
Australian Government
National Emergency Management Agency
Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
Co-hosted by Lucy Kaiser and Dr Bhiamie Williamson
Indigenous disaster resilience research webinar

Welcome

John Richardson

Executive Director

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR)

Acknowledgement of Country

AIDR acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the various lands on which you all join us from today and the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori people participating in this event.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters across Australia.

We also pay our respects to ngā iwi Māori as Tāngata Whenua and Treaty of Waitangi partners of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Housekeeping

- You will remain muted and your camera will not be activated for the duration of today's event.
- Today's event will be recorded and made available after the event.
- Please enter questions for our speakers in the Q&A function, not the chat box.
- Please use the chat box to share any thoughts or reflections during the presentation
- Please be respectful to each other when posting your comments or questions.

Co-host introductions

Lucy Kaiser
Research Officer
Earth Sciences New Zealand

Dr Bhiamie Williamson
Senior Research Fellow & Program Lead
National Indigenous Disaster Resilience (NIDR)

Scan to read the
April AJEM Edition

AJEM Article: *Working in partnership on cultural fire: application of a lessons management approach*

David Windsor
Cultural Fire & Partnerships Coordinator
Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), Western Australia

Peter Galvin
Bushfire Knowledge & Practice Manager
Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), Western Australia

Lessons Learned with the DFES Cultural Fire Program

AIDR Indigenous Edition of AJEM webinar, July 2025

**First Nations Australians should be aware that this presentation may contain images of deceased persons*

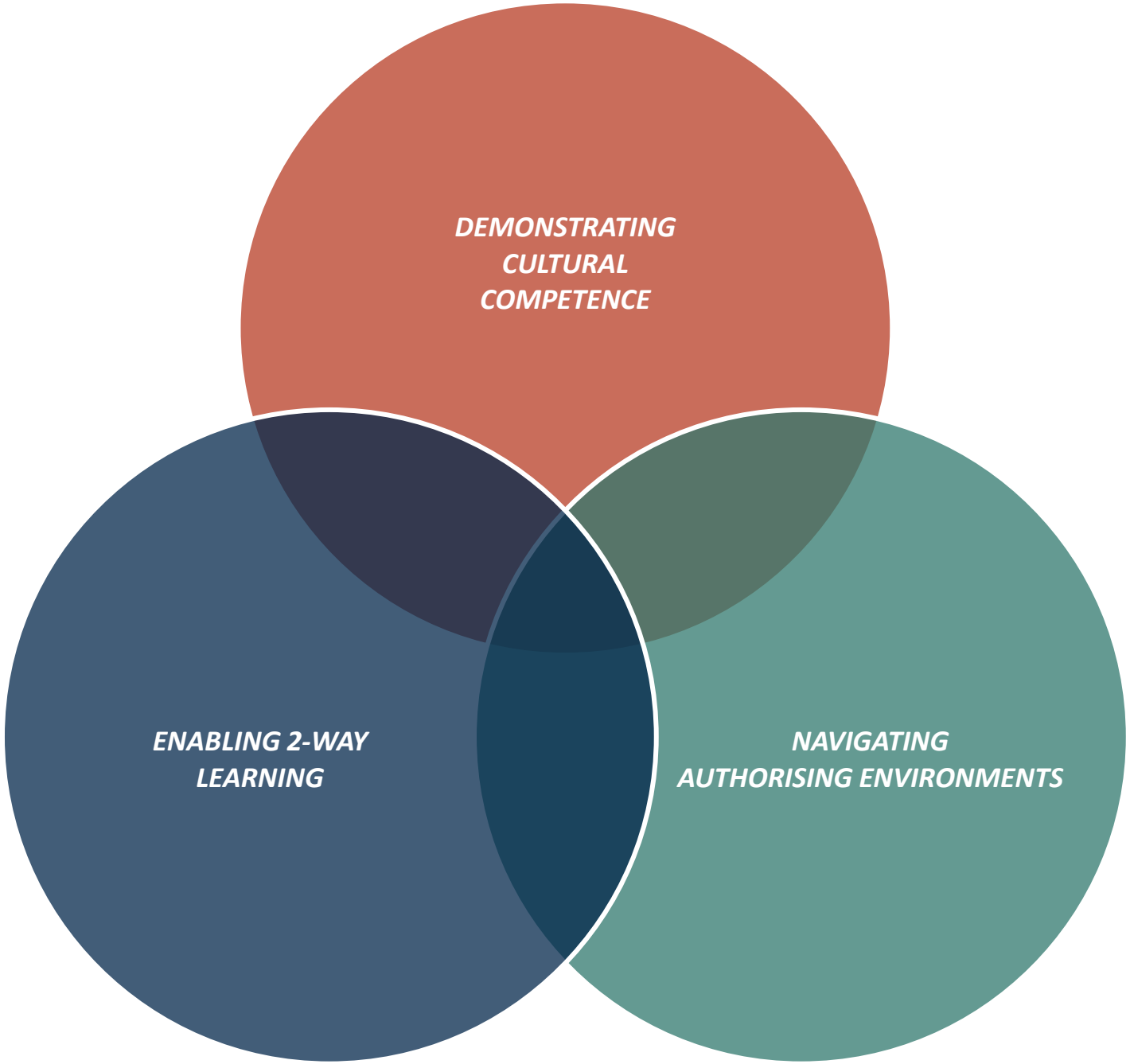
Acknowledging People & Country

Artwork by Aunty Gloria Kearing, Bindjareb Elder

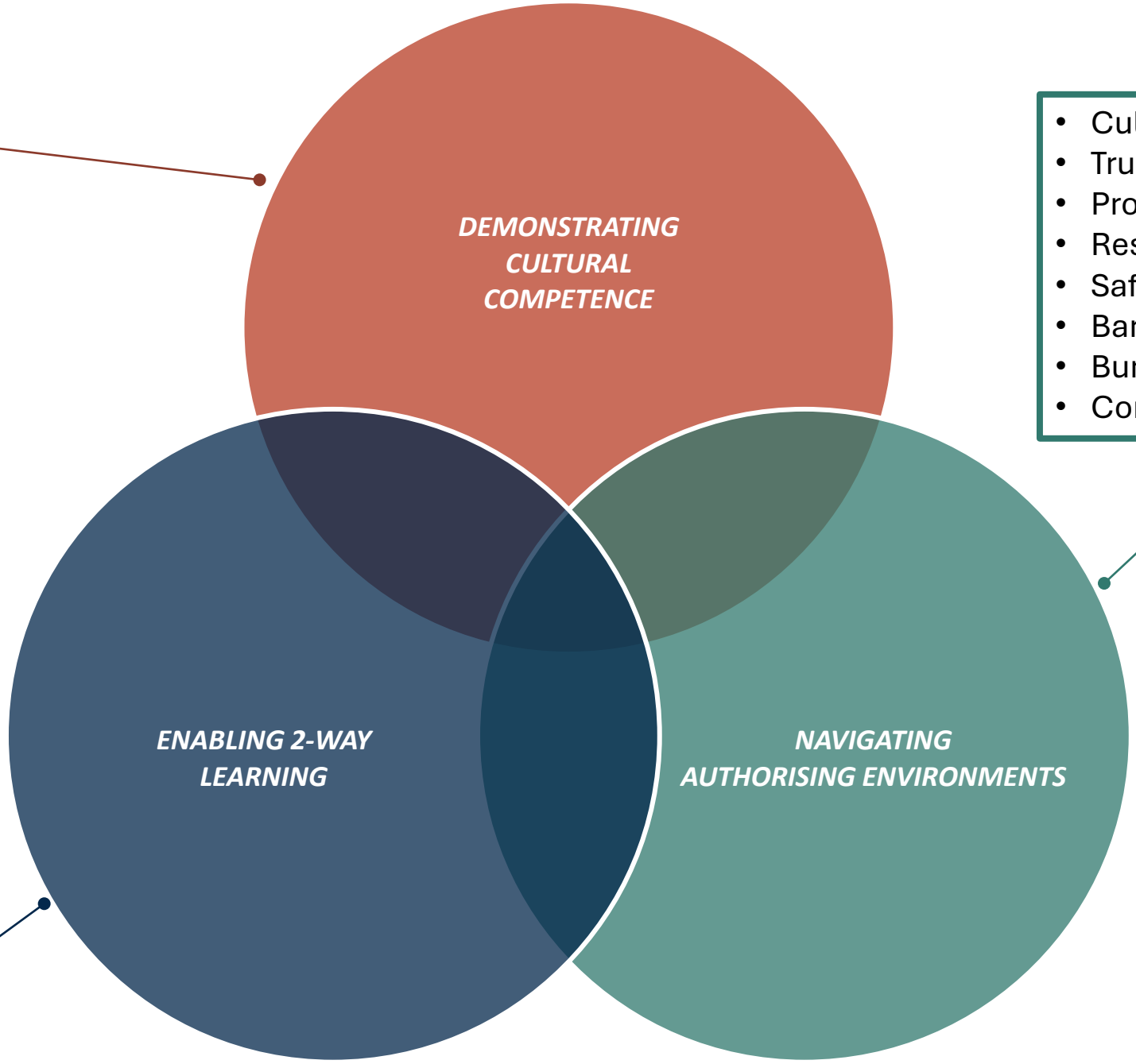
Respecting Cultural Practice and Knowledge (ICIP)

NOWANUP
healing country... healing people

What have we learned?



- Self determination
- Cultural competence
- Cultural safety
- Cultural protocols
- Right people
- Role of Elders
- Knowledge sharing



- Cultural authority
- Trust & relationships
- Program delivery
- Resourcing & capability
- Safe work environments
- Barriers to Cultural burning
- Burn governance
- Conflicting obligations

- Facilitating 2-way learning
- Contextualised learning
- Learning consolidation
- Training delivery
- Schedules & structures
- Group work
- Formal training courses

Sharing learnings

Phase Focus

- Focus on nurturing a two-way relationship
- Focus on shared planning and delivery

Planning together in a Yarning Circle on Bindjareb Boodja, May 2024. Photo: Ryan Tate, DFES.

