

Wānanga



families commission
kōmihana ā **whānau**

He Ara Whakamua: Building pathways together to the future

FINAL REPORT

**Te Mānuka Tūtahi Marae
Whakatāne
April 2012**

CONTENTS

Preface: Dr Kathie Irwin	5
Keynote Speech: Jeremy Gardiner	7
Keynote Speech: Enid Ratahi-Pryor.....	10
Keynote Speech: Te Rauotehuia Chapman	14
Summary of Workshops.....	20

***We have come too far to stop now
We have done too much to not do more
Sir James Henare***

The Families Commission was established by the Families Commission Act 2003 and is an autonomous Crown entity¹. The Families Commission is legislatively tasked with acting as an advocate for the interests of families generally (section 7) (Te Aho-Lawson 2010, p. 8). In performing the advocacy function, the Commission is required to identify and have regard for factors that help to maintain or enhance whānau resilience and strength (section 7). Of particular interest is section 11 of the Families Commission Act 2003 which requires that the Commission, in exercising and performing its powers and functions, has regard to the needs, values and beliefs of Māori as tangata whenua (Te Kōmihana ā Whānau, 2010, p. 4).

Whānau Strategic Framework

In latter half of 2008 and in 2009 Te Kōmihana ā Whānau, consulted whānau, hapū and iwi over the proposal to develop a Whānau Strategic Framework at the Families Commission. This consultation was led by Commissioner Kim Workman. The overarching goal of the strategic framework is to support whānau to achieve a state of whānau ora or total wellbeing, utilising the mechanisms of advocacy, engagement, social policy and research.. Te Kōmihana received four clear messages through this engagement: whānau ora is a non-negotiable outcome; listen to the voice of whānau; speak out for vulnerable whānau; and, inform best practice (Te Kōmihana ā Whānau, 2010, p. 5). We take a partnership approach to research informing the Whānau Strategic Framework 2009-2012, and use kaupapa Māori research models (see www.nzfamilies.org.nz). Our reports include:

- *Whānau Strategic Framework* (2010) Kim Workman
- *Definitions of Whānau: Review of Selected Literature* (2010) Keri Te Aho-Lawson
- *Whānau Taketake Māori: Recessions and Māori resilience* (2010) Kahukore Baker
- *Whānau Yesterday Today Tomorrow* (2011) Dr Kathie Irwin, Lisa Davies, Whetu Wereta, Colleen Tuuta, Huhana Rokx-Potae, Sandra Potaka, Vervies McClausland, Dave Bassett
- *Mātiro Whakamua: Looking over the horizon* (2011) Colleen Tuuta, Sarah Maclean and Dr Kathie Irwin (Editors)
- *Partnerships with Māori: He Waka Whanui* (2012) Dr Kathie Irwin, Professor Ngatata Love, Dr Catherine Love, Meagan Joe, Faith Panapa, Drina Hawea, Materoa Dodd and Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu
- *Te Pūmautanga o te Whānau: Tūhoe and South Auckland Whānau* (2012) Kahukore Baker, Haromi Williams and Colleen Tuuta.

¹ See <http://www.nzfamilies.org.nz/about-the-commission/about-us/our-role>

Whānau Reference Group Strategic Advice 2011

On February 17 2011 the Families Commission Whānau Reference Group (WRG) met in Wellington. The main agenda item for the wānanga was strategic planning. The members of the WRG were given the opportunity to share with staff what issues they were seeing whānau around them facing. *Whānau rangatiratanga*, whānau empowerment, was the kaupapa identified to describe the Families Commission approach to the work needed in this area.

Identifying kaupapa Māori models of intervention that are working and sharing their stories was suggested as a contribution that the Families Commission could make. Within the Whānau Rangatiratanga Outcome Strategy three work-streams were developed:

- *He Kōrero Koakoa: Stories of Success*. Case Studies of successful kaupapa Māori models of transformative change
- *Drivers of Whānau Rangatiratanga*. Policy Paper exploring the drivers of whānau rangatiratanga
- *He Ara Whakamua: Building pathways together to the future*. Wānanga held throughout the country with whānau and people who work with whānau on how to build pathways to the future together.

He Ara Whakamua: Building pathways together to the future

The primary objective of the *He Ara Whakamua* wānanga series is to move through the country, listening to whānau, and those who work with whānau, to research and explore the kaupapa of how to build pathways to the future together. The first wānanga was held at Pipitea Marae, in Wellington, in August 2011. The second wānanga was held at Te Māhurehure Marae, in Auckland, in December 2011, and the third in New Plymouth in July 2012.. Reports of each of the wānanga are available at on the Commission's website. Videos of the keynotes from the wānanga are also available on You Tube.

Preface: Dr Kathie Irwin

Opening Comments

E ngā kaiwhakahaere o Ngāti Awa, tēnā koutou,
E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā marae o tenei rohe,
tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Ko Hikurangi me Moumoukai ngā maunga,
Ko Ngāti Porou me Rakaipaaka ngā iwi,
Ko Waiapu me Nuhaka ngā awa,
Ko Putaangā me Tāne Nui a Rangi ngā marae.

I te taha o tōku mama ko Hoani Laughton rāua ko Horiana Te Kauru Laughton ōku tipuna. Ko Kath Laughton rāua ko Keith Cameron ōku mātua. I tipu ake tāku mama kei Ōhope. I haere ia ki te kura tuarua o Whakatane. I tēra wa, i noho te whānau Laughton kei Ōhope nō te mea he minita tāku tipuna koroua i te hāhi Presbyterian. I mate tāku mama i 1975. I mārena anō tāku pāpā ki tētahi wahine purotu o Kokohinau. Ko Rauotehuia Eruera tana ingoa.

Ko Kathie Irwin ahau.

On behalf of the Families Commission I join in welcoming you all here to He Ara Whakamua – Building Pathways Together to the Future. I bring greetings from Carl Davidson, Chief Commissioner, and Paul Curry CEO, of the Families Commission, neither of whom were able to leave Wellington at this time.

We appreciate the chance to work with Ngāti Awa today – and recognise the value of having this event take place at Te Mānuka Tūtahi. We thank Ngāti Awa for this opportunity and look forward to working with you.

Strengthening whānau is a critical issue for us all. We are keen to hear from whānau, and those working with whānau locally, about what works.

As much as the society we want it to be we must commit to creating New Zealand as the society that we need it to be. Someone has to take the leadership to do what is not popular, but what is necessary. Māori have often taken that leadership role.

Instead of talking and doing to whānau, we need to work with whānau. Simply applying mainstream approaches to whānau, has not worked, and will continue not to work. I know today's conversation will be fruitful in helping us gain an in-depth picture of what is needed to strengthen whānau.

In the quest to find new solutions, we recognise the importance of Māori knowledge. Partnering with Māori is a powerful approach for the Government and practitioners to take at this time.

We're clear at the Families Commission that the research we do can't simply be about making a point. It has to be about making a *difference*.

To do that we've learnt that often the most productive thing we can do is to turn the lens around and enable the people we're doing the research with to tell us about themselves, to tell us how they see the pathways to the future.

This kind of strengths-based approach is part of the Families Commission Act which makes it easier for us to position our research in a kaupapa Māori space.

Becoming a parent, and adding to the strengthening of whānau through that choice, is a deeply enriching experience. – if a little scary at times if your whānau are Māori. My life was changed forever the day my first child, a beautiful daughter whom we named Horiana after her great-grandmother, was born. My son changed forever my previously pointed feminist views of men. Using the phrase “all men are ...” now included him. You’ll all have funny whānau stories that seem unbelievable to those outside the whānau. Our whānau are no different.

