

### Case Study: He Tohu Huarahi Māori – how Māori language champions changed school traffic signs



**The Partnership Rōpū and a Te Mātāwai local iwi cluster representative unveiling one of the first official bilingual traffic signs in Aotearoa New Zealand**

#### Highlights at a glance

- He Tohu Huarahi Māori is a programme of work led by Te Mātāwai and Waka Kotahi NZ transport to enable the use of te reo Māori on traffic signs across Aotearoa New Zealand. The use of te reo Māori on traffic signs will increase the visibility of te reo Māori (the Māori language) and contribute to intergenerational transmission for whānau (family), hapū (sub-tribes), iwi (tribes) and all New Zealanders.

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- The programme aimed to establish an enduring national partnership that would enable Māori-led development of the scope of the project; seek Māori leadership support during wider engagement; and obtain a wide range of Māori and public views on the implementation of a Kura School bilingual traffic sign. The success of the first initiative to launch the Kura School signs has now paved the way for a wider initiative to see te reo Māori on more than 90 other traffic signs.
  - The engagement process used tikanga Māori (protocol) and started in the 'collaborate' space but is now in its second phase where we are proud to have aspects of the programme, especially those relating to te reo Māori, working in the 'partner' space. We hope to move into the 'empower' phase in Phase 3. The process legally had to involve a public consultation to meet statutory requirements, but the engagement occurred well ahead of the consultation.

The engagement on the Kura School sign led to the first national partnership between a government agency, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi), and Te Mātāwai, the independent statutory entity that represents iwi (tribes) and Māori for the purposes of revitalising te reo Māori (the Māori language). The relationship and partnership between Waka Kotahi and Te Mātāwai is now used as an exemplar across New Zealand Government.

- The programme led to the launch of Te Pae Whakamāori, a group of external te reo Māori (the Māori language) and tikanga Māori (Māori culture) exponents to provide direction on translation, dialect, and consistent use of the language on all traffic signs in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Three key outcomes showing impact of engagement:

- 1) 90% positive feedback from the nationwide public consultation on the Kura School signs.
- 2) Project used as an exemplar in national partnerships with Māori across New Zealand Government.
- 3) A further 94 new bilingual traffic signs are being proposed through public consultation.

Three key engagement takeaways:

- 1) Using Māori engagement methods, such as wānanga and hui Māori, tikanga Māori (Māori cultural) processes, and identifying Māori values are key to relationship building with both Māori and non-Māori partners/stakeholders when the topic significantly affects the Māori population.
- 2) Partnerships with Māori bring rich, unique insights and benefits for an entire organisation.
- 3) Having Indigenous people from your own organisation leading and implementing programmes with other Indigenous people removes some barriers to participation and leads to shared and genuine engagement earlier.

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**Key search words:** Public and Government – Central, collaborate, consultation, Māori, indigenous, wānanga, bilingual, te reo Māori,

## 1.0 Objectives

- Te reo Māori is an official language in Aotearoa New Zealand and Waka Kotahi international research has shown the use of bilingual road signs promotes tourism, protects language, enhances safety, culture and social cohesion.
- Our engagement objectives were to build relationships, seek leadership and direction from Māori working in language revitalisation, and successfully complete a statutory consultation, so Kura School signs could be enabled across the country.
- We needed to be able to progress a change to the Traffic Control Devices Rule to allow for the word Kura to be added to existing school signs. Changing the Rule is a complex, legal process, which requires the Minister of Transport to allow Waka Kotahi to consult with the public on his/her behalf. The Minister must also approve the final Rule to enable the signs.
- We developed a relationship with Te Mātāwai, the independent statutory entity that represents iwi (tribes) and Māori for the purposes of revitalising the language.
- Te Mātāwai was active at all three tiers of decision-making, with their Board members meeting with Waka Kotahi senior staff and advice provided to Steering and Working groups.
- Te Mātāwai designed and led the external engagement with their iwi cluster community representatives, innovating the way a government agency delivers community-led engagement.
- All members of the decision-making group were of Māori descent – with equal representatives from Te Mātāwai and Waka Kotahi. Our aim was to make the project as Māori-led as we could in a government context.

