

Ngā Kaihautū creating male leaders

**“Tūwhitia te Tahakore, mai Rangitia te Angitu.
- Eliminate the negative, accentuate the positive.”**

Ngā Kaihautū is empowering an increasing number of tāne to become leaders with mātauranga Māori values since the programme was launched last year.

Whānau Ora Minister, Hon. Peeni Henare, launched the Te Arawa Whānau Ora-led programme in August 2021, at a wairua-filled event at Lake Okareka. Men partaking on the first cohort paddled their waka onto the shore during the opening ceremony before an audience of government officials, health services, whānau and staff.

TAWO senior health coach, Kevin Pahina, says Ngā Kaihautū assists tāne with mental health issues and/or addiction by providing them with the right services, tools, and support to create positive futures for themselves and their whānau.

“Ngā Kaihautū empowers tāne to steer their own waka by finding solutions of strength to guide themselves through the waters of life. Our programme empowers tāne by connecting them back to their Māoritanga, each other, and reclaiming their identity.

They set their own goals and explain why they're here and their expectations of the programme. We apply kaupapa Māori principles and practices, as well as engage in holistic therapies, such as karakia and rongoā.” says Kevin.

Each cohort is limited to 14 men to ensure quality of assistance and aroha. Three cohorts have been through the programme since its August 2021 launch.

Paeārahi walk alongside each individual to create a personalised solution, not only for themselves, but the entire cohort. Kevin says this helps to reintroduce tāne and their whānau to the potential of knowing each other on a deeper level.

“Our tāne's dedication since day one has been inspirational. From their shared kōrero to their tautoko – we've all been moved by them. I'm sure they make as much impact on our lives as we do on theirs,” says Kevin.



▲ Hunia, Sam and Kevin – Ngā Kaihautū facilitators.

Mentor, Sam Runga, is evidence of the positive impact Ngā Kaihautū has on its tāne.

He had previously completed TAWO's Manu Tāpiki and Whaimua respiratory rehabilitation programmes as a participant, before signing-up on Ngā Kaihautū's first cohort.

Sam concedes he previously shied away from talking to strangers and interacting with people he did not know. However, he gradually allowed himself to be vulnerable and comfortable in unfamiliar spaces.

He now inspires others on what they can achieve.

“I used what I learned on the programme and applied it to my everyday life. These tools helped me deal with my emotions and to get through the day.

“Unless somebody has walked in your shoes, they can't guide you,” says Sam.

Te Arawa Whānau Ora delivers Ngā Kaihautū with support from Tūwharetoa Health, Te Waiariki Pūrea Trust, Manaaki Ora and Korowai Aroha, along with independent consultants

Ngā Kaihautū runs three to four days a week, over 10 weeks. To access this service, referrals are generally made through GPs.



Uplifting men's programme created healing and brotherhoods

New friendships are proving pivotal to the healing of men on the Ngā Kaihautū programme.

Te Arawa Whānau Ora delivers the 10-week programme, which assists tāne with mental health issues and/or addiction by providing them with the right services, tools, and support to create positive futures for themselves and their whānau.

Ngā Kaihautū is grounded in kaupapa Māori principles and practices, te reo Māori, tikanga, whakapapa, and mātauranga Māori.

Recent graduate, Matt*, thoroughly enjoyed Ngā Kaihautū – particularly the connections he made with his whakapapa and the other tāne.

"I found the experience hard-hitting, confronting, educational, emotional, and rewarding all at the same time," says Matt.

Waiata played a huge part in his healing process. Indeed, the opportunity to sing his wedding song in front of his cohort was transformational for Matt and his whānau.

"When I finished singing, I felt a weight had been lifted off my shoulders," he says. "This entire experience has been healing for me.

Since completing the programme, Matt has applied the learnings in his everyday life. His overall mental wellbeing has improved, and he is encouraged by the whakawhanaungatanga within his cohort.

"The key for me was not feeling I was being pressured. This programme has lifted my motivation – physically, mentally, and spiritually. I'm more aware of myself and my surroundings.

"Those who've observed me over the past year are happy because the change in me has been more noticeable since I started Ngā Kaihautū," he says.

Matt is now looking forward to continuing his journey with TAWO, as he completes a health and fitness programme.



"I see a lot of whānau and friends who struggle in a lot of areas of life that this programme caters for. I'd recommend people to this programme, like a doctor would prescribe medicine." says Conrad.

Conrad* says he became drug and cigarette-free since completing the Ngā Kaihautū programme. His sleep has improved and he is in total control of his alcohol intake.

"I'm practicing techniques we've been taught to counteract the cravings. My thoughts are a lot clearer being drug-free.

"My partner and children certainly see a less stressful and happier person. The programme's helped improve my relationships with my whānau, as well as those I meet and who already know me.

"It's also reminded me to use the old teachings influential people have taught me, so I can help myself," says Conrad.

He believed Ngā Kaihautū needs to be taught in every town and city in New Zealand, and every town and city in every indigenous country.

Another graduate, Tipene*, says he learned how to change his mindset while on Ngā Kaihautū. He finds it easier to listen to himself and those around him, including his mokopuna and immediate whānau.

"My health – physical, mental, wairua – has improved. While it goes in cycles, I know I need to be more consistent in working towards good health, such as being physical and relaxing more," he says.

The te reo Māori tutor will return to the programme to share his knowledge with future cohorts.

"We started as a cohort, we finished as a family," says Tipene.

**Names have been changed to protect identities.*