Whānau have told us a story about our mother’s first experience of smoking grass as a teenager. (Her father was the local Presbyterian Minister so what a thrill she must have felt being so bad!) She ended up very green around the gills, apparently, because it actually was grass they were smoking.

The Families Commission is developing itself as ‘a centre of excellence’ for knowledge about whānau and family wellbeing. And we’re very clear at the Commission that we will discharge this function in a way that honours the Treaty. In other words, that we approach this conversation, this way of collecting and activating knowledge, in a way that is a true partnership.

We acknowledge that being here in Whakatāne today is a returning to this rohe for the Families Commission.

In February of this year Kahukore Baker, Principal Analyst Māori at the Families Commission, worked with Haromi Williams of the Tūhoe Education Authority to launch *Te Pūmautangā o te Whānau*, at Rūātoki. This is a significant new report undertaken with Tūhoe and South Auckland whānau. He mihi tenei ki a koutou ngā whānau o tēnei rangahau.

The Families Commission thanks all of you who have taken the time to be here today. We recognise that you are extremely busy people and we appreciate the effort you have made to come and take part in this conversation.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Dr Kathie Irwin
Rakaipaaka, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu
Chief Advisor Māori
Families Commission

26 April 2012

Keynote Speech: Jeremy Gardiner CEO Te Runanganui o Ngāti Awā

There are three things I have learned since being a father: I'm not half as smart as I thought I was.

"Dad, why is the sky blue?" Ummm. "Dad, how big is the sun?" Ummm. "Dad, where do babies come from?" Ask your mother.

Secondly, kids are a great leveller. I carry the suitably grand title of Chief Executive of Te Runangā O Ngāti Awa. There are 20,000 members of Ngāti Awa; we've got a massive asset base. I do all sorts of interesting and important things during the way but when I get home I'm the fifth most important person in my house after the dog.

The third thing, kids are much more insightful than we think. They understand the simple things and they can ask the difficult questions.

I thought in my last official engagement as Chief Executive Te Runangā O Ngāti Awa, I would provide a bit of an overview from a Ngāti Awa perspective, an iwi runangā perspective, on strengthening our whānau and parenting education.

When I saw the kaupapa of the hui, parenting education, it took me a while to get my head around it. Now, are we talking about teaching parents, or parents learning? The kōrero I'm going to give today is about empowerment and people: parents empowering themselves to be better parents and therefore creating hopefully stronger whānau.

There are about 20,000 registered members in Ngāti Awa. As of last census about 81 percent of us live in an urban area. An urban area is anything bigger than 1,000 people, so it's not really urban in a real sense. About 50 percent of those live in a very large urban area – so anything greater than 30,000 people. So over half our people do not live here. About a third of Ngāti Awa lives in the rohe and that's about it. Another third live in the wider Bay of Plenty, and another third in other places in the country. So we are no longer bound by geography, and that really reinforces the importance of being bound by something else. Bound by whakapapa, bound by our culture, bound by our reo, bound by something other than living closely together because the reality is we are getting further and further apart. Thirty-six percent of us are under the age of 15, twenty-four percent are under 29, so more than half of us are under the age of 30. Now, I don't know about you, but my decision-making processes prior to 30 were not that robust. I tended to do things and make decisions at the drop of a hat. The reality is for most of us, that's where we are living. So when I look around today, where are those 60 percent of us? How do we reach them? How do we engage them? Because they are our whānau, and they are the parents of the future. And if they're not engaged then we have a real problem.

I did try to set out not to be too deficit-focused in this korero. I want to really focus on the positive. It's very easy to slip into the negatives: how bad our whānau are and how drugs and alcohol and violence affect us, but we're going to focus on the positive today.

Our median age is 22. The median age of the population is around 30. We are about 10 years younger than the rest of the population. Policy is being created in Wellington for the median. Policy is being created for the 30-something-year-old general population. Policy is not being created for the 22 year old Māori, or the 15 year old Māori, and that's an issue for us. Interestingly, and something that I was quite

surprised with, 77 percent of us live in a one-family household. Again, I think if you go back some time that would have been much lower. So we are tending to group ourselves in the western nuclear family unit. We are not living as extended whānau groups. And that's challenging us. That's challenging our culture. Who looks after the kids when there's a tangi and the parents have to go to the marae? Kids go to the marae. Who looks after the kids when the parents are sick? Those family traditions, those family connections are breaking down.

Thirty-two percent of our kids live in a one-parent family, and that's the pressure that goes on single parents. And here's another one, only 50 percent of our households connect to the internet. If we're living further apart, if technology is becoming a human right, a basic human right, and if the only easy way of connecting is via Skype, the internet, and email, then only 50 percent of our households are connecting through that. So already we're reinforcing ourselves as a technological under-class and worsening the ability of our families to reach out to each other. So what do we do about it? Well, I've got three ideas. I'm going to play a video of Ngāti Awa soon because Ngāti Awa say things much better than I say things but here are three things that I think we can do. I'm going to give you a deficit-based one and two positive ones.

First of all, most of our boards, our iwi structures, have some criteria that you must meet in order to be a board member. You can't be bankrupt. You have to be of sound mind. There are a whole lot of things you can't be if you want to stand. I think our boards have to take a zero tolerance approach to violence in the family. If you are in that space you need help, but you shouldn't be able to participate in the workings of our iwi boards until you've got that help. So that's my only deficit-based one but I think it's both a reaching out and a zero tolerance state. You cannot participate in our boards if you are convicted of that sort of crime.

A much more positive idea and something I think I'd like the Commission to think about is this. We rely on the system. We rely on the education system. We rely on the health system. We rely on the welfare system. We rely, sort of, on the justice system. Systems by their nature are not designed to take account of individuals. They are not there to help you as an individual. They are there to create a process by which the majority of the people can get through the system. And if the majority of the people are not Māori and are aged 36, what does that mean for the rest of us? That means the system is not designed for us. So I think this over-reliance on the system is causing some of the issues that we've got as a culture. We're relying on somebody else to make our decisions for us, so we need to change that. We rely on the system to take care of our kids. We rely on the schooling system to take them from the age of 2, 3, 5, through to 16, 17 and 18 and give them a good education and a start in life.

Well, clearly, clearly that's not happening. The system's not designed to allow tracking of our kids, to allow a progress report on an annual basis for our kids.

There is something like 10,000 children and young people in Ngāti Awa under the age of about 18. It is possible for Ngāti Awa to track every single one of those, year by year. It would be possible. It's a matter of a number of people employed to liaise with whānau, to build in a system where the whānau are reporting school reports, tracking immunisations, tracking health, and creating a database to hold the system to account. To say to the system "we're tracking this five-year-old, this group of five-year-olds who were born in 2005, who are now seven. We've tracked them. Half of them have never been to a dentist. Half of them are already struggling with learning difficulties, so what do we need to do about that?" We could do that. It's 10,000 people – it's not hard to create something. So iwi by iwi we could track the kids, the young people, as they work their way through the system. This would allow us greater ability

to interact with the system, to interrupt the system, to engage with the whānau to help them work their way through that process. It's sort of the Whānau Ora idea, but starting much earlier.

So you've all seen those TV programmes like Seven Up, where they take a group of kids born and they track their development paths. So we won't just be watching, we want to engage. We want to be able to track.