- **‘Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Māori. The language is the life essence of Māori.’ – Sir James Henare**
- **The objective was to build relationships, seek leadership and direction from Māori working in language revitalisation, and successfully complete a statutory consultation, so bilingual signs could be enabled across the country.**
- **We started with the focus on the Kura School sign and are now publicly consulting on roughly a third of all traffic signs.**
- **We led in person wānanga and online engagement with all levels of Māori audiences.**
- **Te Mātāwai designed and led engagement with their community champions.**

What roles our Māori partners and other stakeholders had and why

<b>Partner / stakeholder</b>	<b>Sentiment with Waka Kotahi before engagement</b>	<b>IAP2 Participation Spectrum</b>	<b>Level of influence</b>	<b>Process used and why? Supporting communications</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Te Mātāwai	Disengaged / distressed by lack of government partnership and involvement in te reo Māori revitalisation.	Started at Involve, moved to Collaborate and now we're wanting to move some aspects to Empower.	High.  Designed future engagement with Māori.	Face-to-face wānanga, online hui, use of tikanga Māori (Māori culture), all engagement material bilingual. We asked and this was the method they preferred.  Te Mātāwai led media engagement with Māori media.	All Board members. Coverage of Kura School consultation with all major Māori national and regional Māori and mainstream media.
Public and Māori public	Public – engaged on other topics Māori public – disengaged.	Consult.	High.	Social media, Māori media, website, email, survey. All in both languages. Te Mātāwai shared the public consultation through their own channels.	549 individuals submitted to the consultation. 90% of all submissions were in support.
Māori medium education representative bodies	Disengaged.	Consult.	High.	Personalised letter via Ministry of Education on	Ministry of Education staff passed information

Ministry of Education Māori engagement staff				background of project and offer of engagement on Kura School sign. We asked and this was the method they preferred. Personally invited to take part in Public Consultation process.	to Māori medium education bodies. Thirteen schools/kura responded in support during public consultation.
Cross-government Māori staff and others working in Māori language revitalisation	Disengaged, now engaged.			Face-to-face hui, regular emails and updates. The New Zealand Geographic Board came to Waka Kotahi and held a session that was offered to all Waka Kotahi staff about their role in New Zealand place names and partnership with Māori. Personally invited to take part in Public Consultation process.	All invited organisations attended. Four department or agencies submitted in support during public consultation.
Other engagement occurred with local	Engaged through regional Māori.	Consult and then Involve.	Medium.	Memo/briefings for their	Nine local government

government Māori staff, existing iwi (tribe) and hapū (sub-tribe) groups who have partnered with local government, Māori traffic industry representatives	engagement staff at Waka Kotahi.			scheduled Board/ partnership meetings. Online hui and regular email updates. We asked and this was the method they preferred. Personally invited to take part in Public Consultation process.	and Road Controlling Authority groups responded during the public consultation.
Welsh and Scottish Governments	Disengaged, now engaged due to common values around language revitalisation.	Consult.	Medium.	Online meetings were held between Waka Kotahi Māori staff and researchers to gain insights into their journey to bilingual signage. Kept up to date via email at every milestone.	All invited.



## 2.0 Methodology

In 2021, it was established that we wanted to ensure Māori at all levels nationally, regionally, and locally were engaged in this work to lift the capability of the programme and to elevate the voice of Māori.

Te Mātāwai were best placed to steer the direction of the programme's methodology to reach all these groups through their national Board of locally elected te reo Māori champions.

Together we also established different strategies for each level of Māori audience. To start with, we decided to reach out to Māori working within central and local government whose jobs had an interest in te reo Māori revitalisation and Māori development to socialise the idea of bilingual signs.

From that engagement we were able to obtain key bilingual signage standards and research to inform the initial design of the signs.

We then went out to the cross-government group – Local Government Māori advisory and partner groups that we set up to ask their views on the draft design of the Kura School sign, with the word Kura in italic font.

Our aim was to engage with Māori at different levels and incorporate their feedback ahead of the formal wider statutory public consultation.

In our early engagement with these Māori groups, we received consistent feedback, including:

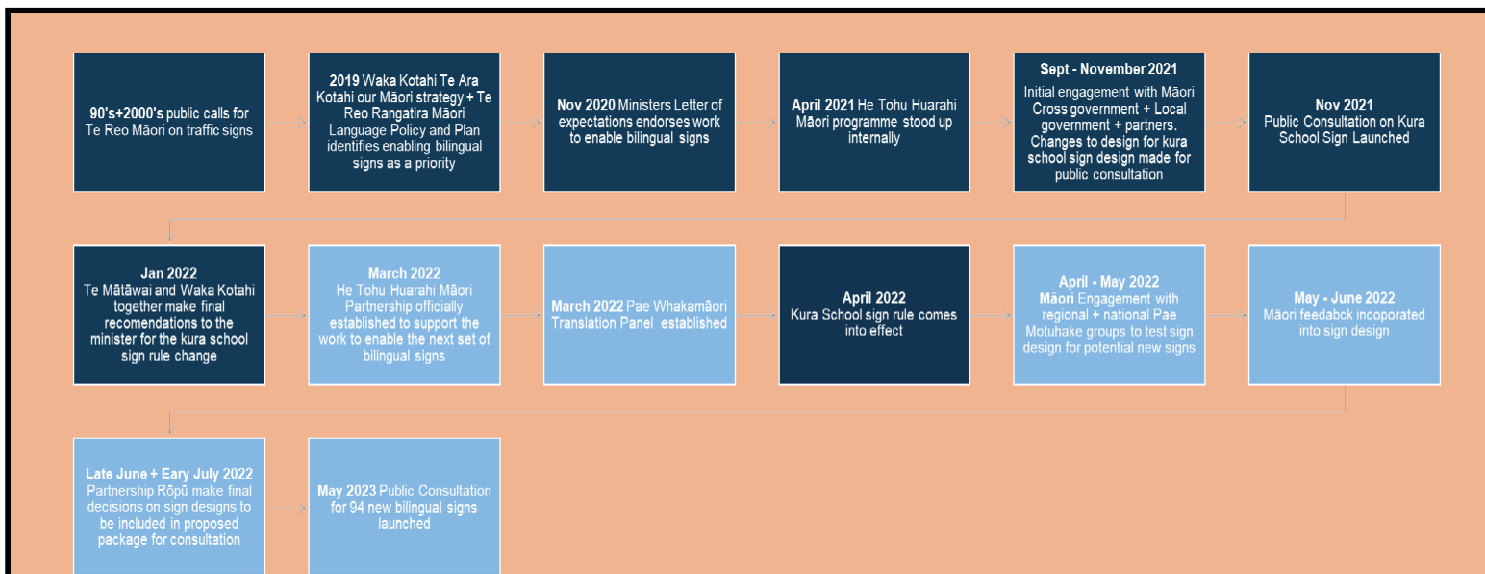
- The dislike of the of an italic font to distinguish the language
- A desire to normalise te reo Māori through this work
- The desire to have community aspirations elevated. For example, by considering different language dialects. This led to a specialist translation panel with te reo Māori exponents from across the country, and a moderation process run by Te Mātāwai.

After the engagement, Te Mātāwai also pointed out that using italics lessened the position of the language. To overcome this, the project decided to take two different sign designs to public consultation. One with the word Kura on top in italics and the other in bold.



When all submissions were considered, the option in bold was recommended to the Minister of Transport for approval. It was enabled for use in 2022. All stakeholders, partners and submitters were informed via email. Sign-unveiling events with the community were also held in two towns.

