

Ngā Puāwai o Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe



REPORT

Ngā Puāwai o Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe:

A 3-day wānanga focusing on restoring the mauri to
Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe

‘Look through the eyes of the Toheroa.’



Whakarāpopototanga Matua

Executive Summary

A 3-day wānanga was held at Te Ahu in Kaitia at the peak of the maramataka on the 28-30th September to ignite systems-change action and to restore the mauri of Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe. The wānanga used the "Future Search" method, which enables large and diverse groups to come together, validate a common mission, take ownership of their actions, and foster commitment to implementation. Tangata whenua, rangatahi, local communities, wairua tapu, landowners and users, fisheries and aquaculture, agencies, tourism stakeholders, and knowledge holders encompassing both mātauranga (indigenous knowledge) and science brought their voices to the table.



The wānanga participants made commitments to implement innovative actions collectively to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe and to restore Toheroa in abundance.

There is an urgency for change and an incredible opportunity for Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Beach Board and Aotearoa's citizens to transform their relationship with the beach and surrounding nature. We have taken time and a lot of korero to identify common ground at the wānanga and proposed some actions to start the transformative changes we need. Why the urgency?

Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe, a place that holds deep cultural significance, is in dire need of rejuvenation. Years of human activities have taken a toll on its mauri, affecting the delicate balance of its ecosystem, and causing the Toheroa (shellfish), a taonga and indicator of beach health, to face severe challenges. The time for change is now, as our collective efforts have fallen short, and we cannot afford to continue with "business as usual" approaches.

Toheroa (shellfish) is one indicator of the wellbeing of the ecosystem on our beach. The Toheroa are becoming scarce and as kaitiaki of Toheroa and Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe it is our responsibility to rectify the imbalance. The greatest challenge has been laid down by previous

generation, and that is for us to restore the mauri (life principle, life force) of Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.

This is *a now* opportunity to work together, to be bold, to meet that challenge and face the uncertainties that lie ahead. With our tūpuna (ancestors) guiding us, we can return the mauri of Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe and contribute to the return of the Toheroa. By doing this we can change the current narrative and have kaitiakitanga as the collective custom within mainstream society. The Toheroa have been overexploited to a few beds and what few Toheroa beds are left, have not been able to establish themselves of that of the past, even with a 40-year ban of 'no take", Toheroa has not returned to its sustainable numbers.

There is a sense of urgency in restoring the Toheroa beds to what they once were. There is a need to address the survival of this taonga species that the hapū in the Far North believe are a treasured species. We have the opportunity to give effect and build a platform that reflects the wellbeing of the iwi which is inextricably linked to the welfare of our environment.

This report calls on ngā tangata and especially all the crucial players in Te Hiku in reversing nature loss and human impacts (including climate change) on Te Oneroa a Tōhe. Ngā Wawata/Objectives and Desired Outcomes for the future management of Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Beach Board Plan p.22 compliments this report and gives their rautaki momentum to progress the strategy.

To achieve this goal, we will need strong governance from the Beach Board and a systems approach to restoring nature. We cannot work alone, and work together for common ground and purpose, to restore the mauri of Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe. Most importantly the role of Māori kaitiaki from each iwi leading this work. Kaitiaki need to lead this work because hapū/iwi understand mauri, because we are Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.

“Once upon a time there was abundance. We strongly believe that if we can revive the Toheroa then we can start to restore the mauri of Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.”



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Introduction

Why?

Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe (Ninety Mile Beach) is an iconic place that is tired. Decades of activities on and around the beach have stressed the mauri to the point that Toheroa, a taonga species and indicator of beach health, are struggling. The complexity of the situation has meant 'business as usual' planning approaches by various agencies, groups and individuals have not shifted the problems, instead we are collectively failing the beach and ourselves.

When?

In September 2023, Nga Puāwai o Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe wānanga brought all parts of the system together so everybody could take responsibility for their contribution to regenerating the mauri of the beach. The website for this wānanga is:

<https://www.teoneroa-a-tohe.nz/wananga>

Who?