There's a very alarming statistic that I heard recently, that the Ministry of Education is talking about. If we don't capture Māori boys by the age of about eight to 10 we lose them. Eight to 10! So the third big idea sort of revolves around that Māori boy. I look around the room, conspicuous in their absence – where are our Māori men? How do we engage them, how do we bring them in to this discussion? What are the triggers that engage our Māori men? Because if they're not involved, then what's the process for bringing our kids through that with strong role models? In some cases we have got the grandparents to provide that strong role model – the uncles, the older brothers. Whoever they are, that's missing in a lot of cases. So I think we should have a Rā whānau each year and the purpose of that is father and children day. They go and do things together – go to sport or go to events – events around the country celebrating Māori men and their kids. I think that's something that maybe the Commission can pick up on. The Māori men are struggling. There are high rates of depression and suicide. They are struggling to understand the role that they play. So I think we need to give them some leads.

Hopefully all of these things lead to a strengthening of our whānau. There are ways to strengthen the individual bits of our whānau, but as parents, as whānau members. We need to empower ourselves. We need to strengthen ourselves, we need to strengthen our own identities, we need to understand who we are, where we come from and have a strong identity. If you know who you are and where you're from, that strong identity will help.

There's a growing urban under-class of Māori youth who look Māori, sound Māori, but don't know who they are, where they're from. They're scared to go onto a marae because they look Māori and they sound Māori, but they don't know anything about it. So it's an alien place. More alien in fact than for most Pākehā and that's a challenge. So we need to strengthen our identity. We need to strengthen our resources. The assets of our whānau, not just money, but knowledge, community, strengthen ourselves, our resources, so we are able to spend time identifying, working out who we are and celebrating that. We need to strengthen our wellbeing. We need to get healthier. We need to improve the rates of our smoking cessation and weight loss and diabetes. So whānau need to be healthy before they can be wealthy, and they need to be wealthy and healthy and identify themselves as Māori.

And finally, we need to stand up and celebrate, which is why hui are important. Celebrate the positive aspects of being Māori and being Māori whānau.

Before I finish, Ngāti Awa has recently completed a vision for the next 50 years, and part of the vision is that tūrangawaewae, knowing who we are, knowing where we're from. Māori Ora, having the resources available and the education and knowledge to be able to support ourselves.

[Māori] Being healthy. Being healthy individuals. Healthy whānau. And standing up, leadership, strength.

And so I'd like to close my kōrero by leaving the final few minutes to Ngāti Awa to talk.

**Keynote Speech: Enid Ratahi-Pryor
General Manager, Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa Social Services**

Welcome to all of you. Welcome to the inner sanctum, to the bosom, to the heart and soul of Ngāti Awa. Welcome to Mātaatua whareniui. Mātaatua built as a symbol of unity for our Mātaatua iwi; built at a time when Ngāti Awa was at its lowest ebb. At a time when raupatu had done its worst to our whānau, to our hapū, to our iwi. Mātaatua was built on the hopes and aspirations of our korowai. That one day our iwi would rebuild itself. That the deconstruction of our social, our economic and our cultural worlds would not be permanent, but merely awaiting another time and place for re-emergence.

We have inherited a moemoeā from our koroua to rebuild Ngāti Awa to its former position of strength. We have today re-established the Mātaatua whareniui and are currently rebuilding our social, cultural and economic foundations. In terms of re-establishing strong resilient whānau the journey for many is filled with challenge. The transition from the state of te korenga, from the darkness, after the raupatu into the state of Te Arangā ake where we are prepared and ready to commence the initial journey to self-discovery.. The journey has been impacted upon by low health access, low educational achievement, high levels of unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse. In 2009 one-in-three Māori tamariki lived in a household below the poverty line. Low levels of income are strongly associated with poor child health outcomes. Tamariki growing up in poorer households are more likely to live in overcrowded houses, have poor access to good nutrition, have worse educational outcomes, high rates of hospitalisation and more restricted access to primary health.

One-third of the Māori population were in receipt of a welfare benefit. I would like to say that included those of our koroua and kuia who are on superannuation, but it didn't. One-third of our whānau are on a benefit because they are either unable to engage and participate in the work-force of this country, or they are physically not able to as a result of sickness. But the point is, if one-third of our Māori population are benefit-dependent, that will only compound the issues that I have highlighted earlier. One can only expect that, without intervention, one-third of the Māori population will increase over time. Similar to Jeremy, I didn't want to dwell on deficits either but it's hard not to when a portion of our total Māori population is in the situation I've just outlined. Two-thirds of our population are doing well. They are actually moving very slowly, but they're moving. The only issue is you can't tell where those rangatahi are in terms of their journey. Are they still in te korenga, are they still in te arangā ake. One-third of our Māori population are actually transitioning between te korengā into te arangā ake. They're still stuck. And with the sorts of barriers and challenges that are out there, I'm not sure when they're going to transition forward. Two-thirds of our Māori population are more than likely in-between te arangā ake, ready to roll, got the goods, and just starting to move forward into te mōhiotanga. Te Māramatangā well, we have those and we're very privileged to have some of them in this whareniui today. Pā Hirini is one of the perfect examples in our iwi that we can look to as a person who's actually gone through all of those stages, and he leads the way and shows the way that we can follow in terms of our whānau.

To support and work alongside whānau during their journey is the role of Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa. Established by Te Runangā o Ngāti Awa in 1989 to provide health, welfare and educational services for the whānau of Ngāti Awa and the wider community. We provide services from one site. Apparently the best services are delivered from one site. I know that for our kuia they don't want to be going all over town, going to the doctor, then coming back to fill in this paper, then going to pick up

the mokopuna and then go to the immunisation of the mokopuna. It's very hard. The aerial photograph is of Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa, the site that we deliver from. It was a very strategic move in terms of the trustees of Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa to have all of our services located on the one site. A dream some 12 years ago, now a reality. Many of you would have passed this site. That is the Adventure Solutions Company. It is one of the approaches that have been used by Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa to deal and work alongside our whānau. We use multiple approaches to support our whānau. Te Pahitaua Adventure Solutions is not your usual social and health service agency. It doesn't reek of deficit, it looks quite fun.

This company was actually established to provide positive leadership environments that promote and encourage leadership qualities, values and skills. The company provides youth programmes, adventure therapy, outdoor adventures including hunting and fishing for Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa. With the added resource base of Adventure Solutions we are able to work with youth, not in an at risk youth environment. Don't you just hate that? At risk youth. No, no, no. We work with youth in an environment that encourages and promotes their inner self in terms of who they are, the future leaders of our iwi and of our country. To be able to utilise multiple environments of both Adventure Solutions and Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa I get back to the fact that we have to have a one-site environment.

That is an advertisement for our young people. It's not about putting a label above their head of being an at-risk youth; that they have alcohol issues; that they don't listen. It's not about that at all. It's about changing the way we think. Jeremy mentioned it earlier. We've got to get away from the deficit model and we've got to start counting in the positive, we've got to start talking in the positive, and that's what strengthening whānau, strengths-based approaches are about.

We provide a range of health, social and education services and programmes. This graph shows that it didn't happen overnight. Some people think that ooh, look at those ones over there, they've got wonderful resources. It started back in 1989 and here we are in 2012 and we're still trying to build the sort of capacity and capability that is required to work with whānau. Down at the bottom there, in the low, it was the Mātua Whāngai service that many of our iwi around here started with. We started taking our tamariki into our own care, the care of the iwi. That's where we started. Over time from 1989 to 2012 we added services, more and more services. Services that together would provide an integrated solution to the very complex issues and problems that whānau were faced with. Some of the services include: social services, we added health services, and then education. The system that Jeremy mentioned earlier is a system that continues to provide services to Māori in a siloed way. Māori organisations, iwi organisations, have the potential to create their own ways in which to work and this is an example of what that may look like.