## Project engagement methodology





## Alignment with IAP2 Core Values for the practice of public participation

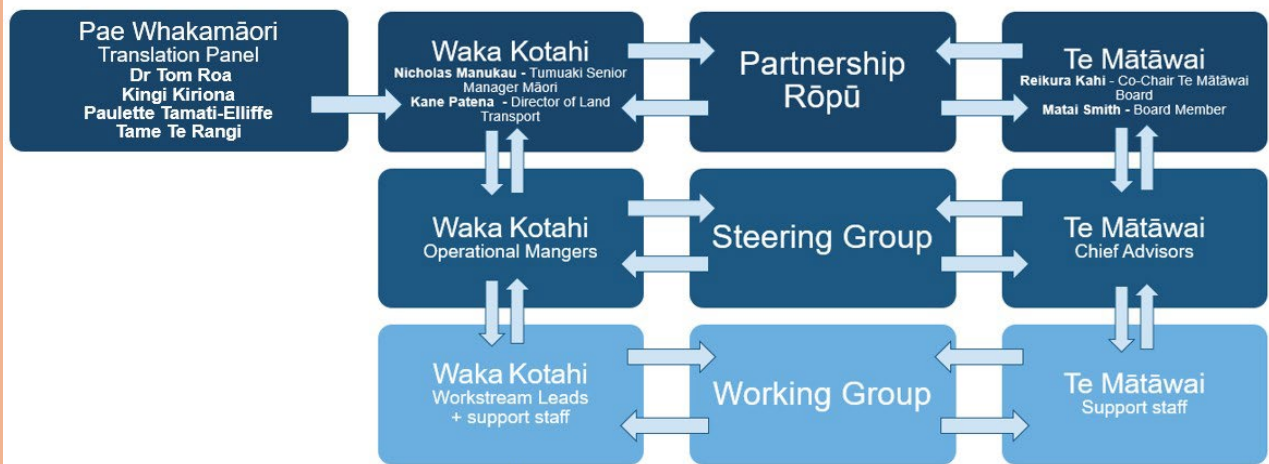
IAP2 Core Values	Example of how this was considered in the design of your project methodology
1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process	<p>Public consultation was publicised through schools, media, a national list of Māori entities and Local Government and industry lists.</p> <p>Under Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) Waka Kotahi must contribute to strengthening the Crown's relationship with Māori.</p> <p>Māori interests were significantly affected. That determined a need for a specific, targeted approach to those with interests in the revitalisation of te reo Māori. On top of our engagement with Te Mātāwai and across-government Māori groups, we also targeted Māori organisations and the Māori public for the consultation of the Kura School sign.</p>
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision	<p>We ensured Māori representation was at every level of the project and throughout the project team, so the views of Māori were heard, and the importance of the partnership approach was repeated whenever necessary. We used a Summary of Submissions document. This showed submitters where and how their feedback was used and how it contributed to the final recommendation to the Minister.</p>
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers	<p>Māori interests were strong. Safety and cost were also key considerations because of the impact implementation could have on road workers, cyclists/walkers and the public if the signs weren't safe or cost too much to implement. Waka Kotahi is also the regulator, so safety was a key concern from the decision-maker as well. To mitigate this, we ensured both Māori and the regulator were equally represented at the table.</p>
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision	<p>We created bespoke engagement sessions or wānanga that were run using tikanga Māori (the Māori culture) and we were able to use te reo Māori to respond to questions. We also established industry, Māori local-government and Māori cross-government groups for engagement to ensure the sign that was progressed for approval has been through a robust process before public consultation.</p>
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate	<p>We agreed with Te Mātāwai that given the special place of te reo Māori as a national language we didn't need to ask <u>if</u> the language should be included during engagement. It's inclusion or otherwise</p>

	<p>wasn't up for discussion. We needed to know from initial engagement and then public participation how language should be presented on the signs.</p> <p>Te Mātāwai engaged their own community champions and led engagement sessions.</p>
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way	<p>All consultation materials were available in English and te reo Māori.</p> <p>We ran online 'wānanga' style sessions using tikanga Māori (Māori culture) in te reo Māori/English.</p> <p>We encouraged email submissions rather than technical online surveys.</p> <p>For the first time, we publicised that we could accept submissions in te reo Māori (in any language dialect) and created a system to have those submissions for the summary of feedback translated and themed by Māori staff.</p>
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision	<p>All decisions made were reported through to the Te Mātāwai Board.</p> <p>We had responded to everyone who engaged and told them what we heard and what was being proposed for public consultation.</p> <p>A Summary of Submissions was created and posted on the website and provided to submitters.</p>

**'The kaupapa is on revitalising te reo Māori, normalising it as the language of Aotearoa New Zealand, and paving the way for te reo Māori to shine. If we are serious about this then we need to stand for this firmly, fully and with conviction,**

**Te Puni Kokiri, government's principal policy advisor on Māori wellbeing and development.**

**'We look forward to our future collaboration for mutual benefit and timely outcomes.' Secretary NZ Geographic Board, Wendy Shaw.**



**Project governance model**



**Unveiling a sign with the local people and the Minister of Transport**

### Engagement with The Partnership Rōpū



Link to video of the unveiling of one of the first Kura School signs: [Unveiling the new bilingual Kura School traffic signs - YouTube](#)

## 3.0 Manage engagement

### Challenges

- Waka Kotahi wanted to have engagement face to face to ensure we could carry out tikanga Māori (our Māori culture). Te Mātāwai advised that we were unlikely to get as much engagement face to face because the participants were in demand from other Māori organisations. There was also a high risk of over engagement as many of our infrastructure projects may be engaging with the same people. We adapted the plan to be online and our tikanga was adapted to fit the format. We also always worked through our regional Māori engagement managers (Te Mātangi) to ensure there was no overlapping of meetings.
- The He Tohu Huarahi Māori programme needed to be delivered with a low-cost approach to match the way the signs were to be rolled out and to mitigate political risk around the use of te reo Māori. The desire to have the signs funded for implementation across the country all at once is a key outcome our partners are looking for. We managed this during engagement by being open and up front about the lack of funding to implement signs across the country and instead focused on a more cost-saving approach.
- The only budget allocated for engagement on the Kura School sign process was for costs of translation of material.
- If budget and resourcing were increased, we would have been able to have more resources created and been able to have more direct, face-to-face and events engagement in priority Māori communities and at schools and Māori medium education facilities.