Delivering together on cultural burning with the Danju Rangers, September 2023. Photo: David Windsor, DFES.

2-way learning with rangers, staff and volunteers on Ballardong Boodja, October 2023. Photo: Carol Littlefair, Shire of York.

Due diligence

Understand people, community, culture and Country.

Phase 1

- ***Identify Traditional Custodians*** to raise your awareness of who they are and learn about their views and perspectives.
- ***Understand decision making protocols*** and that Indigenous governance requires cultural authority to make decisions.
- ***Understand that kinship systems*** help identify the right person who holds cultural authority.
- ***Be familiar with your organisation's role*** and where or how you can help contribute to First Nation's outcomes.

Build foundation

Foster trusting and open relationships.

Phase 2

- ***Be available*** to accept invitations and offers from Traditional Custodians.
- ***Genuinely listen, hear and see*** what is said and not said.
- ***Understand the community's cultural obligations***, priorities and aspirations and how you can contribute.
- ***Respect connections*** between people and Country.
- ***Get on Country*** and make Country the meeting place.
- ***Use actions – not words*** to show you are reliable and demonstrating your willingness to act.
- ***Build trust, respect and understanding*** guided by the pace of Traditional Custodians.
- ***Use storytelling*** for connection and relatability through informal settings like yarning circles, campfires and cups of tea.

Plan together

Navigate complexity and identify mutual benefits.

Phase 3

- ***Be curious*** by asking where and how Traditional Custodians want to engage and make decisions.
- ***Work together*** considering both perspectives to achieve shared outcomes.
- ***Share knowledge and experiences*** to get better outcomes and be willing to compromise.
- ***Use your organisation*** to identify how resources, time and knowledge might support cultural aspirations.

Deliver together

Collective delivery, knowledge sharing and two-way learning.

Phase 4

- ***Embrace 2-way learning*** to maximise knowledge transfer opportunities.
- ***Adopt the process and phases*** to enable collaborative program delivery.

Future projects

Collaborate to identify future opportunities.

Phase 5

- ***Strong relationships*** that are based on trust will allow future projects to start at phase 3 (not phase 1), fast-tracking further collaborations.
- ***Celebrate and acknowledge*** your shared success and continue investing in the relationship for further mutual outcomes.

NAIDOC 2025 – The next generation

NAIDOC 2025 – The next generation

Thanks!

DFES Bushfire Centre of Excellence and Cultural Fire Program

AJEM Project report

Connect:
david.windsor@dfes.wa.gov.au
peter.galvin@dfes.wa.gov.au

Artwork by Aunty Gloria Kearing, Bindjareb Elder

Q&A

Don’t forget to put your questions in the Q&A function.

AJEM Article: *Working together to drive change: weaving caring for Country practices into fire risk management on Djiringanj Country*

Graham Moore
NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Blann Davis, Veronica Parsons, Mandy Foster and Ruby Foster
Merrimans Rangers

Dr Gregory Summerell
NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water and University of Wollongong

Working together to drive change: weaving caring for Country practices into fire risk management on Djiringanj Country

Peer reviewed

Djiringanj Country
Ruby Foster[2]
Veronica Parsons[2]
Raymond Parsons[2]
Zac Campbell[2]
Graham Moore[3]
Kerry Avery[3]
Chris Hoskins[3]
Dr Katharine Haynes[3,4]
ORCID: 0000-0002-3024-6878
Dr Gregory Summerell[3,4]
ORCID: 0009-0007-7024-7200

1. Djiringanj Country
2. Merrimans Ranger, Djiringanj Country [South Coast], New South Wales.
3. NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Sydney New South Wales.
4. University of Wollongong, Wollongong, New South Wales.

SUBMITTED
29 January 2025
ACCEPTED
26 February 2025
DOI
www.doi.org/10.47389/40.2.79

Abstract

This article documents an action research Community-led project with the Merrimans Local Aboriginal Land Council Aboriginal Rangers on the Far South Coast of New South Wales. The Fire and Country Cultural Values Project explored how best to empower Community-led cultural connection that positively influences bushfire management.

The cultural science team in the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) is, we think, an Australian first. It is a group of government-employed Aboriginal staff who are supported to practice cultural science. Processes of colonisation have disrupted the sharing of cultural knowledge through family and extended kinship networks. While there has been significant growth in the interest and support for Aboriginal caring for Country practices, work to partner with communities to sustainably regrow cultural capacity and capability remains limited. The Fire and Country Cultural Values Project has led to increases in cultural identity through sharing knowledge; restoring pride, confidence and wellbeing and rebuilding kinship relationships between different communities on the south coast. This has enabled community members to participate in, and provide advice to, bushfire risk management planning to protect tangible and intangible cultural assets.

Position statement

This paper outlines a case study of action research undertaken with the Merrimans Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) on the Far South Coast of NSW on Dirringanj Country. The authors acknowledge that the format and writing style used in this paper is that of a traditional academic publication. To influence Western process (as this project aims to do), it is important to communicate in academic journals. However, we need to communicate in both Western and Indigenous ways. To do this, Aboriginal ranger teams are creating paintings as a reflection of their story and journey as part of this project. Beside each painting we display the corresponding scientific papers to demonstrate the different ways of communicating, with both methods respecting the different knowledge systems, but telling the same story.

This paper was written and contributed to by all authors. In some cases, information was provided verbally and transcribed. When cultural knowledge has been provided, it has been referenced or cited using an approach that was developed in collaboration with the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee. The approach recognises the significant value of the knowledge held by Aboriginal custodians that has been passed on for generations and should not be considered less than peer-reviewed academic expertise (see Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Threatened Species Working Group 2024, Appendix A).

Introduction

Historical and ongoing processes of colonisation and discrimination prevent Aboriginal people from carrying out their responsibilities to care for Country.[1]

1. Caring for Country at https://soe.dcceew.gov.au/indigenous/management/caring-country

- Community led approach to Bushfire Risk Management planning

Project question:

How to get Aboriginal culture to contribute to Bushfire Risk Management Planning?

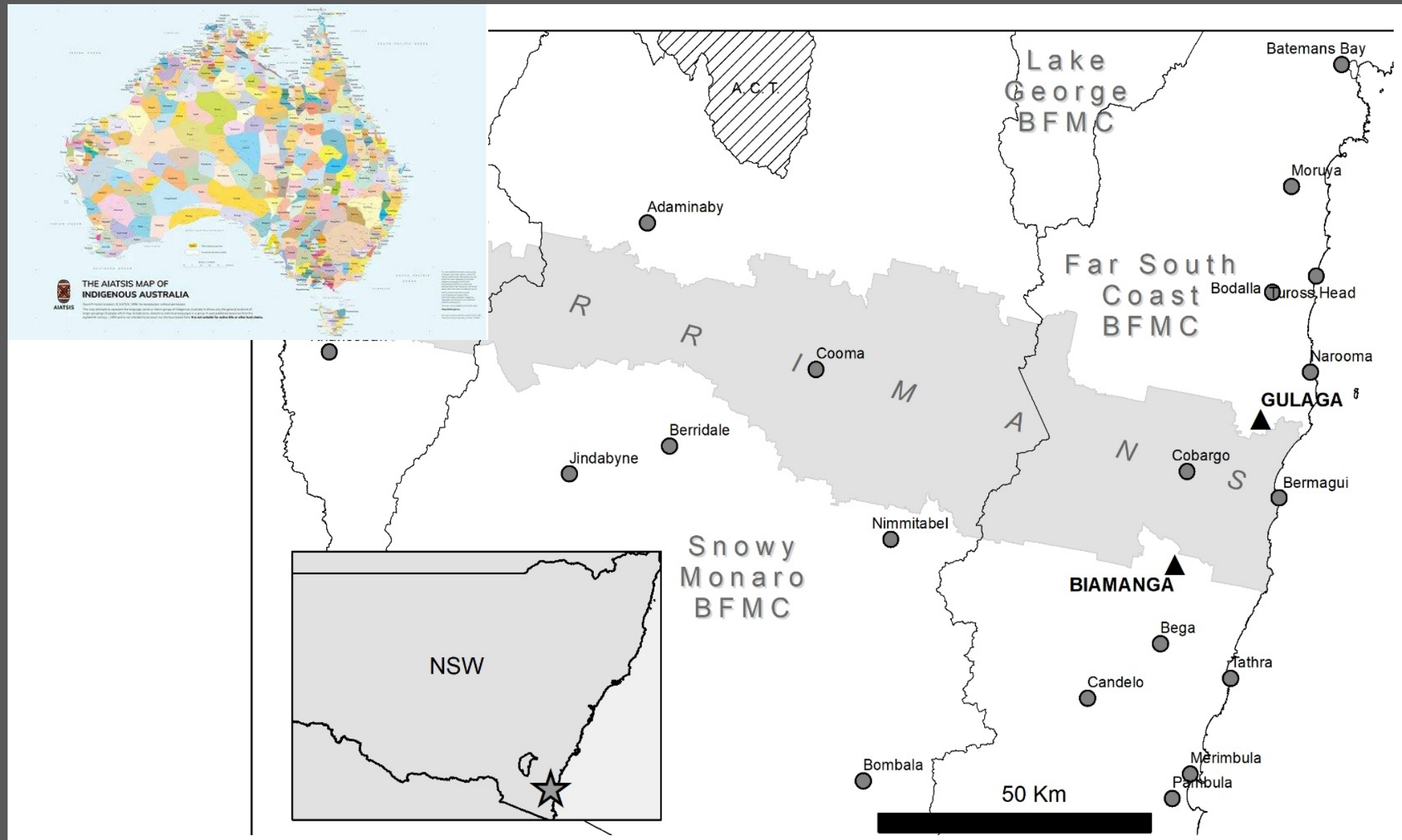
Sub-questions:

How do we support Aboriginal communities to bring an Aboriginal perspective?

What are the challenges for Aboriginal people to practice their culture in this process/space?

