



Hui ā-Tau 2026

This year's Hui ā-Tau at Omaka Marae marked a number of important changes for Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, with whānau considering proposed constitutional changes, electing a new Puaha Te Rangi representative and farewelling contributors to iwi governance.



The day began with a Special General Meeting, where all proposed resolutions were passed. The changes will see Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō move to a new income year October 1 - September 30, allowing future Hui ā-Tau to shift toward the summer months.

The Hui ā-Tau then moved into its usual business, with robust kōrero throughout the afternoon. While

attendance was smaller than last year, the more intimate setting at Omaka Marae allowed for good discussion, both during general business and around the kai tables afterwards.

This year there were three nominations for the vacant Puaha Te Rangi seat on the Board. Congratulations to Tracey McKay, who was elected as the new representative and will join the Board. We also acknowledge Kylie Batt and Irihapeti Mahuika, who put themselves forward as candidates.

The hui was also an opportunity to acknowledge Gerrard Wilson, who was farewelled from his role on the NAIL Board, and Adrian Wilson, who stepped down as a Trustee of Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō. We thank Gerrard and Adrian for the time and commitment they have given to the iwi.

Thank you to the whānau who came along, took part in the kōrero and contributed to the day.

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HE KŌRERO NĀ NGĀ KAIHAUTŪ

Mai i te tihi o Puhi Kereru, rere atu rā ki te motu tapu o Tarakaipa, haere tonu ki Whakatū, ki Onetahua. Heke whakararo ki Kahurangi, ki Karamea, ki Kawatiri. Rere ki uta, ki ngā wai mākohe o Rotomāirewhenua, o Rotopōhueroa. Tae atu rā ki ngā pātaka kai o Rotoiti, o Rotoroa. Ko ngā ara ēnei o ngā mātua-tūpuna, tihei mauri ora!

As we move into kōanga, much of our focus remains on the work needed to position Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō well for the years ahead.

Our strategy, *Kia Apa te tū ki te tōnga o te rā*, continues to guide that work. It reflects the aspirations whānau have shared with us and challenges us to think carefully about how the decisions we make now can strengthen our people, whenua, culture and future.

One area of focus has been strengthening the support available to whānau. Our 12-month Whānau Support pilot, developed with the guidance of the Wairau Steering Group and Oranga Tamariki, is now based at our Wairau office. The pilot is designed to provide earlier, practical support for tamariki and the whānau who care for them.

Work continues across our rohe to create and strengthen places where whānau can connect with Ngāti Apatanga. Construction of our Pahi at Rotoiti is progressing, with the long-term goal of providing our people with a permanent place to gather, learn and practise our reo, tikanga and mātauranga. Restoration work at Te Anamāhanga also continues as we care for and reconnect with places of importance to our iwi.

The resolution of the Nelson Tenth case remains a significant development for Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō. Our Kurahaupō tūpuna are now formally recognised among Ngā Tūpuna o Ngā Uri, and their descendants are recognised as beneficiaries of Te Here ā Nuku Trust. This recognition affirms their rightful place in this history and ensures those rights are carried forward for future generations.

Our Board continues to look closely at how we work as an organisation, including our governance, systems and where our resources are best directed. That work is about making sure we are able to deliver on the priorities set out in our strategy while remaining responsive to the needs of whānau.

As we look ahead, the challenge remains the same: to support whānau now while making decisions that will serve those who come after us. Our strength is not measured only in financial terms, but in the wellbeing of our people, the health of our whenua and the strength of our culture and identity.

Thank you to our trustees, kaimahi, whānau and partners who continue to contribute to this mahi.

Ka rere te wai, ka tipu ngā moemoeā.

As the water flows, dreams grow.

Ngā mihi

Nicole Akuhata
Chairperson



Ngā Kanohi o te Iwi

Member Profile – Damon Smith

Rugby has always been a big part of life for Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō whānau member Damon Smith, but these days you're more likely to find him in the middle of the action with a whistle in hand.