An example of one of the programmes, getting back to basics: kamokamo pickle grown from our own gardens. Grown by our young people who were in one of our homes through the kamokamo. It was picked and cooked by our kuia, a number of our kuia, and the whānau who were preparing that were some of mothers who come to the programmes.

Finding a mechanism such as kai, it's so instrumental in the way we live is one of the ways in which we deliver services. Delivering services in ways where we can have our kuia, our koroua working with our young people to bring about an inter-generational approach to wellbeing. We have a few of our kuia who are making a korowai. We also have young people joining in with our kuia to make korowai as well. One of the ways to strengthen our whānau again is that whole intergenerational approach. Our young

people have never in their lives needed their whānau and kuia more than now. And yet our koroua and kuia are very, very busy doing all of the things that Jeremy mentioned. Running our runanga, running the marae, and now, us young ones, we want them to run our whānau as well. But that's actually what it's going to take to help our whānau to move forward.

And in that bottom photo you can actually see some of our young mums working with our kuia in the kitchen to do something simple. Now, behind all of that obviously there's the kōrero that goes on to help those whānau. But when we talk about our whānau we talk about them in terms of what they can produce, what they can see and what they can be really proud of.

In terms of talking to you today, it all comes back to the how. Jeremy had three ideas in terms of strengthening our whānau. I've come back to Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa and our structure as one of the ways, not the only way. It's one of the ways in which we can help our whānau. The organisation employs 60 full time staff. Sixty. That is a reflection of the challenges that our whānau face. I feel sad when new services are continually added to our organisation. This is an organisation that reflects the social ails of our iwi. And aren't we doing well.

All services across the top, the one on the left is the environmental side of the organisation. That is the side where we work with, in particular, the sawmill workers against poisons. We work with the men to improve the state of the whenua. It's called a bio-remediation project. And we work with them to also bring to the fore the unwellness of men who are exposed to toxins. So we work on the environmental side, we work on the research side. We also have health services. Alcohol and drug services are in there. So it is programmes you'd expect. Tamariki Ora, wellchild services, community nursing services, asthma programmes, diabetes. We need to change the way we eat. We need to change the way we exercise. Exercise isn't sitting on the chair in front of the TV. So, we've got diabetes services. We've got asthma service. As I stand here I'm not actually that proud to be presenting all of the services that we have available to our whānau.

I'll give you an indication of what sort of staff make up a support system who work with strengthening our whānau. Contrary to popular mainstream belief it's a very well-qualified organisation. The management staff all hold formal degrees. Two of the management staff hold Masters. We have a general practitioner on staff. We have registered nurses, five in total. All Māori. That's a fantastic statistic. All five in our nursing team, are Māori. One of them is actually a qualified nurse practitioner. For those of you who don't know, nurse practitioners are able to prescribe. She follows in the footsteps of her mum, Auntie Puti. We have six social workers, all fully qualified social workers. All of those social workers were supported in their degrees by the organisation. How do we strengthen as an iwi our whānau? We must take responsibility for supporting their [development]. We had the education grant ceremony for Ngāti Awa some two weeks ago I think, and it was awesome. There were some surgeons; nurses; doctors; there were some very, very clever people. The key is getting them back to working here, in the kāingā with our whānau. No good being a surgeon in London, we need those surgeons here. We've got non-political staff. Fourteen kaiāwhina who work alongside our whānau, working in the homes. Early-childhood staff. Early childhood is one of the most critical learning periods in a child's life. That's where the foundation stone of learning is laid. We have an early-childhood centre with 50 seats, Te Waipuna Ariki o Matangireia, but it's too small. There's not enough room for the waiting list and yet there are other early childhood establishments that don't have full waiting lists.

The service must wrap around and support our whānau and work alongside our whānau, not *at* our whānau. They must work *with* them, at their pace.

Everything we have talked about this morning crosses on the model in front of you. That model is Te Pou Mataaho that was developed based on a number of other models. It's not new, but it is a model that drives the organisation. It is a model that we base every single delivery upon and all our staff must be aware of and practice. The model, as Jeremy mentioned earlier, actually covers tūrangawaewae. Know where you are from, know who you are because without that how can you stand and be anything. Yet as we know, many of our whānau are missing that in their lives. Spiritually, Te Pou Ihorangi – the ability to come into a whare like this and connect. This whare is our whānau. This whare tells the stories of our whānau and there are some very mean stories. Not mean in awesome but mean and nasty stories in here. But that is who we are and that's what makes us up. Te Pou Mataaho is all about whakapapa: when working alongside our whānau we must appreciate the blood that flows through their veins. For me as Ngāti Awa, the blood that flows through this wharenuī – the tipuna represented in here represent my history. I have a history of violence. I listened to Hone Harawira on TV the other night when he talked of Māori being a warring people. Absolutely. The stories in this wharenuī tell us that. We have it in our blood. Our whānau have it running through their veins. We need to harness that. There is always an opposite to violence. There is an opposite to war. It's about how we harness those elements and use them positively. Māori are full of positive, strong elements. How do we bring them out? Organisations like Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa are one of many trying to find their way through the challenges that our whānau are also experiencing.

Mataatua, built as a symbol of unity for our Mātaatua Iwi. It was built at a time when Ngāti Awa was at its lowest ebb, at a time when raupatu had done its worst to our whānau, hapū and iwi. Mātaatua was built with the hopes and aspirations that one day our iwi would re-build itself, that the deconstruction of our social, economic and cultural worlds would not be permanent but be merely waiting another time and place for re-emergence.

Ko Ngāti Awa te toki. Te tangatangā i te rā. Te nohenohe i te wai.
It was their time, it is our time.
Kia ora tātou katoa.

Keynote Speech: Te Rauotehuia Chapman **Director, Māori Investments Ltd**

Today I'm going to tell you a story. A true story. This is a story about my whānau and the way I grew up. I'm the eldest of six. I have four lovely sisters, a neat brother, and my parents are here today. I was one of the lucky ones. I grew up with two sets of grandparents plus my great-grandparents. We grew up in Murupara – that's the centre of the universe. Dad was a bushman, a truck driver and then finally a supervisor for transport. Mum stayed at home and looked after us kids. And there we learned all the lessons about growing up.

Dad was a hard-working man. One time he had three jobs. Mum stayed home, looked after us. We never went without anything, we weren't a rich family. Dad was always pig hunting if he wasn't at work, or fishing. He took us kids out. There was never any alcohol in our place. We grew up like that. Now I remember Mum saying to us "when you leave this house you will know how to cook, you will know how to sew a button on your shirt, you'll know how to clean a house and you will know how to hem your trousers" and also "When you leave this house, don't forget to pay for your rent. You need a roof over your head. Don't forget to pay for the power, you need some light. Fill your cupboards up and then what's left over, put half in the bank and the rest is yours to do whatever you like." I did all those things. We were lucky.

Murupara was buzzing in the '60s. People had jobs. There was hardly any violence. No kids went without. We were no different to any other family but we had our grandparents too. Grandparents. I don't know anyone, anyone, who had two sets of grandparents and great-grandparents. And we loved our grandparents 'cos they never growled. They always had lollies and they'd always say "haere mai." They always spoke nicely. They'd pick you up for holidays and you'd go to their place and there'd be a crate of soft drinks and big cartons of ice cream and it was open slather. You didn't even have to ask. It was just yours. They had peach trees and you could do what you like and it was awesome. Then there was the veggie garden. You had to help in the veggie garden. You had to help grow. Summer time you had to go and climb the fruit trees, get all the peaches then you'd have to go home and help peel those and then you'd have to bottle. Then there was blackberry picking, all of those things and not only with the grandparents but with my parents as well. That was our family outing. When you went out to the beach it was always for kai. You were always looking for kai. You didn't know what going for a good time was. You knew that you were just going for a kai. That was the good time.