Project components

Photos: DCCEEW/Amanda Close

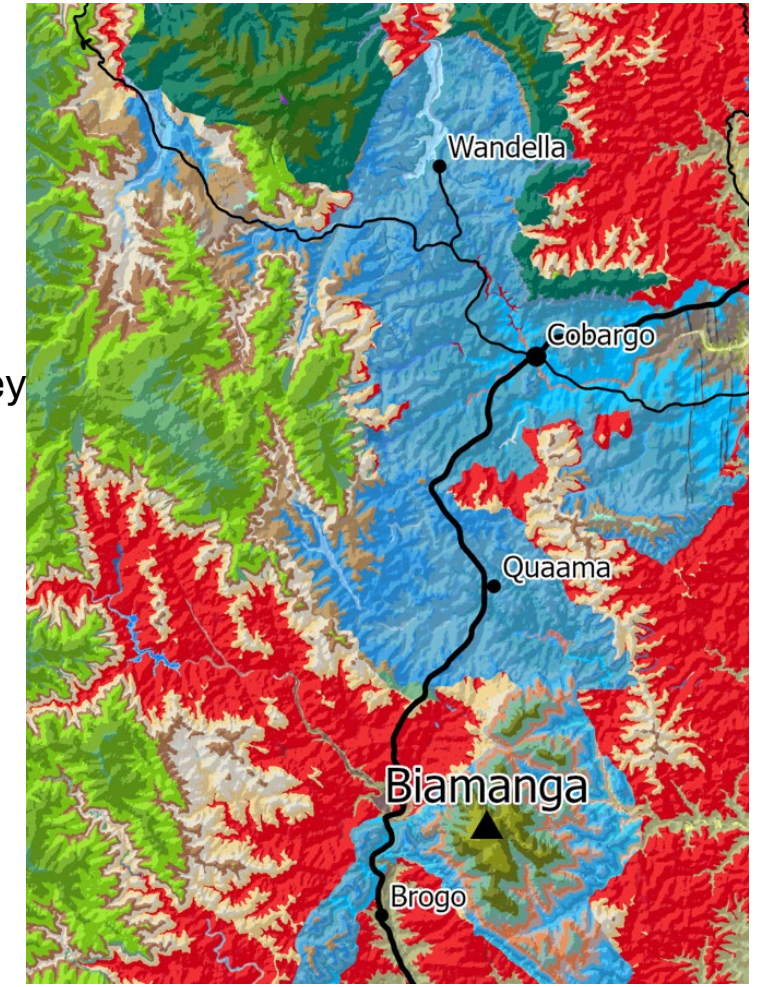

THE AIATSIS MAP OF
INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA
AIATSIS
A.C.T.
Lake George BFMC
Batemans Bay
Moruya
Adaminaby
Far South Coast BFMC
Bodalla
Tuross Head
Narooma
RIRIMANS
Cooma
GULAGA
Berridale
Jindabyne
Cobargo
Bermagui
Nimmitabel
Snowy Monaro BFMC
BIAMANGA
Bega
Tathra
Candelo
Bombala
Merimbula
Pambula
50 Km
NSW

Cultural Mapping of Country (traditional)-

- The skin painting represents specific sites
- Two significant mountains and their Cultural Landscapes within the study area
- Fire affected Country
- Waterways
- Pathways
- Various Vegetation on Country

Cultural Mapping of Country (Spatial Science)

- Major Country
- Landforms combined with key soil attributes as determined by Knowledge holders



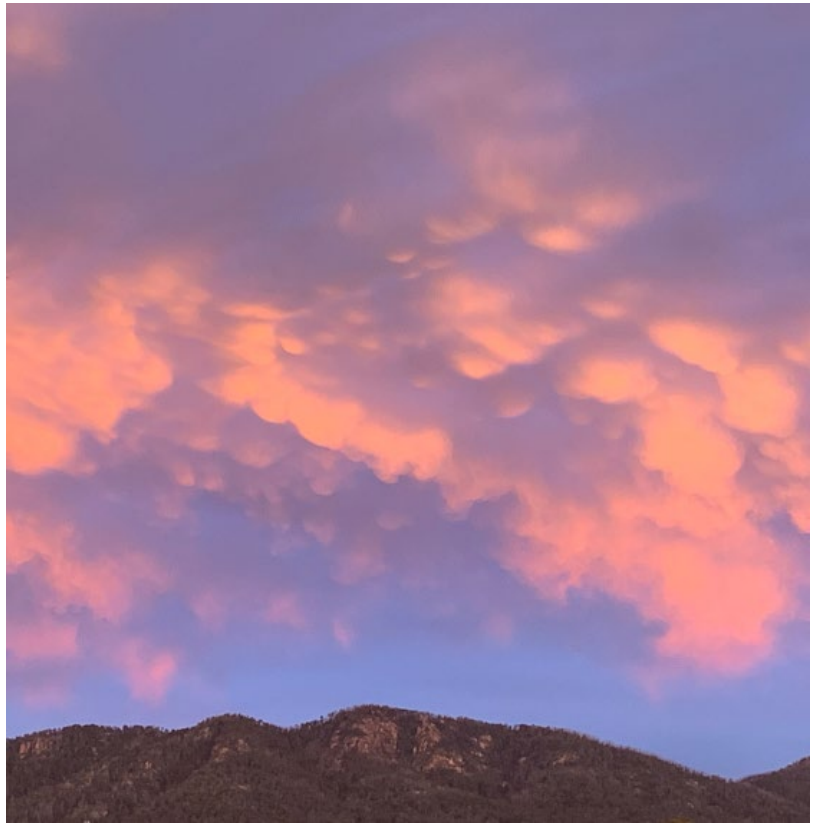
Cultural Gathering – Dignams Creek Kinship Cultural Reset Burn

Elders, Ranger Crews and NSW DCCEEW Science Staff at Dignams Creek – **Bridging western science with Traditional Ecological Knowledge**

Two years in planning – co-ordination of people, agencies and Country, understanding the full imprint of that landscape, tangible / intangible .

Two types of risk we were considering– Legal /Regulatory and Cultural responsibility

Having fun, be safe, be your cultural self, yarn up, Country will respond



Talking with Country to inform her of the planned burn.

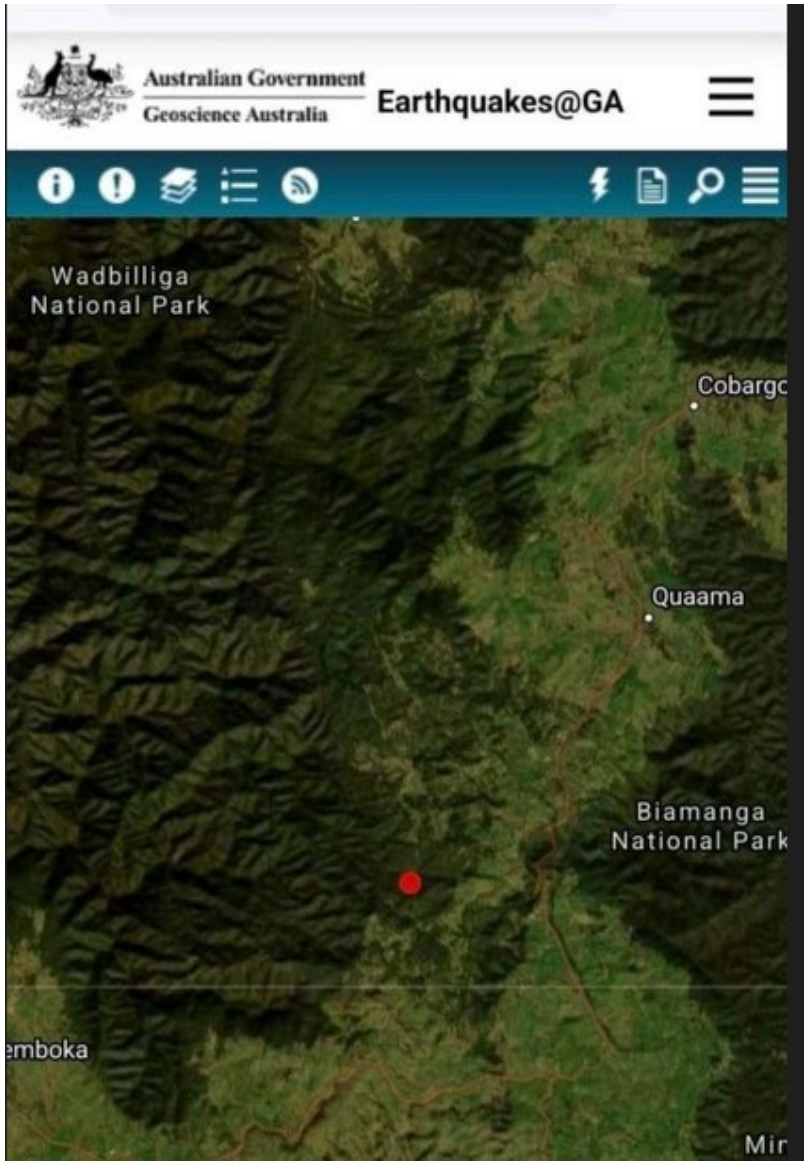
Speaking the story of the Crow and Eagle and their connection to Fire.