The structure and function of aquatic habitats that includes Toheroa on Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe are tightly linked to changes in environmental conditions. The participants were from diverse groups who have an 'impact' on Te Ara Wairua. There were nine diverse categories or perspectives who participated at the wānanga and there was a total of 88 participants.

'This is a breakthrough in environmental management and in the ongoing expression of our nationhood of Aotearoa/NZ. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is a manifestation of that duality as are we all ordinary New Zealanders in pursuit of that. '





How?

A Common Ground Agreement was developed and agreed upon at the wānanga. All 88 participants in the wānanga agreed that these were the most important areas to focus our collective actions.

This report provides a summary of proposed actions developed by the participants at the wānanga. These proposed actions were developed by each of the common ground groups and are being presented to the Beach Board for prioritising and implementing. The report provides some recommendations to get us started.

At the wānanga, every participant made a personal commitment to kick start the transformative change that is needed. The 88 participants will personally make sure there is a change in behaviour and attitude and that starts with and within ourselves.

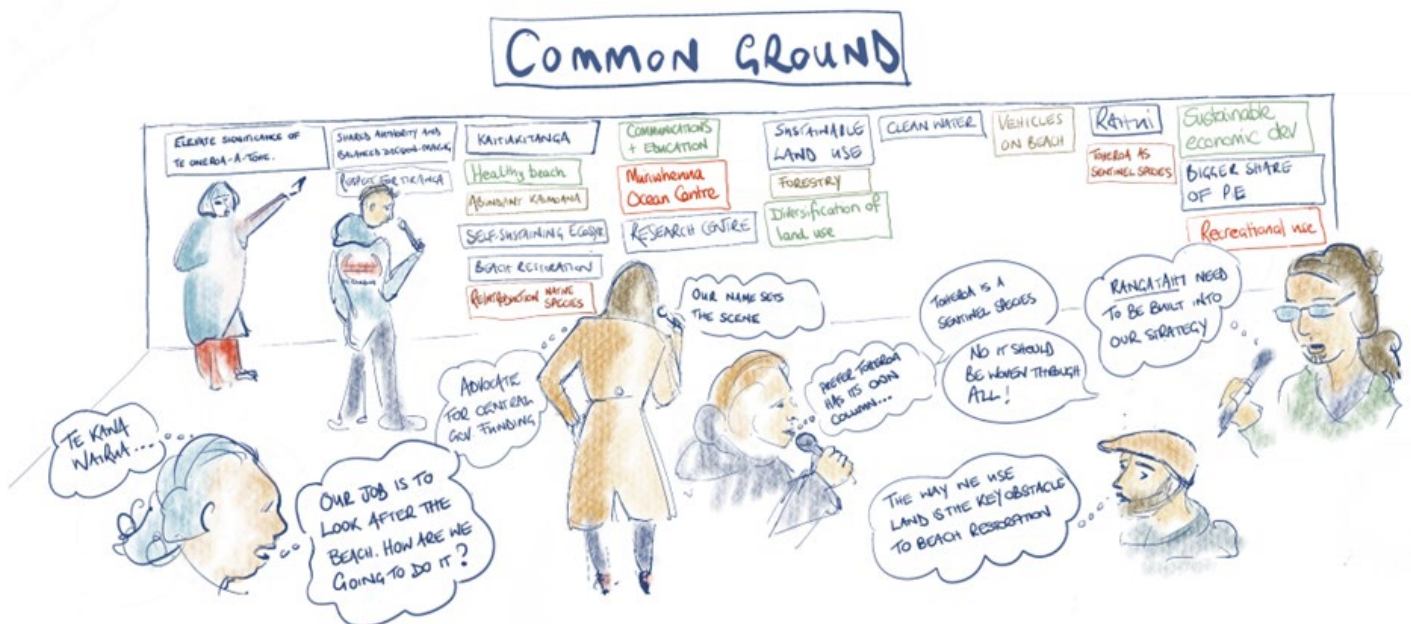
'All Pākehā and Māori alike need to acknowledge the spiritual pathway of the beach.'

it has gone somewhere else to survive. Toheroa, it is a good case study to see what is happening with the Toheroa. The Beach Board hasn't even started on the seaboard issues and has just stayed on the beach. The amount of pressure put on the Toheroa is immense. As people drive over the beach, you smash the Toheroa. We haven't eaten Toheroa for years".