Raised in Hawke's Bay, Damon moved to Te Taihū seven years ago and began refereeing soon afterwards. He connects to Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō through the MacDonald line and now lives in the region with his three young children, Tyler, Evie and Keanu.

After playing rugby throughout his younger years, injuries eventually brought his time on the field to an end. Refereeing offered another way to stay connected to the game he had grown up with.

There may have been another reason too.

"My family encouraged me to give refereeing a go, probably because of my 'know-it-all' nature when it came to mimicking referee decisions while watching rugby on TV," Damon says.

What began as a new way to contribute to rugby has since developed into a pathway of its own.

During the regular season, Damon referees premier rugby, before moving into a range of representative fixtures later in the year, including games up to first-class level. The role has taken him around Aotearoa and further afield, with refereeing opportunities in Australia and Hawaii.

This year brought his biggest milestone yet, making his first-class debut.

"It was something I had worked towards for a long time, so it was a pretty special achievement."

Reaching that level means doing considerably more than knowing the laws of the game. For Damon, one of the biggest challenges is staying composed when the pressure is on.

"You have to make decisions quickly, back yourself and then move on to the next phase," he says.



There is plenty happening behind the scenes that spectators may not realise either. Assistant referees are often connected to the referee by microphone and can feed information through during play, although the final decision still sits with the person carrying the whistle.

And while players and coaches can certainly have their say, Damon says there is one clear winner when it comes to giving referees grief.

"Definitely the crowd! You learn pretty quickly to block it out, although occasionally someone comes up with a beauty that's hard not to laugh at."

For rangatahi who love rugby but may not see playing as their long-term pathway, he says refereeing is well worth considering.

"It's a fantastic way to stay involved and give back to rugby if you've decided you don't want to play anymore. It also teaches you to communicate, make decisions under pressure and back yourself."

With his first-class debut now behind him, Damon has already come a long way from making referee calls in front of the television, and there is plenty of room yet for the next whistle.

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“It was something I had worked towards for a long time, so it was a pretty special achievement.”



Ngā Kaupapa Taiao

Kākā Update

Since being released into The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary earlier this year, Rotopōhueroa has been making the most of sanctuary life and, apparently, developing a strong appreciation for aporō.

Rotopōhueroa was one of three kākā transferred from Nelson Lakes as part of a long-term breeding programme aimed at helping increase the kākā population across Te Taihū.

Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō led the tuku taonga for the manu before their release into the ngahere, continuing our involvement in the protection and restoration of taonga species across our rohe.

That mahi has also included supporting the translocation of endangered mokomoko from Nelson Lakes to Te Nukuaō Wellington Zoo, helping ensure vulnerable species are cared for while wider restoration work continues.

Our partnership with The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary and Natureland Zoo will continue as further manu are welcomed into the sanctuary and the breeding programme develops.

For now, Rotopōhueroa appears to be doing exactly what we hoped she would: settling in, thriving in the ngahere and enjoying the odd apple along the way.



He Pānui Whānau

Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō has entered into a new partnership with Ka Uruora, opening up further opportunities to support whānau with financial capability and pathways toward affordable housing.

Through this partnership, whānau will be able to access support to strengthen their pūtea, build confidence around financial decision-making and take practical steps toward home ownership.

One of the first opportunities connected with the partnership is Waikārapī, a new subdivision that includes a number of homes available for Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō whānau through Ka Uruora.

Cultural Advisor Aaron Hemi and Office Manager Lynne Owen along with Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō staff (not pictured) recently visited Waikārapī, where Matariki was also being marked at the same time, giving the visit an added sense of significance as we look toward new opportunities for whānau.