Applied bushfire science

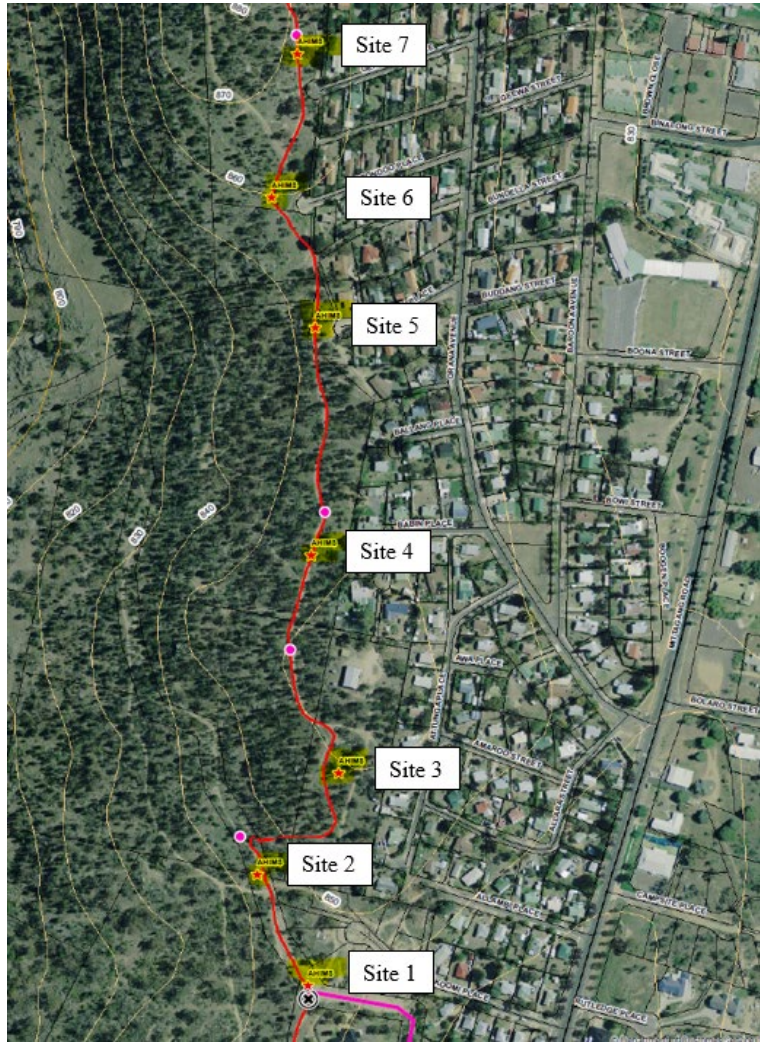
Monitoring soil health under different burning conditions

Credit: Kat Haynes, DCCEEW

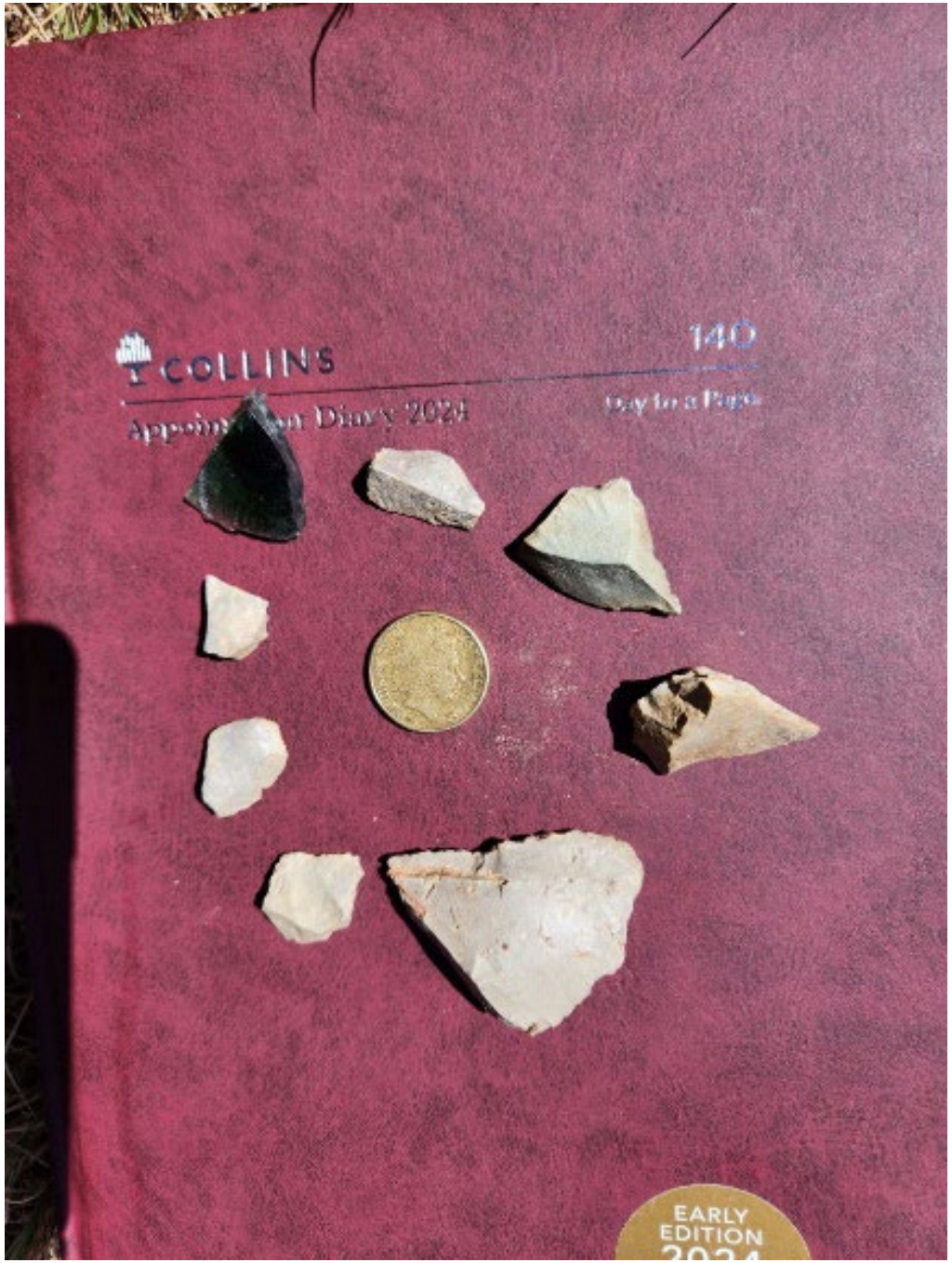
Country responding back



Day after the burn – rain from South + earthquake close to Biamanga – connected Cultural Landscape



Cooma North Ridge Case study


COLLINS
140
EARLY
EDITION

Cultural Incident Management Exercise (CIMX):
Protecting Aboriginal Cultural Values in bushfire

- Australian First
- Documentary being produced
- Premiere event in Sydney (Reconciliation Week)
- Approaches for critically important, but sensitive, cultural information was communicated to government agencies during an emergency situation.

Cultural camps – shared experiences – Kinship – being on Country

- We laugh a lot, and we cry a lot. Be prepared for both.
- Value of getting on Country
- Commit time to some deep yarning
- Allow yourself to learn and see things from another perspective
- Be open to truth-telling and listening

Q&A

Don’t forget to put your questions in the Q&A function.

AJEM Article: *Māori-led tourism and climate change impacts and adaptation: Perspectives from Westland Tai Poutini National Park, New Zealand*

Abby Hamilton (Ngāi Tahu)
Lincoln University Master of Applied Science Graduate (2024)
Te Toi whakaruruhau O Aotearoa Whakaaturanga, Mātauranga Māori
Disaster Risk Reduction Research Centre, Massey University and EQC

Māori-led tourism businesses (MLTB) in Te Tai Poutini: An exploration of how they are adapting to existing and anticipated climate change impacts in the region: A case study of Westland Tai Poutini National Park and its proximate destination townships

Abby Hamilton, *Ngāi Tahu,* Emma Stewart,
Stephen Espiner & Joanna Fountain

National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) 2.30-4.45pm NZ time on the 9th of July

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY
TE WHARE WĀNAKA O AORAKI

Australian Journal of Emergency Management (AJEM) webinar showcasing research from the April 2025 special issue to celebrate NAIDOC week

Ko Aoraki te maunga

Ko Waitaki te awa

Ko Ngāi Tahu te iwi

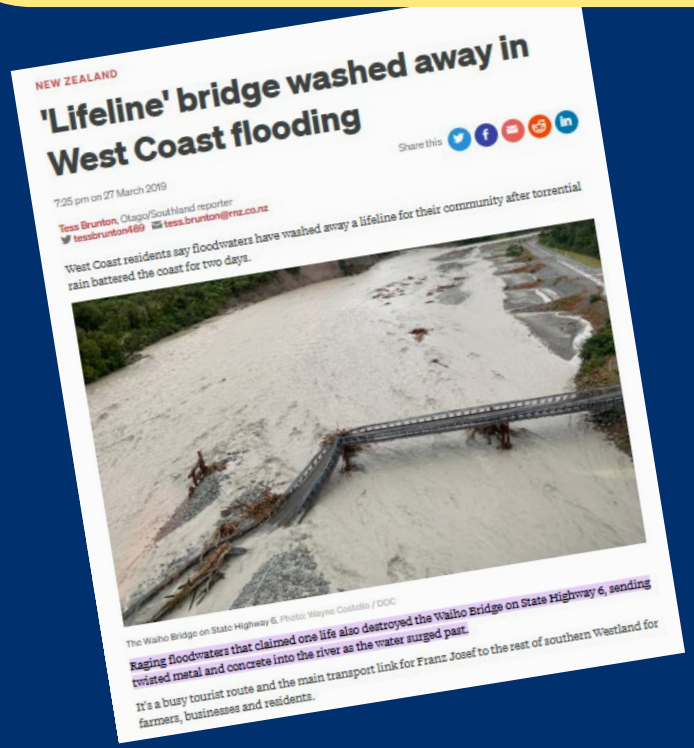
Ko Te Whareraurahe te tūpuna

Ko Hamilton te ingoa whānau

Ko Abby toku ingoa

Research Focus:

- MLTB experiences of climate change in Westland Tai Poutini and nearby towns
- Adaptation strategies and alignment with Māori values
- Climate-related risks and opportunities for MLTBs in the region



NEW ZEALAND

'Lifeline' bridge washed away in West Coast flooding

Share this

7:25 pm on 27 March 2019

Tess Brunton, Otago/Southland reporter
tessbrunton489 tess.brunton@rnz.co.nz

West Coast residents say floodwaters have washed away a lifeline for their community after torrential rain battered the coast for two days.

The Waiho Bridge on State Highway 6. Photo: Wayne Costello / DOC

Raging floodwaters that claimed one life also destroyed the Waiho Bridge on State Highway 6, sending twisted metal and concrete into the river as the water surged past.

It's a busy tourist route and the main transport link for Franz Josef to the rest of southern Westland for farmers, businesses and residents.