During the Timeline Voice groups at the wānanga: "We anticipate that we will see each other's issues and opportunities and agree to begin the transformative action to restore Toheroa habitats so that they can survive across the entire beach once more. It begins today with all of us making a commitment to meet common ground for decisive action."

"We need culture change and respect for Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe and respect each other"

Our Common Ground Agreement



Ngā Puāwai o Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe

Ko Tōhe tō tatou tūpuna, ko tōna huarahi e mohio-hia nei, ko Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.

Tōhe is our ancestor, his journey is known and acknowledged on Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.

Ko ngā mātauranga o Te Ara Wairua me ngā wāhi tapu o Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe, me tuku iho na wa tatou tūpuna.

The knowledge of the spiritual pathway and the sacred places on Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe has been handed down by our ancestors.

Koia ēnei ngā tikanga hei arahi i ngā whakāro o te hunga ora

These are the protocols that will guide the thinking and mindset of the living.

Koia ēnei ngā mātauranga Māori he kawe mō ngā uri whakatupu, mo ake tonu

These are the Māori principles that the generations of young and old will learn, understand and forever uphold.

We are dedicated to using mātauranga Māori and other knowledge systems to provide the best information available to inform **balanced decision making towards restoring the mauri of Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.**

We ensure that **land use protects Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe** and recognise and provide for the transition.

We provide for safe, respectful, **appropriate use of vehicles** on Te Oneroa a Tōhe.

We are delivering an **abundance of kaimoana to Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe**, that allows for sustainable harvest consistent with tikanga, and as evidenced by a healthy population of Toheroa as a tohu.

We are acting to restore Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe until the **abundance of taonga species** particularly Toheroa, show us that the underlying ecosystems are flourishing.

Te kawa Waiora o Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe: we are committed to enabling all users to live, work and play safely on Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.

To achieve exceptional social and wellbeing outcomes for the whānau and communities of Te Hiku, we are investing in Te Hiku to diversify use of our natural advantages to provide and **grow a sustainable, resilient and thriving economy**, underpinned by greater infrastructure.

We are an **iwi-led ocean centre of excellence**. Our kete weaves whakapapa through education, research and innovation. We are a place to share the stories of Te Hiku and the gateways to Te Oneroa a Tōhe.

