Innovation as Necessity: Te Rarawa and the Challenges of Multi-Purpose Research

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One of the major factors affecting not only *iwi* (tribal) research but also iwi development generally is compartmentalisation of ó for example ó funding, service provision, service and research contracts, government agencies and policy making. Yet *iwi* (tribes) strive for seamlessness and holism in their workings. In 2006, compartmentalisation of research presented itself as a problem to Te R nanga o Te Rarawa when four distinct research or research-dependent projects appeared on the *Rūnanga*øs (board, council) work load.[1] This article shares some of the research stories and lessons arising from the integration of those individual projects into a single research programme ó *Ngā Tāhuhu o Te Taiao* ó and reflects on the methodological quagmire that it invoked.[2] It discusses Ng T huhu from a practical point of view, and is concerned with *how* the problem of compartmentalisation was dealt with, the challenges faced, and the strategies and innovations that were developed in response.[3]

Ngā Tāhuhu o te Taiao: An Exercise in Reclaiming Research
Simultaneously separate and joined the four projects that comprise Ng T huhu o te Taiao are:

- *Te Mauri o te Ukaipō* ó a study of the intersections between Te Rarawa environments and notions and expressions of well-being;[4]
- Te Rarawa *Whānau* (family, extended family) Development ó a comprehensive wh nau and h pu development project which includes Te Rarawa *Hapū* (sub-tribe) Planning and *He Kōrero Whanau* (family stories), a sub-project aimed at supporting wh nau and h pu to record their own histories;
- Te Rarawa Fisheries, centred around developing and planning for iwi management of customary fisheries; and
- Te Rarawa Whenua Ng here, which aims to design a comprehensive management strategy for Te Rarawa *whenua ngāhere* (forest lands).

What separates the projects is that each is funded from a different source, and therefore carries different contractual obligations and reporting requirements, let alone different sets of iwi expectations. What joins the projects are the broad goals of wh nau and hap development, preparation for a post-settlement iwi environment,[5] and research: Te Mauri o te Ukaip (Mauri) is entirely a research project; Te Rarawa Hap Planning and Fisheries include a defined research

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[1] Te Rarawa is one of the northern Maori tribes of Aotearoa New Zealand. *Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa* (literally, the board or council of Te Rarawa) is the legally constituted representative body that formally represents the iwi.

[2] Ng T huhu o te Taiao loosely translates as the ridgepoles or support beams of the environment. A fuller explanation of its meaning is provided below.

[3] Both authors are involved in Ng T huhu o te Taiao, though in different capacities. Based in the Hokianga, Wendy Henwood is a researcher with the Wh riki Research Group, Massey University, and responsible for the Mauri component of Ng T huhu. She is also a marae delegate on Te R nanga o Te Rarawa. Aroha Harris, an historian, has been providing research and historical advice to the R nanga for some five years. Their article is drawn from their own reflections and experiences which have included discussions with other contributors to and participants in the project, as well as access to a range of documents produced within Ng T huhu.

[4] Te Mauri o te Ukaip may be translated as the life essence or life principle of the mother (or the breast that feeds).

[5] The post-settlement iwi environment refers to the phase of development that Te Rarawa will enter into once it has negotiated and agreed a settlement of its longstanding historical grievances with the New Zealand government.

component and together with Whenua Ngāhere stand to benefit from being informed by research. Furthermore, for Te Rarawa, the individual projects built upon ó some would say repeated ó others that dated as far back as 1999 when hapū and *marae* (tribal gathering place) participated in a planning exercise that identified sites of significance. That exercise focused on the natural environment and was primarily driven by the needs of local government. It was broadened in 2005 when Te Puni Kōkiri (the Ministry of Maori Development) contracted Te Rarawa to undertake a whānau development research contract, a key goal of which was the formulation of a planning process in five areas: the collection of whānau and hapū stories, marae and hapū planning, natural resource management, whānau development and whānau enterprises (Te Runanga o Te Rarawa, 2005).