### Data and findings

- Māori are an oral, storytelling people. During the engagement, special consideration had to be given to the use of their stories. We kept notes and records of feedback during engagement and would ask before sharing the notes.
- For the consultations, we used a Summary of Submissions document to clearly articulate the points of view and the support for and against certain aspects of the signs. This showed submitters where and how their feedback was used and how it contributed to the final recommendation to the Minister. It also shows key data on the submissions.

## 4.0 Outcomes, impact and insights

### Reflection and evaluation of engagement

Te Mātāwai uses the engagement process on the Kura School sign and the subsequent partnership as an exemplar when their Board members speak with the Minister of Transport and other government agencies.

During public consultation, Waka Kotahi received 564 responses from a range of stakeholders via email and the online survey platform. Compared to other public consultations on Land Transport Rule changes (and without the budget to publicise the consultation considered) this was a great result.

Respondents	Number of respondents	Level of influence
Individuals	549	Consult
Schools and kindergartens	13	Consult
Industry Associations	2	Involve
Local government and RCAs	9	Māori engagement staff were at the involve level of influence, other staff were at consult)
Central government departments or agencies	4	Involve

Around 90% of respondents supported the introduction of bilingual traffic signs. Reasons provided in support included:

- Bilingual signs would be a positive step forward in normalising the everyday use of te reo Māori
- The signs will provide the mana te reo Māori should be accorded as New Zealand's official Indigenous language
- The signs could provide educational opportunities to enhance learning of te reo Māori
- The signs support the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Under 10% of respondents did not support the implementation of bilingual signs. The main reasons included:

- Road signs were not the place for bilingual text as they would become more complex and difficult to comprehend if they were made bilingual for English speakers, especially tourists who are not familiar with te reo Māori. Safety was always going to be a key risk so this was addressed through the publication of [research of the international experience](#).
- The costs of implementation were too great for the signs, for little apparent benefit. This was addressed through the implementation policy, which is to only use the bilingual signs when a sign needs to be replaced, i.e. if the sign is damaged or a new road/cycleway is being built.

Social media was also used to promote the consultation (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn). Over 680 comments were received, and although not treated as submissions because of the legal consultation process, the feedback showed positive engagement with the Kura School signs proposal and indicated similar levels of support for the use of the bold font in the sign.

We also received almost all positive or neutral media coverage when the announcement of the Kura School sign was made.

### Innovation and uniqueness

He Tohu Huarahi Māori programme included several new, innovative approaches to engagement for Waka Kotahi and potentially across New Zealand Government:

Following initial engagement with Te Mātāwai (in the consult level of the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum) they then moved themselves in the collaborate space by offering with their own regional iwi community champions to provide feedback on the Kura School sign. In the IAP2 Community Engagement model (Figure 4 below) the meetings to gain insights from the Te Mātāwai Board were in the Community Leads section. This is very rare to have a group leading the engagement because of the demands on their time and resources. This community advocacy was vital for the success of the public consultation. We hope it will lead to Waka Kotahi trying to move Te Mātāwai into the Empower section of the scale with the view that they would eventually lead the inclusion of te reo Māori on traffic signs.

Both the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum and the Waka Kotahi Māori engagement scale, based on Te Arawhiti Māori Engagement model, were used together. This is a new way of combining a Western and more Indigenous-led framework. This helped us run two different engagement processes, one for Māori and one for industry/public and helped us to determine which views needed to be elevated to ensure equity. One thing didn't change though, we still used tikanga Māori (Māori culture) because of the importance of the issue to Māori.

We ensured that all of our engagement materials and branding were bilingual and led with te reo Māori first. There were many firsts on this project for Waka Kotahi, including specifically calling for submissions in te reo Māori (as well as the usual English).

Figure 4: IAP2 community engagement model





### **Acknowledgements and to find out more:**

We would like to thank Te Mātāwai for agreeing to share this case study and insights to advance engagement practice. This case study was co-authored by Marcelle Pio (Whakatohea, Ngāi Te Rangi, Tūhoe, Ngāti Pikiao, Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Ngati Porou) from Te Mātāwai and Natalie Mankelow (Ngāpuhi) and Adrienne Duffy from Waka Kotahi.

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For more information about this project see:

- <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/he-tohu-huarahi-maori-bilingual-traffic-signs-programme/>

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