You grew kai. That was just the natural thing to do. Then coming back to Te Teko and helping do the garden when it was harvest time with our Nanny Ma. We called our great-grandparents because we had so many nannies the great grans were called Nanny Ma and Koro Pa. Then you had Nanny Ra and Koro-huna, and then on Dad's side you had Granddad and then Chapman. I used to laugh about that Granddad because he was the darkest and he had the Pākehā name. He should have been called a Koro.

You're learning all the time these different things, even cooking. "Come on, come and make a jelly." The first things you learn to do. Just simple little things. "Come on, come and make a rewena bread." So I learned to make rewena. Then I remember coming back to Te Teko, all the kids were there, the whole whānau and everybody was happy. We used to go swimming in the river. None of us could swim, there was no supervision. Oh, God, when I think about it now they probably would've had CYFS onto our parents. But it was fun, we were all happy and there was always a Nanny to feed you. Always food, food, food, food, food. But that was just the way it was.

I left Murupara, went off to Waiariki for about a year and then I decided to go to Australia. I was 18 then. I saw in the paper one-hundred and fifty dollars return to Aussie and I thought oh, that's cheap, I've got the money, I might go over there and have a look with a couple of mates, and off I went. I stayed there 13 years. Looking round, working here, there, everywhere and just generally having a good time and doing what young people do. But every second year I made a point of coming home. Our family's so close and I remember the younger ones used to write to me. Being the oldest you look after your younger siblings. It was just natural, just normal. Anyway, busy having a good time, met an Aussie man and started a family. Before that we built a house. Nice big flash house. And I was living in the Pākehā world and then, when I had my daughter, I noticed the difference – the way the Aussies brought up their kids and how they were with their families. One thing I hated was they'd feed the men first and then the kids. We don't do that in our family. Their whole focus was different. It was mother, father, child. You know, they even forgot about the grandparents.

My mother-in-law, she absolutely loved me. I'd go down there, take all this kai – because that was one of the lessons my mother taught me “whenever you go to anybody's place, take something to eat. Don't take your head. Always take something with you, even if it's a loaf of bread. So my mother-in-law absolutely loved me. I'd take a freezer down. We were living out in the waps [countryside]. My children's father was managing the meatworks and we got meat for nothing so I had a freezer, one with beef, and then we decided we wanted sheep, so I'd go and get some sheep, and all these skills that I had learnt when I was a kid, I used them. We knew how to grow a garden and knew what types of cuts of meat. When the seafood man used to come through I'd give him a rump steak and trade for seafood.

Then we moved inland, about four hours out of Townsville. There was nobody around, no family, just us and the meatworks. In the off season it was really lonely. So my children's father was transferred to Townsville and off we went. We were living the merry life with our kids but I just had this feeling and I just couldn't stand it, not having my family around. There was no-one to go to, no nanny or koro to visit. Nobody to take your kids for a holiday. Too far away. Life was different. The people, their thinking was different. Pākehā thinking was different. You know, even with their children they'd take them off to play-group, just dump the kids there and go off. No input whatsoever. I grew up where Mum was in your face all the time. I just had this feeling and my relationship with the kids' father was breaking down so I thought, right. I had my second child, who was sickly. He was in hospital for about a month before I got him out. I was home one week in 1991 and two days before Christmas I rang up Dad and said I want to come home. He said “well, give me an hour”.

He rang back in an hour and he said “right, I've got your ticket booked and you better not be mucking me around.” So we left at three o'clock in the morning, my two babies and I flew to Brisbane and got into Auckland at 12. I remember it so clear because I was so tired. I had these two little babies to look after and I just wanted to get home. My baby sister picked us up and we got back into Whakatāne Christmas morning. Mum was there, the whole family was there. Mum had tinned milk. She said “never mind the titty, give me that baby.” Pram was there, nappies were there, baby clothes. I had just picked up everything I could that was around me and just came. My poor baby was wrapped up in a beach towel. Mum and Dad said “well, you can stay here.” They had a home here for when they were ready to retire but my brother was living there. So we stayed there, my children and I, and over the paddock was my grandmother. She came over and she said to me “you come over here and you stay with Poppa Keith and I and look after us. Bring your kids over” and I said alright, Nan. The best thing I ever did.

I moved in with her. The kids went into kōhangā and at that stage I wasn't real familiar with kōhangā because ... in the '80s I was in Australia and I didn't know what was happening back here in New Zealand. It seemed like the trend was to learn Māori. Nan said "take your kids over to kōhanga". I said I didn't know anybody there. She said "that's alright, take them over there, they're your relations". So I went over there and introduced myself and got into the kōhangā mode. And it was great.

Our kōhangā was great, because the children were with the kaiako. The parents had to go and learn life skills. You had to go and learn little things like changing a tyre. Oil change. Make tāniko earrings. Make rewena bread. It was great because there were a lot of women my age who didn't know how to do those things. The kids got older and I started looking and I thought you know, you're doing your kōhanga. I better start brainwashing you. So I said "you two, come on, you're going to learn how to pick pūhā. 'Cos one day there might be no food around and you need to know what pūhā looks like." So we're out in the paddock and I'm showing these kids what pūhā looks like. They were great, they absolutely loved it. They filled up bags and bags because we grew heaps of pūhā around our area. And then we took it home and Nanny was there sorting through the pūhā and I thought right, this is good. Next trip we're going to Galatea, you need to know what a watercress looks like. It was great.

Then school holidays were at our place because I chose to stay at home and look after my kids until I thought they were old enough to take care of themselves at school. I didn't want to be one of these working mothers whose kids went on school trips and they didn't have their mother there. My mother was always there with us so I decided I'm staying home, I'm not going to work and that 'til they're right. School trips were great, going there and okay, other parents didn't go so you had their kids too to deal with. It was lovely going there and seeing what your kids got up to and just being part of their school life. Because Nanny was around she would say "oh, I'll come with you". I'd say "yeah, okay, Nanny." Well she was 50 then so she could and she enjoyed it. Then there was the rest of the family. We used to have all their kids because the parents were working. It was great. The kids got to know who they were, got to know how to play with them. It was my job, I just kept an eye on them, but Nanny was there watching too, and she loved it. She'd say "oh, I just love listening to them laughing and playing." You'd get the odd one that would start crying and you'd go out and see what it is and it would be that somebody called somebody an egg and they didn't like it and it would be a big, big drama and, well, you got that all sorted out. And Nanny would say "come on, I need to go to a meeting." Alright, in the car with the kids, we'll go to this meeting, that land meeting, that land meeting. Next minute they're running a course at Waiariki. She said "you need to go to one of those courses." I said "what for" She said "land administration course." I said but I'm just your driver. She said "No. You can go along too." I said I didn't have any money. She said "it doesn't matter 'cos I've already paid for you to go." So I had no choice. I went along, did this, and before I knew it she was saying to me "oh, we've got this meeting here. What do you think about this?"