In 2006, a second-phase contract enabled the Whānau Development project to progress from planning to implementation. In addition contracts for two other projects were finalised ó the Fisheries contract with the Ministry of Fisheries, and the Mauri contract with Whāriki Research Group at Massey University. It seemed timely and logical, therefore, to not only manage the projects together, but effectively integrate them, tie them to Te Rarawa goals for iwi development, and incorporate other related elements arising from the Rūnangaøs workload. Preliminary thinking about how an integrated approach might operate led to some important discussions with *kaumatua* (elder) Joseph Cooper, who gave the name Ngā Tāhuhu o te Taiao to the conceptual umbrella under which the individual projects gathered. The *tāhuhu* (ridgepole, ancestry) invokes the ideological lines of ancestry, *mauri* (life principles, life essence) and *tikanga* (customs and values) that keep the projects connected. The *taiao* (environment) references the fundamental importance of the environment not only generally but also in the specific local ways that land and sea define Te Rarawa, who are bound south and west by the sea and insulated by mountainous bush-clad ranges. The mauri of land and sea was established when the earliest canoes landed in the Hokianga area and *taniwha* (environmental guardians) were put in place to guard the sea bed and the land on both sides of the Hokianga harbour. Ngā Tāhuhu o Te Taiao is simultaneously a reminder of and a vehicle for the iwi development *kaupapa* (policy, principle), providing a comprehensive structured framework that weds the research to the Rūnangaøs processes and programmes of work. It also integrates understandings of whānau, hāpu, iwi and marae as connected yet distinct and highly nuanced socio-cultural units, although there is some slippage between the terms as they are used here. In part, the slippage occurs as a result of labels applied to the projects by the funders, as well as some taking for granted of what they mean in the Te Rarawa context.

Within Ngā Tāhuhu the research is mainly guided by and designed around the Mauri and Fisheries projects, each of which must report to their funders on methods and findings. In research terms, Mauri is interested in how and why health and wellbeing are influenced by physical and social environments; identity, belonging and place; *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship, custodianship); whānau dynamics; and movement to and from the city. These topics overlap considerably with the research interests of the Fisheries project which include: past and present customary fisheries practices, fisheries knowledge, experiences and leadership in whanau and hapu; contemporary fisheries development and management; and kaitiakitanga, again. Added to this mix is a research interest in the vast tracts of conservation land in Te Rarawa territory, arising from Whenua Ngāhere proposals to negotiate and settle claims to them. Meanwhile Hapū Planning has revealed a widespread marae-oriented interest in documenting local histories in a

variety of media, and an enthusiasm for He Kōrero Whānau ó recording the oral histories of *kuia* (elders, female) and *kaumātua* (elders).

Overlaying these interconnected, yet differently motivated, research interests is another familiar dynamic: skills development. The Mauri project brought with it a salary for a part-time community researcher, and Fisheries required the training of community interviewers to complete oral interviews with key informants. He Kōrero Whānau identified a flax-roots demand for not only training in oral history methods, but also material support for collecting and archiving the results. Early Hapū Planning results showed that hapū and marae histories are regarded as important parts of the knowledge and tikanga infrastructure of each marae, and there is a strong marae-based call for a strategy to strengthen and secure that knowledge base. Nor is research skills development the only added dynamic with which to contend; each project has particular requirements to meet and functions to fulfil ó for Te Rarawa, the funder or both, as the table below shows. The contractual requirements may be summed up as obliging Te Rarawa to file professionally written research reports, with the additional stipulation of skills development in the Mauri and Fisheries projects. The functions to fulfil for Te Rarawa are more diverse, and call on Ngā Tāhuhu to variously inform, support and contribute to a range of planning, development, and implementation activities.

Table One: Ngā Tāhuhu o te Taiao Functions and Contractual Requirements	
Component • **Functions to fulfil for Te Rarawa**	*Comment on Contract/Funding* • **Contractual Requirements**
Mauri • Inform Whenua Ngāhere • Inform Hapū Planning • Collaborate on Fisheries research	*Contract with Whāriki, Massey University* • Report on research and findings • Employment of community researcher
Fisheries • Inform fisheries management plan • Inform management practice • Contribute to policy development	*Contract with Ministry of Fisheries* • Use Te Rarawa interviewers • Report on methods and findings (Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa, 2007).
Hapu Planning • Gather baseline data for each marae on facilities, people, places, resources, needs, developments and priorities • Inform iwi plan	*Contract with Te Puni Kokiri* • Report on process and planning tools used (Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa, 2006).
He Kōrero Whānau • Support whānau and hapū to identify, collect, record, and archive their kōrero (stories) • Establish Te Rarawa oral history collection • Identify Te Rarawa records held by other institutions • Contribute to strategy for Te Rarawa archive and taonga (belongings, treasures) collection	*Te Puni Kokiri (part of Hapū Planning)* • Report on process (Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa, 2005).
Whenua Ngāhere • Negotiate management structure for whenua ngāhere	*Part of Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa treaty negotiations with the Office of Treaty Settlements.*

• Establish decision-making processes • Identify significant areas and record associated histories and tikanga	• Develop management proposal for Department of Conservation lands