NEW ZEALAND / BUSINESS

Uncertain times for Westland tourism businesses

6:34 am on 12 November 2024

Share this

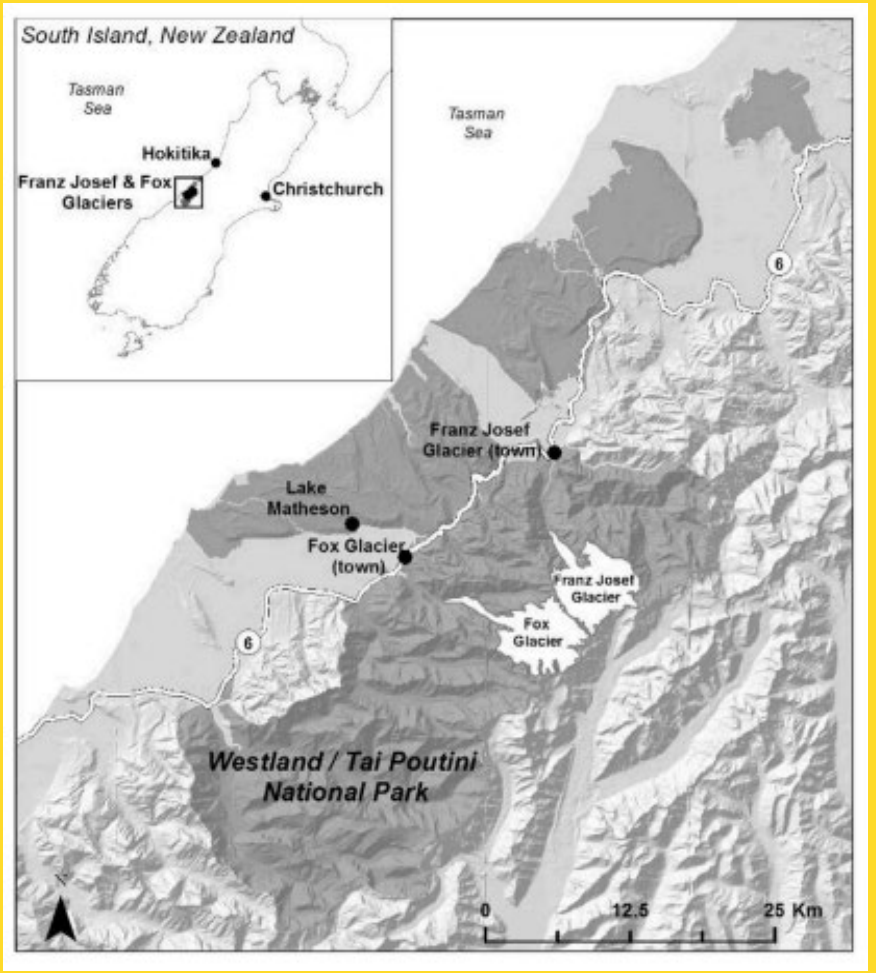
State Highway 6 is shut from Fox Glacier to Haast. Photo: NZTA/Waka Kotahi

Tourism businesses in Westland are facing uncertainty heading into their busy season, as the main highway remains closed after this weekend's storm, with no firm re-opening date.

State Highway 6 is shut from Fox Glacier in the north, to Haast in the south, and Waka Kotahi have said that's likely to be the case until the end of this week, at least, while contractors clear rockfall debris and assess the stability of the road.

Method:

Qualitative Interviews (n=13). Participants included MLTB representatives and tourism experts. All provided informed consent; pseudonyms used to ensure confidentiality



Location of Westland Tai Poutini National Park and Fox Glacier/Te Moeka o Tuawe and Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere (Stewart et al., 2016; p. 381)

NEW ZEALAND / WEATHER

West Coast main highway cut off, businesses worried

5:52 pm on 10 November 2024

Share this

Major cracks in the the main highway linking West Coast communities - at Westland's Knights Point - are a concern, NZTA says, and there is currently no detour without travelling over to the east coast. Photo: Supplied / NZTA

Businesses are worried tourists can't reach them as a main highway connecting West Coast communities is closed north of Haast, after damage from severe weather, and local authorities have provided advice about what if you have property damage.

A local State of Emergency declared in south Westland was lifted late on Sunday, following deluges, slips, evacuations, flooded homes and damage to roads and highways on Saturday.

Key Findings:

Most informants recognise climate change impacts on their business and manuhiri (visitors)

Major risks include road/infrastructure disruptions and glacier retreat

Key findings:

Glacier Retreat & Tourism Impacts

- Informants noted growing challenges in visitor access to glaciers due to recession
- Helicopter use seen as a short-term, controversial solution with landing becoming harder
- Concerns raised that continued retreat may deter tourists, threatening regional visitation
- Earlier data shows ~46% of past visitors wouldn't come if glaciers weren't visible (Wilson et al., 2014)

A helicopter flies below cloud cover towards Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere (Photo by Abby Hamilton, 11 October 2023)

The results of this research provide unique insights through a Ngāi Tahu cultural lens and a MLTB perspective for climate change adaptation.

- **MLTBs are considering future adaptation options in light of key Māori values, including Kaitiakitanga [guardianship or stewardship], Manaakitanga [hospitality] and Whangaungatanga [relationships].**

‘Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei.

For us and our children after us’

Key findings:

MLTBs are adapting to climate change giving regard to their inherent connection to the whenua:

A strategy adviser acknowledged that: "**Local MLTBs [have the] opportunity to share our stories, our culture, our way of living, our history, and what's important to us, and I think people want to hear those stories." (#9A)**

"the value of manaakitanga is embedded through Māori owned businesses; it's just part of what they do"

"We're lucky, the people that work within this business are so connected and passionate about the whenua"

The resilience MLTBs need to enact climate change adaptation responses has been built upon across many generations (Kenney & Phibbs, 2015; Mason et al., 2021; Kenney et al., 2023).

Cultural storytelling exists through ancestral/tūpuna links to the environment, which in turn can mitigate the perceived risk of environmental changes.

As Cradock-Henry et al. (2021, p. 1-5) suggested, “industry-specific, locally based options and pathways to support adaptation are needed”: This means prioritising the voices and leadership of specific iwi, such as Ngāi Tahu, and respecting their unique insights and priorities, particularly in regions like Westland Tai Poutini.

Figure 15

Arrow showing sea wall constructed in front of Te Tauraka Waka a Māui Marae located in Bruce Bay/Mahitahi (Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio, 2021)

Figure 16

Looking towards the sea wall from inside the gates of Te Tauraka Waka a Māui Marae (Photo by Abby Hamilton, 5th April 2024)

Key findings:

MLTBs see risk as an opportunity to diversify

Diversification of MLTB's offerings as a response to climate change in the region was a focal point of discussions.

There is a push to shift the focus of the region and promoting the mountains to ocean landscapes beyond the glaciers.

Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere viewpoint track (Photos by Abby Hamilton, 10 October 2023)

Developing cultural assets in the region, such as the new Pounamu Pathways in Greymouth/Māwhera, and the Te Kopikopiko o Te Waka installation may encourage visitors to stay longer in the region.

Tourists can be involved to carbon off-set travel, by planting a tree and/or donating to conservation efforts in the region

Some key interviewees from MLTBs saw value in operating conservation groups with kaimahi/employees, the community, and other businesses.

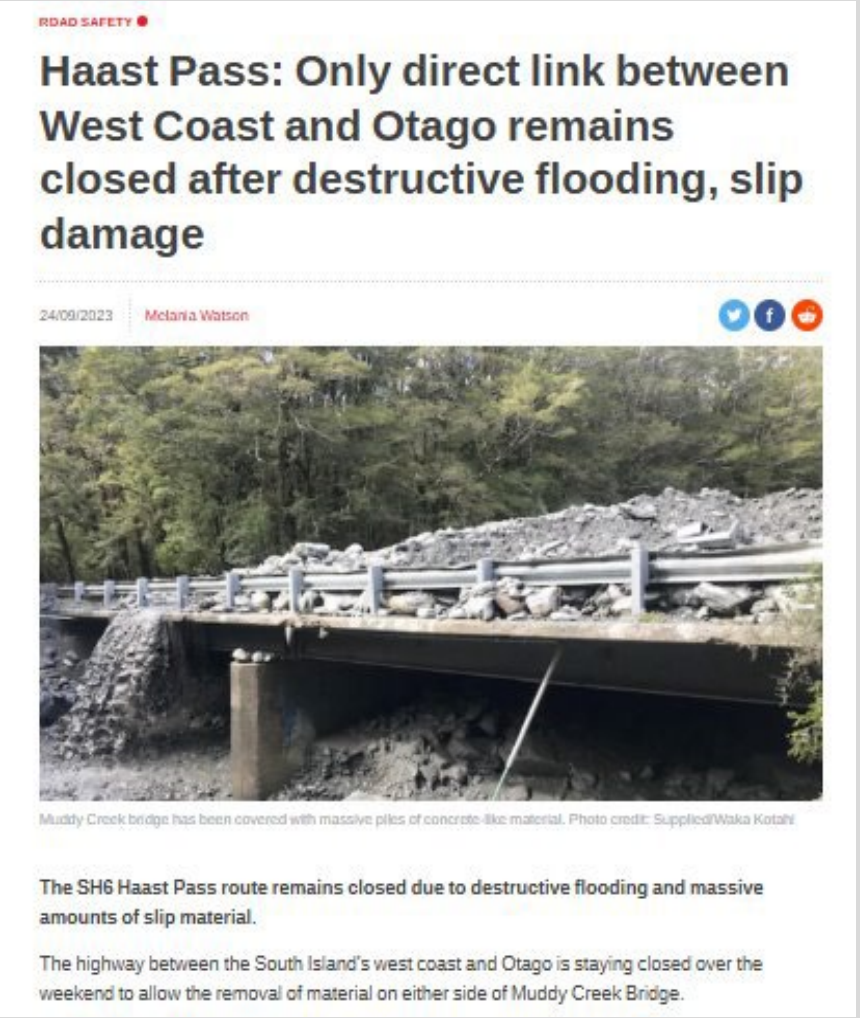
Plantings at Okāritō Lagoon (Photos by Abby Hamilton, 9 October 2023)

Future Research Needs

- Collaborate with iwi and MLTBs to strengthen resilience and address infrastructure risks from extreme weather
- Assess visitor intentions if glacier access declines, to inform adaptive tourism planning

Adapting in a Cultural Context

- This research aimed to support culturally inclusive climate change adaptation for MLTBs in Te Tai Poutini/West Coas region of Aotearoa/New Zealand
- Climate change may shift tourism patterns and raise new visitor management challenges in the region



ROAD SAFETY

Haast Pass: Only direct link between West Coast and Otago remains closed after destructive flooding, slip damage

24/09/2023 Melania Watson

Muddy Creek bridge has been covered with massive piles of concrete-like material. Photo credit: Supplied/Waka Kotahi

The SH6 Haast Pass route remains closed due to destructive flooding and massive amounts of slip material.