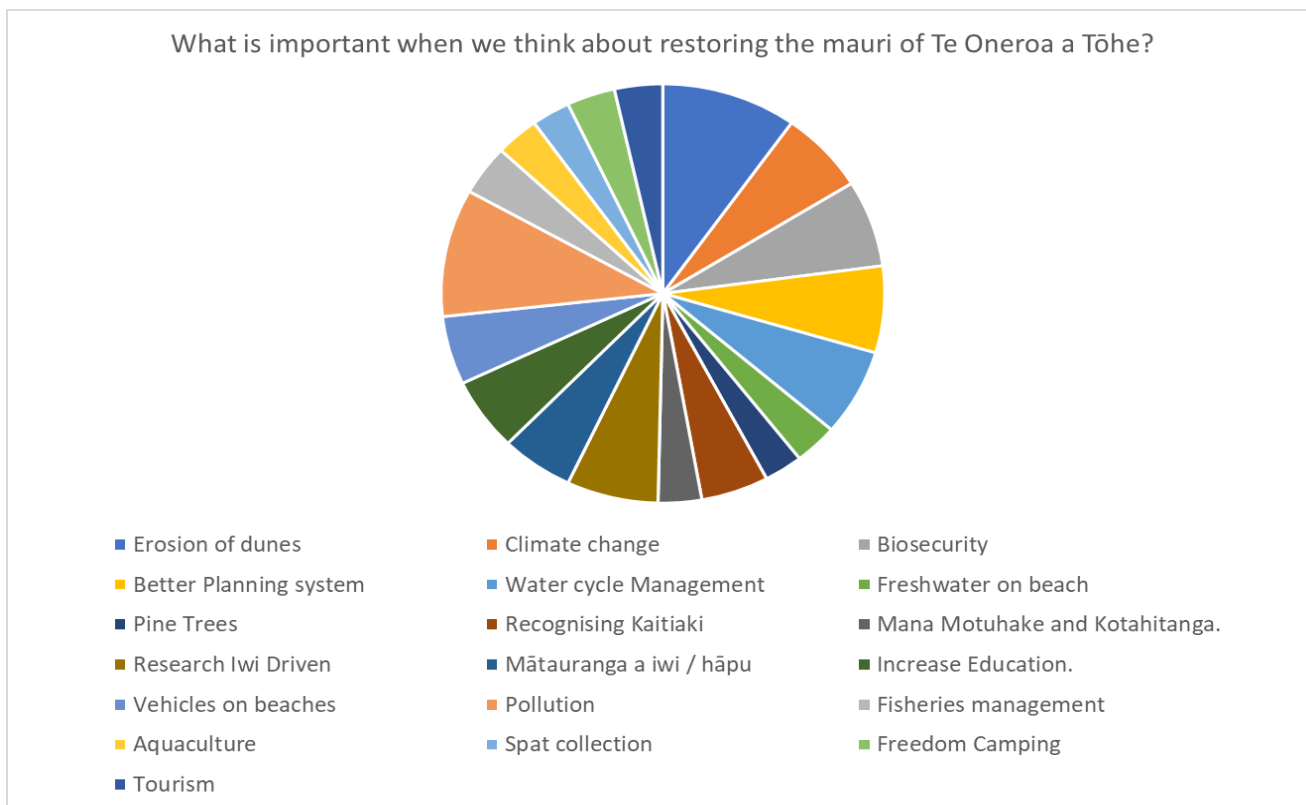


Common ground commitments agreed by participants at Beach Board wānanga 28-30 Sept 2023

Ngā Koringa ā-Muri - Actions

“Put the beach and only the beach in the centre of everything that we do.”

The actions agreed upon at the wānanga will develop a rich understanding of how different world views can change behaviours and as human beings we can work together with western science on one hand and our tūpuna in the other.



Actions proposed by participants of Ngā Puāwai o Te Oneroa a Tōhe

Te Ara Wairua Group (Personification)

Tino Rangatiratanga:

- Kaitiakitanga: Mātauranga of the area
- Whanaungatanga/Manaakitanga - Mana Motuhake.

Appropriate Use of Vehicles

Actions are to design *a beach code for vehicle use* that:

- manages speed and driving behaviours, zoning, type of vehicles, reduce speeds through environmental design of entrance, no go areas/time of year
- kaitiaki ranges mandated to manage vehicle issues.

- Collect data and evidence of vehicle behaviour that is ok or not.
- Respect the beach.
- Note: off road bikes and 4WD clubs banned.

Restore Underlying Ecosystems

Gather information from all iwi and agencies and share (not to overlap or repeat work that has already been done) that is: survey data, land cover data.

- Select sites: depleted or disappeared need to be identified.
- Monitoring before and after.
- Restoration within 5 years.
- Repeat process i.e Select sites, monitor before and after, restoration within 5 years.
- Repeat process.

Land Use

Next 3 months:

- identify the streams within Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe and name them.
- Provide signage and recognition.
- Recognition of the significance of Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.
- Information on water flow.

