications Close	Applications considered
Short course* Certificate, Diploma	01 Jul 2025 – 31 Dec 2025	01 Jul 2025	31 Jan 2026	Feb 2026
Bachelors and Masters	2026 Academic year	30 Nov 2025	28 Feb 2026	Mar 2026
Doctoral	2026 Academic year	30 Nov 2025	28 Feb 2026	Mar 2026

* Short courses include Te Kura Reo o Raukawa and Te Uru Raukawa programmes offered by Raukawa

Sports Grants

Registered iwi members can apply for a contribution towards costs incurred while competing as an amateur sportsperson at a local, regional or national representative level. It is open to amateur competitors such as athletes, coaches, managers and officials (umpire, referee, judge).

Type	Period that this grant covers	Applications Open	Applications Close	Applications considered
Summer Sports	01 Dec 2025 – 31 Mar 2025	01 Dec 2025	31 Mar 2025	Apr 2026
Winter Sports	01 Apr 2026 – 30 Sep 2025	01 Apr 2026	30 Sep 2026	Oct 2026

Kuia and Koroua Wellbeing Grants

Registered kaumātua can apply for a contribution towards costs incurred or needing assistance with their wellbeing.

We have streamlined the process to make this service more accessible for our kaumātua. There is no longer a need to hold your receipts for this grant.

Type	Period that this grant covers	Applications Open	Applications Close	Applications considered
Kuia and Koroua Wellbeing grants	01 Jun 2025 – 31 May 2026	01 Jun 2025	31 May 2026	Jun 2026

Want to Register with Raukawa or Need Help?

To register as a member of Raukawa follow the link below. If you have any questions about our grants process call 0800 RAUKAWA and ask for our grants team.



Scan the code or visit rauakawa.info/grants

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Raukawa