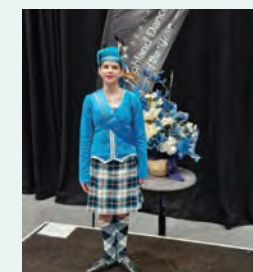
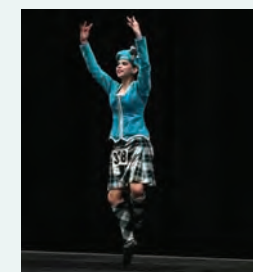
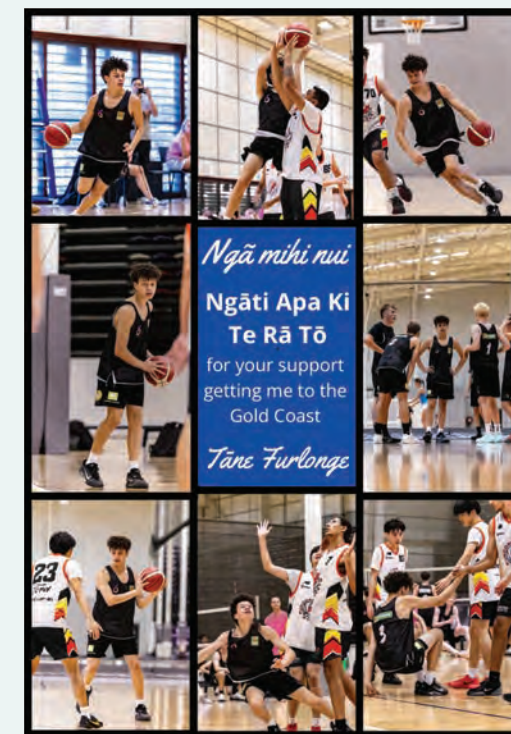
We'll be sharing more information about the support available through Ka Uruora, along with upcoming housing opportunities, as these become available.



Ka mutu pea!

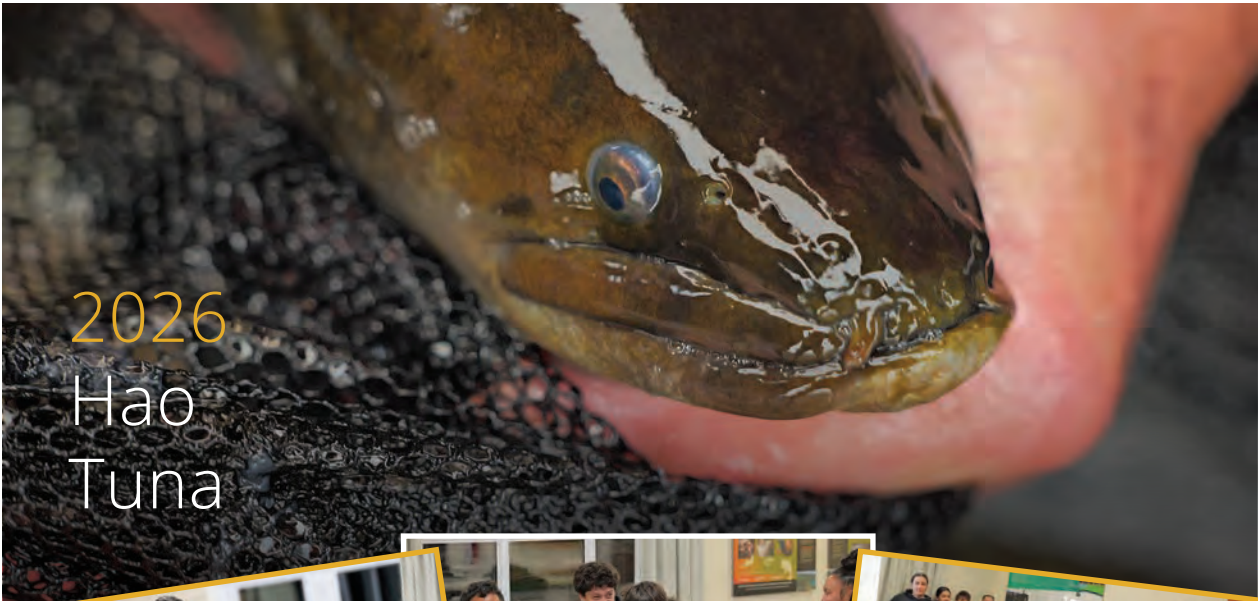
A huge congratulations to Grace Hodren, who took out the Hunting & Fishing Regatta at the Queen Charlotte Yacht Club and has now qualified for Nationals at Worsley Bay in March 2027.