The highway between the South Island's west coast and Otago is staying closed over the weekend to allow the removal of material on either side of Muddy Creek Bridge.

Acknowledgments

This research would not have been possible without the generous support of:

- Ngāi Tahu Tourism – Franz Josef Glacier Guides
- Ngāi Tahu o Te Rūnanga and Ngāi Tahu Tourisms Shotover Jet
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Grants: Kā Pūtea Masters Scholarship
- Lincoln University: stipend scholarship through the Resilience to Nature's Challenges (RNC) NSC
- Lincoln University: L.W. McCaskill Scholarship
- Te Toi whakaruruhau O Aotearoa Whakaaturanga, Mātauranga Māori Disaster Risk Reduction Research Centre, Massey University and EQC: Emerging Māori Researchers support whānau

I am grateful for the support of my supervisors from Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand, Emma Stewart, Stephen Espiner and Joanna Fountain. Additionally, Te Toi Whakaruruhau o Aotearoa, Mātauranga Māori DRR Centre, Massey University, and EQC: Emerging Māori Researchers whānau. Special thanks to Dr Christine Kenney, Dr Jonathan Procter, Dr Suzanne Phibbs, and my fellow Māori researchers for creating a safe, empowering space. Unforgettable experiences at Te Hotu Manawa O Rangitāne O Manawatū and Te Tauraka Waka a Māui Marae have fostered lasting friendships and whanaungatanga I will carry forward. Ngā mihi.

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

TE WHARE WĀNAKA O AORAKI

Q&A

Don’t forget to put your questions in the Q&A function.

AJEM Article: *Whaowhia te Kete Mātauranga: Papakāinga as a Hapū Resilience Framework*

Robbie Richardson
Massey University

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HEALTH
TE KURA HAUORA TANGATA

Whaowhia te Kete Matauranga: Papakainga as a Hapū Resilience Framework

Robbie Richardson, Dr Suzanne Phibbs, Distinguished Professor Christine Kenney
Anau Pare Pere, Kimmy Savage

Indigenous Edition of AJEM Webinar

Australia Journal of Emergency Management

9 July 2025

Whaowhia te Kete Mātauranga: Embedding Mātauranga Māori in Hapū Resilience Plans

National Science Challenges | RESILIENCE TO NATURE'S CHALLENGES | Kia manawaroa – Ngā Ākina o Te Ao Tūroa

- Project developed in partnership with three tribal groups that span the Rangitikei River in North Island New Zealand
- The kaumātua (elders) identified the need for the research, and agreed on outcomes
- Aims
  - Research wānanga (meetings) and interviews to facilitate development of hapū-based resilience plans;
  - Facilitate capability development
  - Gather local intelligence

Building hapū (tribal) capability and capacity

- Research prioritised for
  - hapū (tribal) management plans
  - hapū climate change management plans
  - to support future development of relationships between regional authorities and Māori under the New Zealand Government's Resource Management Act.
- Academic development –
  - Robbie Richardson - PhD thesis arising from the research
  - Employment of a youth researcher to facilitate intergenerational knowledge transfer

KAUPAPA MĀORI

Linda Smith (2005) clarifies kaupapa Māori as Māori and tribal ways of knowing in the context of privileging indigenous knowledge (mātauranga Māori), Māori customary practices (tikanga Māori), and cultural values.

KAUPAPA INJUSTICE

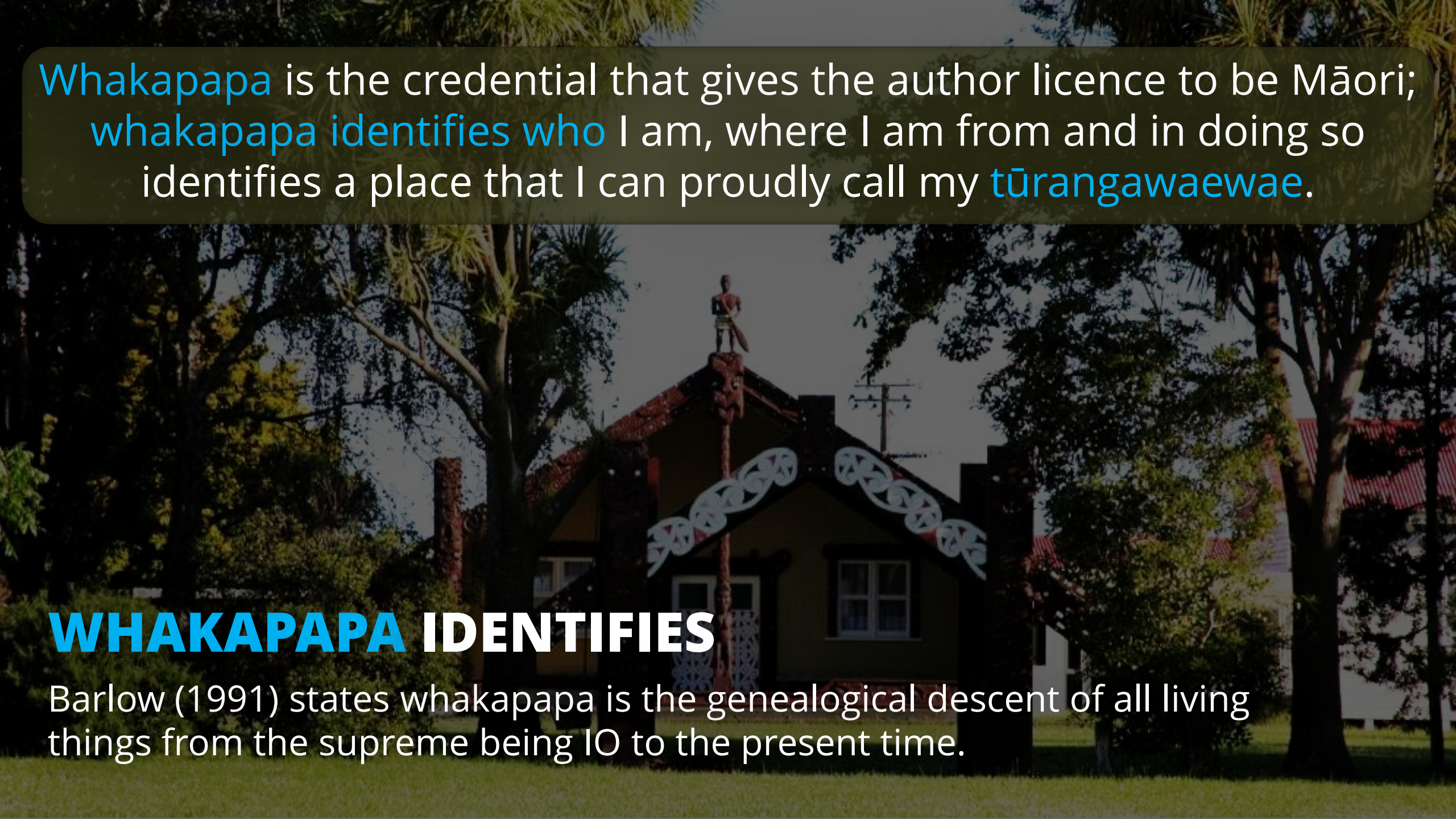
According to **PIHAMA** (2001) Kaupapa, Māori must be about challenging injustice, revealing inequities and seeking transformation.

WINIATA (2002) shares indigenous validity is research people at home, about home and by people from home where "home" is, typically, the marae or papakainga.

Whaowhia te Kete Mātaruanga: Research Methods

National Science Challenges
RESILIENCE TO NATURE'S CHALLENGES
Kia manawaroa – Ngā Ākina o Te Ao Tūroa

- Qualitative Interviews: Semi structured discussions with knowledge holders.
- Wānanga (Gatherings): Collaborative workshops to share knowledge and develop disaster preparedness plans.
- Focus Groups: Facilitated discussions emphasising community led approaches such as on agenda of monthly marae committee meetings, on monthly Iwi feedback meetings.



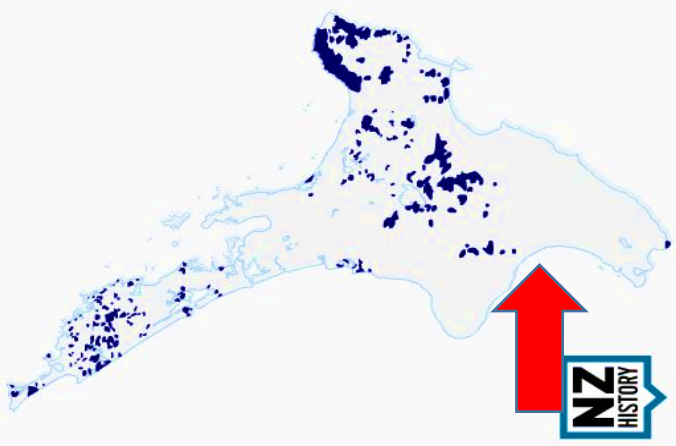
Whakapapa is the credential that gives the author licence to be Māori; whakapapa identifies who I am, where I am from and in doing so identifies a place that I can proudly call my tūrangawaewae.