Forward Planning:

- Muriwhenua hui and projects to provide recognition of culture and history.
- Include infrastructure e.g. rubbish bins.
- Change land use and how this benefits Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.
- Discussion around pest management.
- Support Kaitiaki Tūturu (Rangers)

Abundance of Kaimoana to Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe

- No trawlers.
- Return of good numbers to Toheroa again.
- All about sustainable harvest. Toheroa restoration methods that are effective to increase numbers.
- Translocation to pine free areas of the beach at scale.
- Monitoring Minimal flows of creeks, flows, streams and naming them.
- Pine tree retirement, harvest - 10 years.
- Look at research on vehicles and the impact.
- Customary rāhui, beach wardens to enforce (medium-term 5 years) and the impact.
- Customary rāhui, beach wardens to enforce (medium-term 5 years)

Balanced Decision Making

We are committed to working together on an agreed pathway.

- Respecting tikanga and historical significance.
- Through good communication in developing protocols/policy for co-ordinated actions to achieve our purpose.

Sustainable Economic Development

To achieve exceptional social and wellbeing outcomes for the whānau and communities of Te Tiriti, we are investing in Te Hiku to diversify the use of our natural advantages to provide and grow a sustainable, resilient, and thriving economy, underpinned by greater infrastructure.

Te Kawa Waioara o Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe - Keep our people safe, spiritually and physically.

- It is about best practice.
- We need resources to send those messages e.g. Fishing competitions. Information on what to do and what you do not do.
- Create Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe as a World Wonder like the pyramids in Egypt.

Iwi and Centre of Excellence - A Global Centre of Excellence.

- We are an iwi-led ocean centre of excellence.
- Our kete weaves whakapapa through education, research, and innovation.
- We are a place to share the stories of Te Hiku and the gateways to Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.



Commitments

Personal changes we will make - from the participants.

After three days of reflection, future planning and dreaming of a restored Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe we all agreed to make a commitment to restoring her mauri. Here are our immediate actions from the participants and then our recommendations for a collective, large-scale actions for the medium- and long-term changes we need. This mahi builds on each small step we take on the journey.

"We own the space, it's inherently imbued in our landscape and in our whakapapa."



Recommendations to the Beach Board

The wānanga has set us some challenges so that we can see transformative change on the beach. To realise this change, there is a lot of mahi to do. We need hapū, iwi and the collective users of the beach to come forward to be the change we need. To do this we recommend the Beach Board undertake the following:

1. Agree to the work plan of actions from this wānanga.
2. Prioritise the actions we need to do first to see a change on the beach.
3. Set up a structure to implement these actions.
4. Kaitiaki Māori leading the restoration of Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.
5. Identify who will lead or co-ordinate the delivery of the common ground commitments (or is it a steering committee that reports to the Beach Board)?
6. Set up a monthly hui (who to attend) to drive new actions and report/work with the Beach Board (report bi-monthly to Beach Board?) on progress.
7. It is recognised that we need more investment to create the landscape changes needed to return the wai to the moana and to restore Toheroa. We propose a small group who can identify potential funders (e.g. philanthropic Foundation North, NEXT etc) and other funding opportunities. This group will apply for grants to make changes we need and to create the transformative change across the landscape of the beach. Te Hiku Development may play a pivotal role here?
8. Report actions at the March 2024 hui of the 88 participants of Ngā Puāwai o Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.

‘Mana Motuhake is the foundation. It is reclaiming the name and continuing to practice as whānau, hapū and iwi.’

Next steps

We propose that the Beach Board approach several funders with a clear scope of actions to restore the mauri to Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe. This scope is based on the outcomes and actions of this wānanga and the Toheroa Strategic Plan.

Our indicator species of mauri is the Toheroa and this wānanga and mahi is through the eyes of the Toheroa. When Toheroa sees their restored habitats along the beach they will return in abundance. With their return other taonga will also be restored, through reconnected waterways, dune ecosystem restoration and tikanga returned to the beach.

We know that if we look after the little ones (for they are young) and we protect the big ones (for they are the source of the future taonga) we will restore the exquisite species, Toheroa. By doing this we restore a part of ourselves.

Developing a workplan is essential to moving this kaupapa forward. We urge the Beach Board to start implementing achievable short time-frame actions.

‘Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe has world heritage status.’