We especially love seeing Grace out on the water in her Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō hat! Ka mau te wehi, Grace. We wish you all the very best for Nationals!



Ana-Rose Offord competed at the NZ Highland Dancer of the Year Competition held in Nelson over the weekend. She came away winning 5th place overall in the Under 16 age group. Placing in all her dances with the following results:

2nd Sailors Hornpipe U16
3rd Irish Hornpipe U16
3rd Double Time Irish Jig U16
3rd Highland Fling 14 years only
6th Irish Jig U16
6th Highland Fling U16
VHC Sword Dance U16
HC Seann Triubhas U16



Kōrero mai - Do you have any news to share with Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō?

Do you have any whānau achievements that you would like to share through our monthly pānui?
If you do then please email comms@ngatiapakiterato.iwi.nz so we can highlight the amazing mahi of our Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō whānau.



AGM Questions

At the Hui-ā-Tau, members raised a number of questions and suggestions.

Treaty Settlement Documentary

Members asked for an update on the Treaty Settlement documentary. The Trust confirmed that discussions have been held with participants and that the documentary will be screened for whānau on the evening prior to the opening of the Pāhi. This will provide an opportunity to reflect on our history and acknowledge those involved in the settlement journey. Further discussions with the producers will continue as the project is finalised.

Communications with West Coast Whānau

Concerns were raised that some West Coast whānau were not receiving information about wānanga and iwi activities. The Trust acknowledged this feedback and is reviewing ways to strengthen communication and ensure whānau throughout the rohe remain informed and connected.

Trust Logo

Questions were also raised about the Trust logo. Trustees advised that the current logo was developed through a process involving whānau feedback and Board consideration. Feedback received to date has been largely positive, and the logo reflects Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō identity and aspirations.

Committee Structure

Members requested information on the Trust's committee structure. The Board is currently refreshing its governance framework, moving to a new puna-based structure with clearer responsibilities, accountability, and reporting pathways. Expressions of Interest for participation in the new committees will be sought in due course.

Trustee Election Voting Papers

Concerns were raised regarding some whānau, particularly those living overseas, not receiving voting papers. The Trust has committed to investigating this matter once the post-election reporting information from ElectionsNZ has been received.

Future AGM Agenda Items

Suggested that future AGMs include a dedicated agenda item for spiritual and cultural activities undertaken throughout the year, enabling whānau to share experiences and celebrate the living culture of Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō.

Ngā Kōrero o te Pahi



Work on the Pahi build is progressing well, with the roof now in place and contractors continuing to make steady progress as the warmer weather arrives. A reminder that, for health and safety and tikanga reasons, access to the site is restricted to approved personnel only.

Ngā Toa Hākinakina



Ngareipa Fold



Hana



Huxley

A big mihi to Huxley, Hana and Ngareipa as they head off to school with their Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō 5-year-old education packs.

Packed with iwi-branded goodies for the classroom, each pack is a small way of helping our tamariki carry their Ngāti Apatanga with them as they begin this new chapter.

Ngā mihi nui Huxley, Hana and Ngareipa, and all the very best for school!

He Aha kei te Heke Mai?

What's Coming Up?

Kurahaupō Ipukarea
Kapa haka practice

When: November 8

Where: Ukaipo, 10am - 2pm

Ipukarea

When: November 20-21

Where: Wairau

Tūapapa Wānanga

When: November 27-28

Where: Rotoiti

For more info visit:
ngatiapakiterato.iwi.nz

Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō Roadshows

When: Early 2027

Where: TBC



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