WHAKAPAPA IDENTIFIES

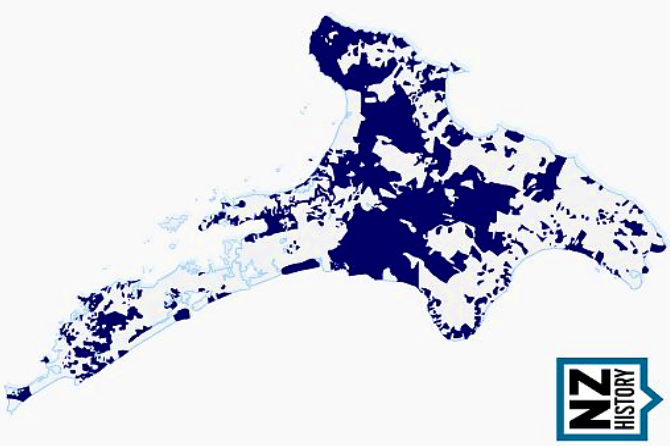
Barlow (1991) states whakapapa is the genealogical descent of all living things from the supreme being IO to the present time.

MĀORI LAND 1910

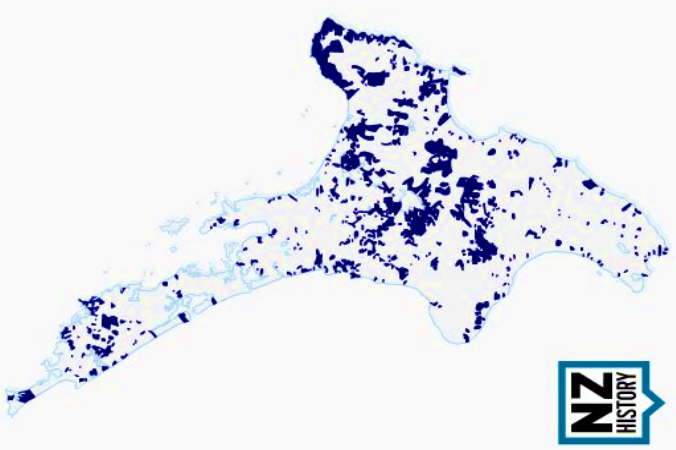
MĀORI LAND 2000



MĀORI LAND 1890



MĀORI LAND 1939



MĀORI LAND 1860

PENE
RAUPATU

X

Land Confiscation by the PEN

TOHUNGA SUPRESSION ACT 1907

SUPPRESSION ACT 1907

Introduction to Act, July 1907 : James Carroll

"Every person who gathers Maori around him by practising on their superstition or credulity, or who misleads or attempts to mislead any Maori by professing or pretending to possess supernatural powers in the treatment or cure of any disease, or in the foretelling of future events, or otherwise, is liable on summary conviction before a Magistrate to a fine not exceeding twenty-five pounds or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months."

(James Carroll, 1914)

WHO ARE THE TOHUNGA?

- **Tohunga** means 'expert'
- A practitioner, skilled person, chosen expert, priest, healer.
- **Tohunga** are experts in sacred lore, spiritual beliefs, traditions and genealogies (ancestors, generations etc.)
- **Tohunga** are specially trained in "Houses of learning" (schools), or are trained by other **Tohunga**.

WHAT WAS ITS PURPOSE?

- To suppress **Tohunga** from using traditional healing practices
- Replace traditional **Tohunga** healing with modern day medicine
- The government attempts failed as only nine **Tohunga** were prosecuted

LONG & SHORT TERM IMPACTS

Long:
- Breach of the treaty caused tension and grudges. Maybe even war
- Maori social and spiritual/religious structure to collapse (this failed to happen)
- Much of Maori language and tradition was lost or corrupt by 1962 when the act was repealed
- Many Maori communities converted to Christianity, due to the absence of **Tohunga**
- Elders hid and kept Maori culture alive and passed it down only to younger generations

Short:
- Breach of the treaty caused protests, marches, petitions e.t.c.
- Maori communities reacted in anger
- Maori considered a 'lost race'
- Assimilation of the Maori was evaded but also failed

TYPES OF TOHUNGA

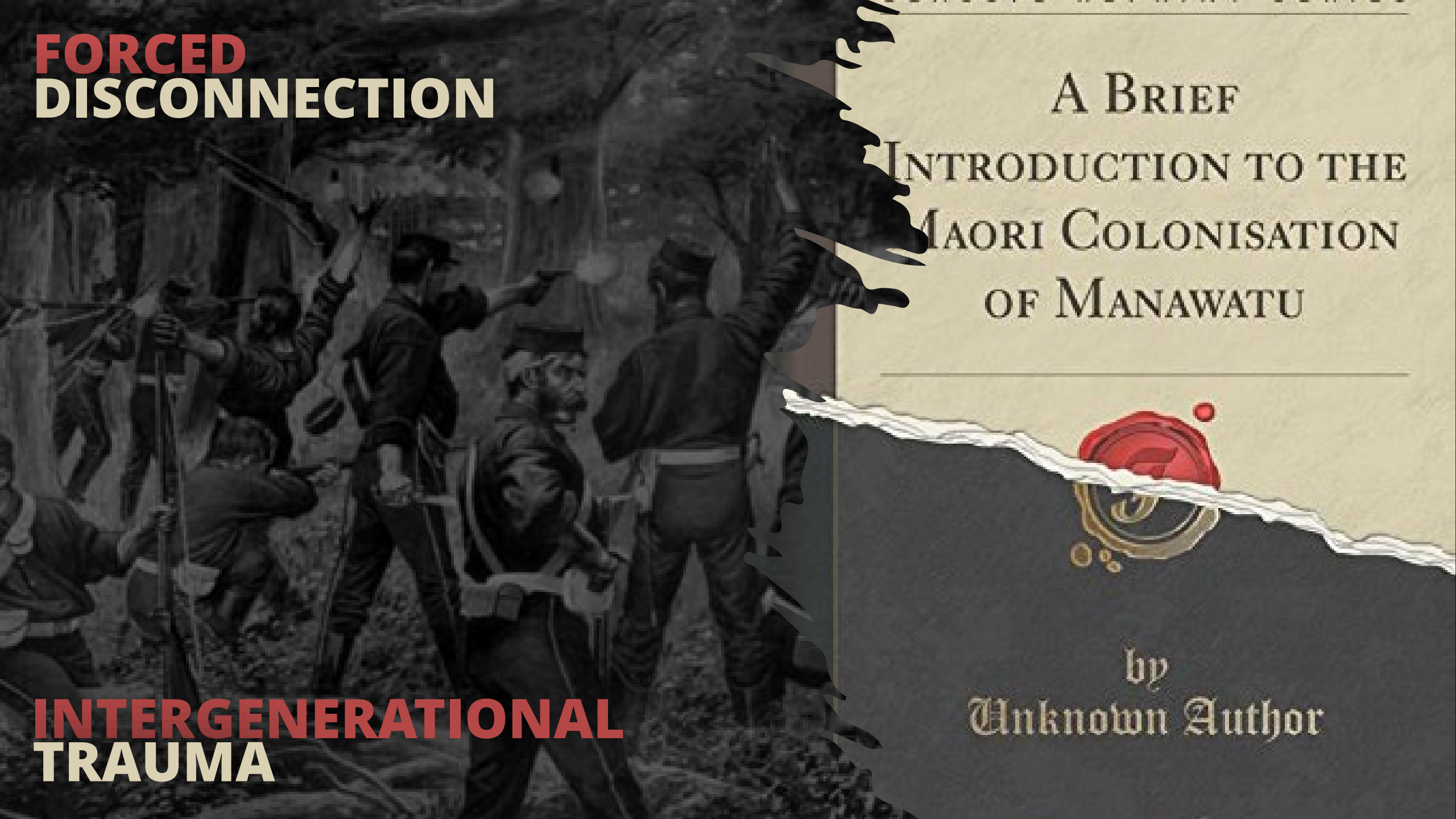
There are many types of Tohunga:
- Ahuwhiu = Priest
- Makutu = Sorcerer
- Whaimana = Sorcerer
- Ta moko = tattooing
- Kokorangi = astrology
- Titi waiata = composing songs
- Tohi waka = canoe making
- Karakia = rituals

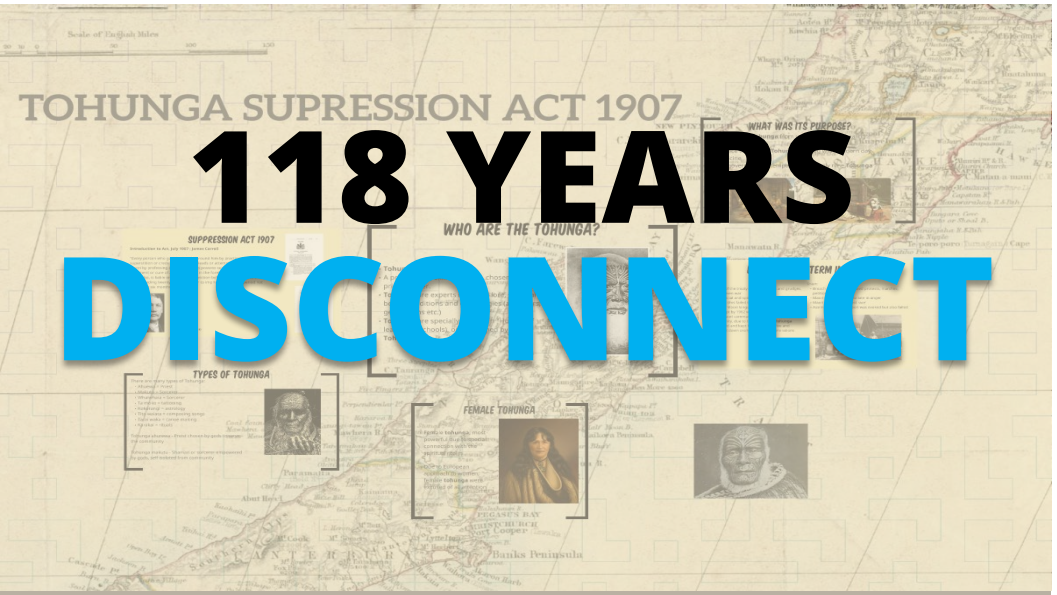
Tohunga ahuwhiu - Priest chosen by gods to serve the community