Already happening

Our current work plan

Area	Action	Responsibility	Goals	Timeframe
Beach Board (BB) site	Updated and Monitored	BB	Short	Oct 2023
Vehicles	Place Speed signs/ Monitor	BB, NRC, FNDC,	Short	Nov 2023
Education	Media- Vehicles, Cultural Significance.	BB, Runanga, Community Groups, NRC, FNDC.	Short	Nov 2023
Knowledge/Research - Historical mapping of Te Oneroa -a-Tōhe (this was shown at the wananga)	GIS mosaic mapping of aerial photos from 1950s to today. Also develop a geospatial web viewer App to store information.	Tui, Haami, Jacquie, Damian, Lynker Analytics.	Short	1 November
Tangata whenua - climate adaptation fund- NRC	Seedbank of endemic plants of Te Hiku o Te Ika.	Te Rarawa Jacquie, Paul, Tui.	Short	5 November
Knowledge/Research - The Journey of Tōhe using VR	Unlocking Curious Minds (MBIE)	Te Rarawa Haami, Jacquie, Tui, David.	Short	16 November
Knowledge/Research- Blue Carbon and restoring reef ecosystem	He Aka Ka Toro (MBIE)	Te Rarawa Jacquie, Tui, Haami.	Short	16 November
Knowledge/Research - Uia Te Tahatai- Restoration of Mauri to Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe	Smart Ideas (MBIE)	Te Rarawa Tui, Jacquie, Haami	Medium	22 November
Spat MoU	Discussion and Monitor	BB, Iwi, George, Spat Collective.	Short	Dec-Jan 2024
Plant Nursery	Plan and cost.	Te Rarawa Tui, Paul, Haami, Kevin Mathews, Felicity Foy and Jacquie.	Short/Med/	Feb 2024

Our Future Work Plan is for medium- and long-term actions from the wānanga to be developed by the structure that is created by the Beach Board.

The Future of Toheroa - a poem

Te Rōpu Waru Poem by Atareta McNab

In 2030 we all know there is an ancestor in our environment. Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe is our connector, not a divider. The health and mauri of the beach is restored and in balance with all the activities. We have made a pledge of allegiance.

*Upon Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe sandy shore,
A tale of transformation, I implore,
Where nature's grace and culture intertwine,
In the heart of Aotearoa - divine.
As dawn's first light begins to gently kiss
This land of legends, here is what is amiss,
Yet hope and effort, like the rising sun,
Bring forth a future where new life begins.
Tangaroa long lost, returned with open arms,
Gifts from the past, bearing ancestral charms.
Pīngao golden threads grace the dunes once more.
With resilience it reclaims the short.
Waterways and wetlands, once choked and strained
Now flow with life as if they've been unchained.
Our old people, the faces lined with glee.
Enjoying whānau, mahi, by the sea
Their laughter echoes through the endless sands
In the place, they find their hearts and hands.
Traffic managed with a mindful eye.
Balancing the present with the by and by.
The waterway express, a lifeline to explore.
Bringing people together to the shore
With reverence for the past and hope for what's to be.
Toheroa, a symbol of prosperity.
As Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe flourishes anew
In its embrace, we find a future to pursue.
In twenty thirty gentle glow
To Oneroa-a-Tōhe beauty does show
Golden sands and waters clear
A paradise cherished year after year.*

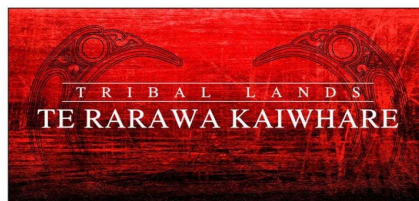
Acknowledgements

Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Beach Board, Ngā Puāwai Working Group:

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Sponsors

Ngā mihi to our sponsors



APPENDIX ONE:

Data Mind Mapping Exercise

Table 1 - Data from the mind mapping of risks and opportunities to restore mauri to Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe

Risk-Opportunity	Count-Votes
Erosion of dunes	28
Pollution fishing/shorter spawning season.	28
New and invasive species/ instructive aquatic species/caulerpa	19
Intensive use of infrastructure/better planning/frustration at RM decisions.	19
Research Iwi Driven	19
Freshwater Management/aquifer/natural hydrology (intensification).	19
Increase Education.	16
Vehicles on beaches (speed, number, intensity)	15
Mātauranga a iwi / hāpu	15
Recognising Kaitiaki	14
QMS Applications/Rahui and Compliance/Rohe Moana.	11
Freedom Camping	10
Warming Oceans	10
Tourism Activities/Sandboarding/People	10
Aquaculture	9
Mana Motuhake and Kotahitanga.	9
Water onto the beach/Monitoring.	9
Pine Tree Margins	8
Spat being removed from the beach.	8
Sea Levels Rising.	8

APPENDIX TWO: Commitments and personal changes

Comments and commitments from participants

Comment	Commitment
Manaakitanga – organisers and food and participation levels	We will be committed to ongoing programs, support programs.
Next time a Tamariki group would be good to have as a future action.	Keep the kōrero rolling back.
Inspired kaumātua / kūia kōrero today	Try to get the putea to make those dreams come true.
Privileged to be a part of this Kaupapa	Committed to flipping the system on its head.
Increasing awareness for the beach, leave only footsteps	Commitments to explore answering questions.
Leaving with this cup full	Commitment to the Kaupapa, educating others on the importance of our beach
Thanks given to organisers, although dubious it was a success, an enlightening process	Commitment to change
We are here united for one common purpose and one purpose goal	Commitment from MfE to support the beach board.
Big picture problems can be achieved, hope for human nature.	Hope to create change within my own industry
Happy to be included, hear and share kōrero	Commitment to maintain willingness to do so
Thanks for giving up their lives for the next three days	Commitment to echo what we have heard here for the rest of my life.

Comment	Commitment
Good to see older faces	Committed to advocate, see other faces
Pleasantly surprised as to the enthusiasm here, fantastic to see	See around the walls the result of it
Thanks for the kitchen staff	Commitment to planting natives for a mile inland to Butler's creek
Happy to sit with passionate and skilled people. Happy to share her passion.	We go on the beach to pick up the plastic, commitment to the beach
Thank everyone for hospitality, shared knowledge, learning, experience	Commitment to bend the science funding of MPI to support this work
My time on Te Oneroa a Tōhe: my guidance is guided by my tūpuna, our claims in the early 1960s.	Commitment: to follow in the footsteps to follow their dreams (Waata Tepania claim) Historical history:
Proved they lived on the beach in the court system within the WAI claims filed.	Encourage everyone to read and listen to those stories and the WAI claim.
Good to be in the room with knowledgeable people	Plant Pīngao on the sand dunes
Limitations are a creation of the mind.	Share this Kaupapa onto the other rangatahi
Organisation of the event was impressive beyond words	Commitment to making the beach pristine again.
Great networking, range of young and old faces	I continue to commit to Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe and help connect people in.
Lovely to share time, make new connections	Commitment to share with the group in Mitimiti
Toheroa whakapapa species / tohu for me	Committed to getting our ocean centre up and running

Comment	Commitment
Me, We – Mohammad Ali	Sharing Kaupapa with wider whānau
Acknowledge those who couldn't come today	Commit to going doing mātauranga Māori on this beach (Masters)
Started with fences, environment statements and then kaitiaki tūturu and we have nudged agencies to identify inaccuracies/inadequate mahi.	Commitment to keep nudging
Mutual respect has been obtained, better understanding	Share with whānau and workplace
Team effort / group effort achieved.	Committed to building a future for the rangatahi.
Awesome wānanga. I learned about the 'future search' process.	Hikoi- come with me and then come to talk with me
Nice to meet new people who are passionate about the beach	Commitment to try help keep the connections going, joined up to keep this Kaupapa going
Thanks to the organisers. Wairua within the room was of love, aroha	Commit to reading the Waitangi of Tribunal Claim (Tepania)

APPENDIX THREE: Photographs from the wānanga

Some images from Ngā Puāwai o Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.





Please see the Beach Board, Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe website for all the photographs of the 3-day conference.