Then there was the marae. Nanny was going to the marae and she said to me "Come on. Let's go to the marae." Oh, little did I know that I was getting groomed to be a part of the marae committee to go and do all the land transfers and training. But it was great. And I thank her for it. All those years, me thinking I was just the driver, she was teaching me. She was talking all the time. "Oh, yeah, do this and then do that". You take this stuff in and before you know it you're a trustee on something, then before you know it you're on the committee for the marae. Not one marae but two. It's too much work. But your kids get involved with you too because they're there all the time. Then you go "I'm bouncing back now, back to the kids – their lives and their sports". I used to say to Nanny, "Hang on we've got kids sports and we've got tennis lessons,

we've got dancing lessons, we've got jujitsu, we've got swimming. I'm tired." She'd say "You're alright. You're young. All you have to do is just worry about getting your kids and that here, there, I'll worry about everything else". I was so lucky. I'd come home from kōhangā and everything was all peeled. I just had to cook. The washing was already in, all lovely and folded. I'd say "oh, thank you, Nanny." All those little jobs meant a lot. She was so helpful. I was a solo mother with two kids. One was real lively, high maintenance. Nanny would say "leave him, he's a normal kid." I used to think that maybe he needed to see a child psychologist. She'd say "there's nothing wrong with him, he's a normal boy". So today we call him a high spirited child. And he's still like that.

Anyway, the kids, they're just so funny. I talked about brainwashing them. The five-year-old and the eight-year-old, driving them to catch their bus, they'd say "Why do we go to school?" I'd say "We go to school to get a good education." "Why do we need a good education?" "So we can make plenty of money." "Why do we need plenty money?" "So we can look after Mum when she's old." I remember when my Mum would say all those things to us. Good, got that sorted, they won't ever forget that, you know, just brainwash them, brainwash them. We were coming back from school one day and the five-year-old says to me "eh, Mum, babies come out of your tummy" and I'm coming around the roundabout at the Whakatāne bridge and I'm going "Yes" and thinking Oh, my God, he's only five-years-old and I'm going to have to tell him ... and the eight-year-old says "well, what's your pito for mum?" And the five-year-old one says "see, I told you, I told you" and that was it. I was waiting and waiting. Oh, God, that's funny. And there's one thing I've got to thank the school for: Te taha Māori. Te reo Māori. One day we're driving down Domain Road and he goes, past the urupā, he goes "Mum, when we die, our wairua goes to Hinenuitepō". And I thought oh, yes, darling. He says "where does the Pākehā wairua go?" [Laughter] "We've got to increase the Māori nation". This is the brainwashing we do to them.

I used to tell them the stories about Mataatua, Mātaatua Waka because I had enrolled in Awanuiārangi Wānanga. I thought "no use me sending him off to kōhangā and I don't know anything. So I've got to go and get educated too. It was great, and I'd used all these little stories I'd heard, and the kids are so gullible. You can tell them anything but you've got to make sure it's true. I remember my daughter saying to me "Mum, is Tracey Chapman the singer, is she our relation?" Yes. A while after that she saw a picture of Tracey Chapman.

You know, kids, they heal you too. When I was 10 my grandfather died. He was the first of the grands to die. And my great-grandmother said before they closed – "you're not going to see him again, touch him". So that put me off. I couldn't stand being near a tūpāpaku. That stayed with me until I was in my 30s. When I came back from Australia, we went to a tangi and I said "oh, no, I'm not going there". Then the kōhanga, we went off, took the kids to a tangi at Poroporo. I went up and thought "I don't really want to go up" but my daughter went up and touched the tūpapāku and she said "Mum, what's wrong with this kuia?" I said "oh, darling, she's just asleep". She touches her again and said "you're a liar. She's dead". [Laughter] But it was good, and then those kids, they learnt. Then when Dad's father passed away, my kids were there talking to their granddad and I thought oh, that's great, because I never, ever want them to be in their 30s and be like I was. It was great.

Anyway, having my kids I brought them up the only way I knew how, and that was the way that my parents brought me up. Good moral values, you know, moral values are more important than material items. Today they have ipads, iphones and digital phones and all that.

The highlight was that I always had Nanny there. And my kids today, they say “oh, mum, I’m so happy that you brought us home. We know all our family.” Christmas time, every two years I’d send them over to Australia to have Christmas with their family over there and said “We don’t want to go there.” Why not? Why not? “‘Cos it’s just us and it’s boring and the kai is funny.” And I said “well, what’s the difference?” My son says “oh Mum, at home we have a big hākari and the whānau is there and all the cousins and we play” and I thought oh, that’s neat. That’s really neat. Today my kids have both said “thank you, Mum”.

I loved my first Mothers’ Day when they left home. My daughter went off to university and did well. My son went off to Aussie. He went off the track for a while and I nipped that in the bud real fast. I said he was going to Aussie for a holiday and I said “when you get there, ring me up.” He rung me up, I said “you’re not coming back.” “Why?” I said “you don’t want to go to school, you don’t want to do anything. And you’re only 14 years old.” So Jeremy, all those kids, those boys that are going off the track, nip it in the bud straightaway. Deport them. You’ve got to get them out of the environment that they’re in.

I said to my son one time, when he was going through this stage, “have you smoked pot? He said “yes, Mum” and I said “When? How old were you?” And he said “I was 12.” So I said “where was I?” He said “you were at home.” I said “where did you get it from?” “Oh, I took uncle such and such and I had to drive him home and he was having a joint so I asked him for a puff and he gave it to me.” Anyway, meanwhile my sister’s at university, and she text me and says “boy’s at the Red Rock”, a pub in town, and I’m sitting there watching Coronation Street. I thought he was in bed. Grabbed this photo and drove into town and I said to them at the bar, “you seen this bloke?” They said “yeah, he was just in here” and I said well, he’s only 14 years old. If he’s back in here again,” I said “kick him out and call the cops.” Don’t muck around. You can scare them somehow. But he went off, he wasn’t happy about not coming back – having to stay in Australia – but I think it made a better person of him. His father got a professional tutor in for him, he was home-schooled and he had no choice because his father was there, you know.

My son’s biggest role model over the years has been my father. I thank you for that, Dad. Today to my son, his koro is his hero. And he showed it at Christmas time. He gets the biggest present he could find, the most expensive present and we’re all standing there and he gives it to his koro and says “oh, my hero”. But Dad’s been there too, you know, teach him how to eel, teach him how to chop wood, do basic little skills in the garden and that. And my daughter, when she went off to university she says “oh, Mum, I’ve got a garden growing”. She says “veggies are too dear, I can’t afford it”. I was so proud of her. Where did she learn that from? From her grandparents, her grandfather. All the little things, you know, this is how my family has been, and we carry it on from our grandparents, great role models. Grandparents, parents, me. Today I am a six-week-old Nanny. I’ve joined the nannies. And it’s awesome. And I look at my mokopuna and say yes, you’re going to be brainwashed. You are going to increase the Māori nation. You will ... role model. That’s what we want, isn’t it? We want healthy, well-educated respectful children.

I said to my daughter “You make sure she goes to a good kōhanga. She says “oh, no, Mum. Don’t need to do that.” Why, I said “Why? I’m her teacher.” I said, “Well, make sure. Make sure because I’m going to be watching”.

That’s my story. And there’s one thing that I’ve noticed with our families today. Last year I did a six-month suicide intervention course. I had a little project going, I thought: I’ve got to learn a bit more about this suicide thing before I start going out and doing

some research. One thing I would like the Government to have a look at is when these young mothers enrol to go on the benefit, I'd really like them to be able to do a parenting course. And they have a choice. Some Māori person could come and tell them, teach them. They're only babies today and, you know, life's so different and some of them haven't got grandparents. Some of them have been brought up with their mother or their father and even the parents don't even know. But I think it should be made compulsory that if you're going to go on the benefit you must do a parenting course. That's my recommendation.