Tohunga makutu - Shaman or sorcerer empowered by gods, self isolated from community

FEMALE TOHUNGA

- Female **tohunga**, most powerful due to special connection with the spiritual realm
- Due to European approach to women, female **tohunga** were excluded of all attention


FORCED
DISCONNECTION
A Brief
Introduction to the
Maori Colonisation
of Manawatu
by
Unknown Author
INTERGENERATIONAL
TRAUMA


TOHUNGA SUPRESSION ACT 1907
118 YEARS
DISCONNECT
WHO ARE THE TOHUNGA?
WHAT WAS ITS PURPOSE?
SUPPRESSION ACT 1907
TYPES OF TOHUNGA
FEMALE TOHUNGA

Our Papakainga

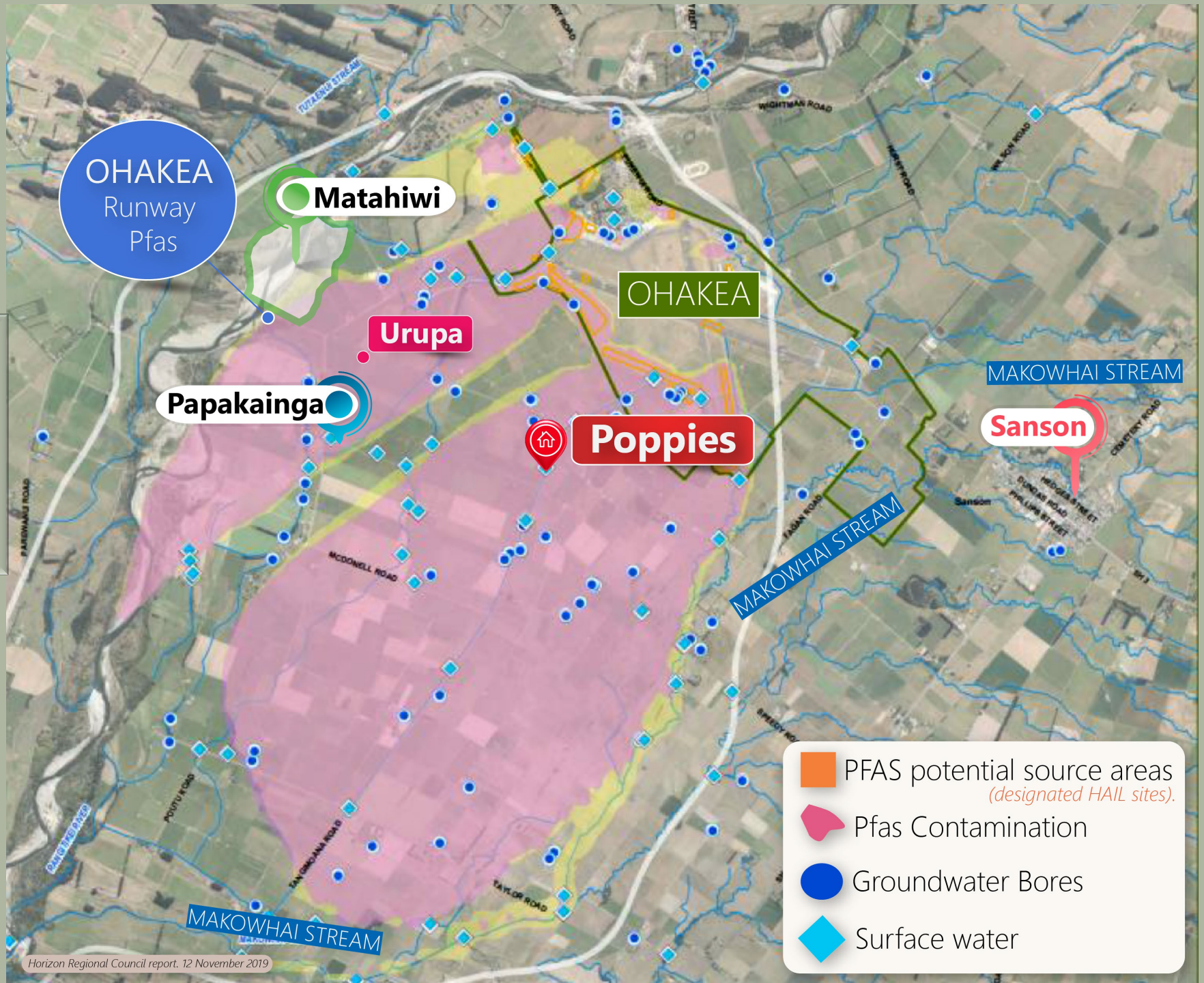
- “Looking towards Ohakea Airforce base in the north with a stand of the only rongoa rakau (healing trees) left that we have protected. All around us is intensive farming. Prior to settlers you can imagine this area was lush with ngahere bush, wetlands, birds, animals and insects, freshwater kai (foods). In my lifetime I recall the wetlands but we don’t have any now, so no animals, native birds or Rongoā (traditional medicine) from the wetlands. Ohakea makes sure we can’t have birds due to impact they have to airplanes”.

Pfas Contamination

OHAKEA AIR FORCE

A Parewahawaha Narrative

Predicted PFAS plume at 25-50yrs.



PFAS contaminated old runway surface from the Ohakea Airforce Base dumped along the banks of the Rangitikei River

Neglected riparian margin

Local environmental challenges identified by tribal members:

- Land alienation through pene raupatu (government confiscation)
- Destruction of native bush for farming
- Flooding (largely due to environmental destruction)
- Land locked traditional urupā (burial sites on alienated land)
- Contamination of Rangitikei river from industrial activity
- PFAS contamination of area from Air Force Base
- Dredging of Rangitikei River for road metal
- Council ownership of Rangitikei river riparian margins
- Public trespassing on Māori land because they always drove there or walked down there.
- Complex planning/consent processes and financing for Māori land

Whaowhia te Kete Mātaruanga: PAPAKĀINGA

National Science Challenges | RESILIENCE TO NATURE'S CHALLENGES | Kia manawaroa – Ngā Ākina o Te Ao Tūroa

PAPAKAINGA

- Fosters Collective Wellbeing
- Environment Stewardship
- Shared and communal facilities
- Sustainable Living
- Enhance cultural and spiritual connections
- Strengthens kinship ties and enhances whānau resilience through collective living
- Revitalizes cultural practices
- Intergenerational participation to ensure continuity of traditional knowledge
- Traditional environmental indicators – hundreds of years of intelligence
- Traditional healing systems at the centre of our space

Whaowhia te Kete Mātaruanga: PAPAKĀINGA IN ACTION

National Science Challenges | RESILIENCE TO NATURE'S CHALLENGES | Kia manawaroa – Ngā Ākina o Te Ao Tūroa

Rongo ā Wairua – Spiritual, Metaphysical, Interdimensional

Impact: Disrupted spiritual harmony; environments hold trauma and imbalance.

Outcome: Enhanced practices to clear, reset, and realign spaces using wairua-led healing.

Rongo ā Tīnana – Physical Wellbeing

Impact: Land and food sources contaminated; risk to kai sovereignty (e.g., chickens, eggs, produce).

Outcome: Development of hydroponic systems and native medicinal gardens; establishment of a clean water scheme for healing and food resilience.

Rongo ā Hinengaro – Emotional Wellbeing

Impact: Feelings of grief, loss, and taint; stress from compromised living environment; impact on whānau livelihoods and home resale value.

Outcome: Emotional resilience programs; safe, sacred spaces for restoration and healing narrative.

Whaowhia te Kete Mātaruanga: PAPAKĀINGA IN ACTION

National Science Challenges | RESILIENCE TO NATURE'S CHALLENGES | Kia manawaroa – Ngā Ākina o Te Ao Tūroa

Rongo ā Whānau – Family and Relationship Wellbeing

Impact: Strained whānau dynamics due to uneven land impacts; emotional fatigue affecting collective wellbeing.

Outcome: Whānau wānanga to restore unity; strengthening collective care models grounded in whakapapa and shared values.

Rongo ā Wānanga – Ancestral Knowledge

Impact: Disruption to intergenerational knowledge transfer; disconnection from traditional land-based knowledge systems.

Outcome: Revitalised cultural innovation using ancestral insight; adaptive approaches to land and water use.

Rongo ā Whenua – Environmental Wellbeing

Impact: Long-term degradation (150+ years); ongoing risks to public and spiritual health.

Outcome: Kaitiakitanga-led environmental healing initiatives; community-led planning for sustainable futures.

Looking to the future: Papa kāinga

- Building of Māori community housing on hapū land.
- Issues: Complication consent process due to communal ownership (9 years to resolve).
- Permission from Airforce base to build (not required by immediate non-Māori neighbours).
- One mortgage option
- Requirement to build relocatable homes.

Whaowhia te Kete Mātaruanga: PAPAKĀINGA FRAMEWORK

National Science Challenges | RESILIENCE TO NATURE'S CHALLENGES | Kia manawaroa – Ngā Ākina o Te Ao Tūroa

- **Expression of Rongo ā Wairua**
  - Spiritual, Metaphysical and Interdimensional
- **Expression of Rongo ā Tīnana**
  - Physical wellbeing
- **Expression of Rongo ā Hinengaro**
  - Emotional wellbeing
- **Expression of Rongo ā Whānau**
  - Family and Relationship Wellbeing
- **Expression of Rongo ā Wānanga**
  - Ancestral Knowledge – A Space to Be
- **Rongo ā Whenua**

- Environment Wellbeing

Q&A

Don’t forget to put your questions in the Q&A function.

Event concludes

Thank you for attending today's webinar.

Register now for the next AIDR webinar.

Resilience Matters Webinar Series:
The policy context from global frameworks to national documents
Wednesday 23 July 2025, 1.00pm-2.00pm AEST

Happy NAIDOC Week!


Australian Government
National Emergency Management Agency
Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
Co-hosted by Lucy Kaiser and Dr Bhiamie Williamson
Indigenous disaster resilience research webinar