Summary of Workshops

There were five groups discussing ways to strengthen whānau with the particular focus on parenting education. A resounding note among all groups was the belief that a strength of whānau Māori can be sourced in the practice of traditional concepts such as whanaungatangā and manaakitangā and that these cultural strengths can bolster whānau facing social and economic challenges.

It was also apparent that among those present, the ideal of the child being raised by the village was a firmly held aspiration. Parenting was often seen as a shared responsibility between parents, grandparents, as well as other relatives including aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings. The marae was also viewed as a key site of potential support and strength for whānau.

Both whakapapa and kaupapa based whānau were acknowledged as being powerful and positive contexts within which people can experience family and can develop to their fullest potential. There was a strongly held view that despite the varying configurations of whānau in contemporary New Zealand society Māori cultural values, such as whanaungatangā and manaakitangā which underpin the caregiving and caretaking aspects of cultural practices such as whāngai, are still valid and remain viable alternatives.

However, it is evident that whānau face their own challenges and not all are engaged culturally or attached to marae or a wider whānau. Irrespective of cultural strengths or access to wider whānau support, many whānau are dealing with serious issues that require other support mechanisms and strategies to enable themselves to fulfil their potential.

Support networks and agencies must work to access whānau and engage them in a way that is appropriate and empowering for whānau. Education and up-skilling were viewed as critical to the process of strengthening whānau. Effective communication was also seen as essential to ensuring whānau success.

Key issues

The hui acknowledged that many whānau Māori are dealing with difficult circumstances including financial hardship, lack of family support, the effects of abuse as well as alcohol and drug related issues. In particular, concern was expressed about the negative impacts that a lack of money can cause, especially for children and older family members.

“When we talk whānau, mother is close to 80 is struggling to survive on a pension. I’m trying to support my family, my mother, sister’s children and my brother’s children because my brother is in jail. I find a lot of Māori in that situation where one salary has to feed about four different whānau. I would like to see that being addressed somehow.”

“I come from a big whānau. My father was cruel, he was an alcoholic and always beat up my mum but he was a good provider. It was not always pretty but what I see for myself is we got to look after our own backyards first. Start from grass roots, start from yourself and look in the mirror.”

It was felt that the younger generation have higher and unrealistic expectations and that they are dissatisfied because they are coming from a place of want instead of need.

“This is a ‘want it now’ generation.”

“I think nowadays whānau expectations are greater. My daughters say ‘Mum there’s nothing to eat’ but there’s plenty of kai, it’s just not what they want. Our young people today their expectations are high. Also the whole IT environment has created an ‘I want’ instead of an ‘I need’. To a degree it’s about: are the wants or needs of our whānau realistic in terms of affordability and the reality. I don’t think anything the Government is going to do will change the way our whānau think. It’s a lot to do with jobs and economics. My kids would never go out and pick pūhā. They know how to but they never will.”

While some felt that families “Need lot of help” especially “Raising of mokopuna” some believed that “we don’t need fixing” recalling “the Epuni Boys home – the place where naughty boys were sent. They were so-called fixed up and then put back with the whānau. Things haven’t changed.”

However, it was acknowledged that there are “Dysfunctional whānau with no contact with marae who don’t know their connections.” And that “*Whānau ora* was supposed to help the marae to help the whānau connect but “*Accessing whānau is not easy*”.

Culture as a strength

It was evident that while there are ‘different value systems’ there is also a belief that ‘culturally empowered’ families can strengthen even those who are economically weak. These cultural values play an important and foundational role for many whānau Māori.

“Our group has agreed that the strength of whānau is based on these fundamentals. By taking care of your own whānau first and having realistic goals in terms of life style and affordability. Promoting whakapapa, whakapono, whanaungatangā within our tamariki, hapū and iwi. To see positive policies implemented within government for whānau. Giving our tamariki something to believe in, filling a void that was once there with our rangatahi and celebrating all the positives surrounding whānau.”

Parenting as a key

Parenting is one aspect of strengthening whānau that can draw from traditional concepts in an empowering way:

“Strengthening whānau is about effective role-modelling. When we look at the nuclear, mainstream family structure, we normally identify the roles and responsibilities of mother and father. Through the Māori world view, we see the layers of conceptual thinking, philosophy, principles, values and beliefs that are embedded in our cultural understandings and wider application of parenting. Parenting is a function that is carried out by the wider whānau. If we are talking about the importance of whānau support, then we need it put into context to understand it.

From a Māori perspective, our ancient histories, our whakapapa are our models of best practice for parenting. We are spiritually linked to the first primal parents, Ranginui and Papatuanuku who continue to nurture us and provide sustenance. Through time and space, the ‘separation’ of Ranginui and Papatūānuku was the impetus that enabled the first children of the universe to grow, develop and establish boundaries with each other in order to determine their own identities and potential futures. This ‘separation’ represents the potential strength of whānau.

Although Ranginui and Papatūānuku are the 'first parents' of the universe, their own manifestations emanate from the development and nurturance of their whakapapa links to Te Pō and Te Kore. It is within this context that we can begin to understand the inherent nature of parenting and whānau support. Māori possess a nurturing spirit. All members of the whānau play a parenting role."

All members of the whānau are then employed in the task of raising the child including grandparents, aunts, uncles, older cousins and siblings:

"Grandparents/tūpuna play an important grand-parenting role to their mokopuna. Some kuia and koroua whāngai their mokopuna and therefore assume the role of parenting as well as grandparenting."

"This generation also plays an integral parenting role to the nieces and nephews (also grand)."

"Whānau support where each sibling cares for each other."

"Older siblings, older 'cuzzies' looking after the younger siblings and cuzzies."

"To be there for my tamariki and make sure they have the right resources. Knowing that when they look to their aunties and uncles that they have many parents, I'm not their only parent it's not just me watching and caring for them."

The role of parenting and whānau support is extended to include the marae and members of the wider whānau and hapū:

"Parenting is not only the role of whānau members. The marae and papakāingā also play a critical parenting/nurturing function for our children. During the marae's day-to-day activities including wānanga, celebrations, tangihanga, events etc, the marae as a collective becomes the holistic parenting body. Kids are free to run and play anywhere on the marae. They know that if they are hungry or thirsty to go to the wharekai and the aunties and uncles will feed them. They know where the boundaries are, the areas that are forbidden to play in eg rivers, moana, wāhi tapu. The marae is their playground, their home, their safe haven because they know that the whānau whanāui will look after them. They are also aware that they are free to do what they want to express themselves as tamariki because this place is their own, their tūrangawaewae, their ūkaipō, their place of sustenance and strength."

"The marae provides the platform for our tamariki to have their own unique experiences and realities that enable them to grow and develop as confident young Māori who truly understand the power and strength of whānau."

In addition to the social and cultural wellbeing of the person, the spiritual welfare is also bolstered and nourished within this traditional setting.

"Brought my whānau home to Ōpōtiki. We didn't go to the marae, as we needed to time to reconnect as a whānau. To find our connection to the land, our whakapapa and whanaungatanga. We are always learning it's a privilege and a joy. We didn't want to put pressure on whānau from overseas. Didn't want to get caught up with protocol, culture and tikanga."

"It's a challenge living in a city because I was brought up in the country. My role for my children is to take them back home and let them know that's their place in the world."

That's one of the ways of strengthening my whānau and that is to travel an hour and a half once a week back home. I didn't have te Māori at secondary school nor did I have kōhangā reo but my children have that now. They had kōhanga, kura kaupapa Māori and secondary school that grounded them. It was all about te reo, identity, whakapapa, that was the making of my kids. Making sure you know where your children are and that they know no matter where they are they know where the whānau are. Connections, things like face book and social media. Our kids teach us just as much as we try to teach them."

The importance of traditional values

The traditional values of whanaungatanga and manaakitanga as expressed through cultural practices such as whāngai were held by many at the hui as foundational keys to strengthening whānau.

"I hold firm with promotion of whakapapa, whanaungatanga. For our own whānau and iwi. Whakapono and whangai ngā mokopuna i roto i te reo. We try to promote this in our parenting lifestyle programmes."

It was felt that these traditional values and the sense of belonging and self-worth that they can engender in a person can be promoted amongst whānau, regardless of their configuration. Whether whakapapa or kaupapa based, members of whānau can experience that same sense of kinship and relationship and enjoy the benefits of those connections.

"Everyone is whānau – as a person with special needs I get labelled a lot. I have adopted my neighbour as my Mum although I have parents who live in Australia. I am in constant contact with my parents. I started 'People First'. We protested to get a home for special needs people to be shut down. This was an institution where we were isolated. We were successful and we are out as active participants in the community."

"My whānau always look immediate. Help our own first. We always took whānau in, fed them, and clothed them. That to me is what whānau is about. I learnt that from my mother, she had 12 young people in our home. We as children had that in our lives; we were always caring for people. My daughters know through observation that when they leave home they will always, no matter what, be responsible for me at some point in their lives. If you can, entrench it into your tamariki that it is important to care for people."

"That's how I grew up with my mum and dad always people coming to our house who had to be looked after. My sister and I started taking people in like students from Maketū and Murupara live on the floor so they could go to Rotorua Girls High School. That's how I lived and still do. Everyone who comes through became whānau and I cared for them. I just loved them and gave them food. I was also aware of Hauora and importance for my whānau and being a nani."

"Back in the day thinking about my mum, she could make anything out of nothing. They had a wonderful ability to take people in which wasn't an issue whereas today we are wondering how to feed them. When I was young, as the youngest I used to have to go without, sometimes we all had to go without so we could provide for the manuhiri. So some of us have grown up thinking we always have to give."

Although Te Reo was mentioned it did not appear to play as significant a role in strengthening whānau as the maintenance and promotion of traditional concepts and cultural practices.

"We've lost our ability to listen and to grasp and hold on to words (te reo)"

"Although we are a visual/learning people, we have become more visual and lost the ability to learn by listening eg when learning waiata we have a big screen in front of us with the words. Our kids and moko can run and play around us all day and will have learnt the words by the end of the day (Just by listening)."

"We've lost those skills."

"We are the generation that missed out on the reo. Our parents never passed it down to us and now our kids and mokopuna have the ability to attend kōhangā and learn the reo."

Other strategies for strengthening whānau

There were a range of strategies put forward by participants with a particular focus on Education.

"Teaching our whānau what is right and wrong."

"It's not one answer it's a lot of others. On my father's side my koro, he was a great believer in education whereas my koro on my mother's side my grandfather were mahi kai all the time. They were both right in the end and I reaped the benefits of both."

"Whānau are the most important actors in the directions that our tamariki follow in regards to education."

"Education is the door to opportunities in life and whānau is the key to opening that door."

"Teach our parents to love their tamariki."

"Introducing new skills to whānau."

"Learn skills to better their lives."

"Role model homes, incentives are necessary."

"Alternative methods of learning – using nature, instruments/music in schools."

"Expose whānau to ensure they get educated – life experience."

Other ways to strengthen whānau included:

"Love, expectations (clear), value systems, walk your talk, know your child, service, unconditional giving, me (oneself) , trusting yourself and others."

"Big hearts and making a difference/we are in it for the long haul."

"Clearing the mirror. Before dealing with other whānau, one must clear their own whānau."

"Correcting what the past did wrong."

"SMART Goals."

"That bond of the parent and child is important."

"Express their aroha, to let the tamariki know that they're loved."

"Importance of empowering our tamariki"

"Focus on whānau is paramount."

"Just being whānau (immediate/extended)"

"Keeping together "

"Whānau is important, role modelling, everybody has the ability to achieve."

“Being actively involved in our tamariki’s lives.”
“Acknowledge the skills we have. “
“A succession plan within our whānau and on our marae.”
“A different way of doing things, fix the whānau (Iritana Tahwiwhirangi)”

Support services to strengthen whānau

There were some key messages for support services and agencies seeking to work with whānau Māori:

“This is the voice of our whānau/families, listen to the voices.”
“Go to the community and observe and engage.”
“Support whānau to identify their own futures.”
Have a “Solution focused approach – whānau have their own focus in the future.”
“Empower whānau to make them feel valuable.”
“Nurture the whole family.”
“Get those high risk whānau to engage in community activities.”
“It doesn’t matter what whānau, we meet them, we offer support where there is a need.”
“A commitment to the people, tātau, tātau.”
“Work behind the scenes”
“Linking to other services.”
“Encouraging whānau to reach their full potential and grab each opportunity that’s in front.”

Other needs identified included:

“Māori nurses are hard to find in mainstream health issues/services, many work for iwi providers, lacking in Plunket services.”
“BREAKING THE CYCLE – looking at providing respite care for grandparents who look after their mokopuna, offering support for caregivers.”
“Positively encouraging whānau through life.”
“Advising whānau through their ups and downs.”
“Being in their faces.”

Effective communication

Communication is a key to strengthening whānau from within and outside of the whānau network. Participants felt it important for outside agencies to listen to whānau in order to better understand their needs and aspirations.

“Listening to whānau”
“Whakarongo to whānau “
“Communication to better understand families”
“Communication is important”

Within the whānau, the technology associated with communication such as Facebook and Skype were seen as positive tools for members to keep in touch. The growing importance and place of communication technology in the lives of youth was acknowledged another critical factor by those present. The challenge for the older generations is to embrace this technology and utilise it to strengthen the whānau.

“Communication – social media”
“Kids watch a lot of TV/Facebook. Can this be a way of reaching and teaching.”
“Communication good or bad is learnt”

“It’s a way of keeping in touch.”

“Texting, Skype – keeps you in touch with the rest of the world, no matter where your whānau are.”

“We need to use it to keep in touch.”

“We need to understand the kids world which is a technology and cyber space world.”

“Should technology be on our marae? (As long as it doesn’t replace our tikangā practices such as karangā on a CD which is already happening in some parts of the motu.”

Role models

The role of men and women within the whānau were two key areas of concern. It was felt that the “positioning of Māori women is very important”, and that there are not enough strong male role models for children especially Māori boys.

“I might not be the best messenger for my own kids so find the right one and in terms of how we engage. Get back to basics. Celebrate us as people instead of everything bad all the time. Positive affirmation and celebrate the small things. At the moment our boys and our men are lost. Our role models, there’s not enough of them. We have to find a role for our boys. The last one is make time. Just be there for my kids.”

Empowering whānau

Finally, there was a sense that whānau Māori would do what is necessary to strengthen themselves utilising the tools, networks and resources at their disposal. “Whānau make sacrifices for the pursuit of success.”

Furthermore, there was a strong desire to enable and empower those whānau and individuals who need extra support to become strong so that they might be able to experience their fullest potential. There were heart-warming stories shared about those who actively work voluntarily within their communities in enabling roles.