The links between Ngā Tāhuhu and other priorities on the Te Rarawa agenda are clear. For example, advancing hapū planning, even in modest ways such as identifying the infrastructural needs of each marae, can facilitate hapū and iwi thinking and discussion on settling Treaty of Waitangi claims. Similarly, the various research components support previous and existing iwi initiatives in planning for iwi management of customary fisheries and whenua ngāhere, for instance. Viewed together, the distinct Te Rarawa goals and research goals converge around the individual projects, and demonstrate their multi-purpose nature. The challenge to Te Rarawa was to reclaim the research; Ngā Tāhuhu is the Te Rarawa response. It reassigns the research goals for iwi purposes, and reinstates the well worn principles of seamlessness and holism to the research design. And it does that while also meeting the disparate contractual obligations derived from either an academic or governmental ÷compartmentø

Realizing the Concept: Te Rarawa Accepts the Research Challenge
Moving Ngā Tāhuhu from the realm of sound concept to research programme fully implemented in reality has required creative juggling, inventive thinking and judicious planning. Common and clear understanding of the rationale for integrating the suite of projects, encapsulated in the naming of Ngā Tāhuhu o Te Taiao, has helped; so too have the familiar guidelines and principles for researching with iwi, such as those espoused by Linda Smith ó *aroha ki te tangata* (respect for people), and *kanohi kitea* (the seen face), for example (Smith, 1999, p. 120). Rigorous ethical considerations are an integral part of best research practice, of treating people and what is important to them with respect, and designing research to work appropriately with communities. Every researcher ought to be concerned about these fundamental principles, and there are many examples of projects that model best practice (Moewaka Barnes, 2000a; and Conway, Tunks, Henwood & Casswell, 2000) as well as useful and practical guidelines and advice for research with Maori (Moewaka Barnes, 2000b; Walker, 1997; and Walsh-Tapiata, 1998).

Ethics approval was obtained for the Mauri project through the Massey University ethics committee and subsequently amended and applied to Nga Tahuhu.[6] Moreover, within Ngā Tāhuhu the key underlying principles and organising concepts found in the literature have been implicitly understood and appreciated, largely receding into the background as a result. This allows the research participants to follow their own guidelines and protocols, rather than be overshadowed or influenced by the researchersø academic task at hand. In the foreground, meanwhile, is the daily practicality of managing and carrying out a multi-purpose, mixed-methods project now fully immersed in the socio-political realities of the Te Rarawa setting. Many strategies and innovations have been applied to the task; several have emerged organically, and a few with relative ease. But all have featured in relation to the challenges Ngā Tāhuhu presents. A number of strategies stand out as having proved effective so far. On the surface they may have the appearance of being standard practice. For example, an advisory group oversees the project and a training programme was established to prepare community interviewers. These

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[6] The Massey University Human Ethics Committee Approval Procedures and Code of Ethical Conduct are available online respectively at: http://humanethics.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/ethics/human-ethics/approval.cfm and http://humanethics.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/ethics/human-ethics/code/code.cfm (viewed September 2006).

are not new ideas; what makes them innovative are the inflections of Te Rarawa goals and commitments which finesse orthodox strategies for Te Rarawa purposes.

Immediately the research was reclaimed under the Ngā Tāhuhu banner, the monies from the four different funding streams combined to form a single budget. That simple fiscal act produced several useful results. Projects with light budgets could be supplemented by the others. The interviews that the Fisheries and Mauri projects required could be streamlined in operating and spending terms. Also, thinking through the practicalities of Ngā Tāhuhu could evade the tensions that might otherwise arise had the individual budgets remained separate and no doubt fiercely protected by their respective project leaders. One notable upshot of the integrated budget was that the community researcher position ó funded by the Mauri contract at 20 hours a week ó was materially improved by an injection of Runanga funding and made a full-time job. In Kaitaia ó the service centre for most of Te Rarawa and locale of the Runanga ó a full-time job is a far more attractive proposition than a part-time one, and a healthy number of desirable applicants sought the appointment.

A key management and monitoring device for Ngā Tāhuhu is the Whānau Development Advisory Group. As inferred above, advisory groups regularly feature in large research projects, but in the Te Rarawa context the word advisory may under-estimate the breadth and depth of this groupøs work. The initial reason for establishing the group was to bring the individual projects together, within the limited resources available, in ways that would be beneficial for the iwi and hapu in the longer-term. Membership of the advisory group includes each of the project leaders for Mauri, Fisheries and Hapū Planning, the community researcher, a member of the Runanga executive committee, the manager of the Rūnangaøs resource management unit, and the chief executive officer. Consequently, the group has a wide-ranging mix of expertise and experience that includes social, historical and iwi research, evaluation, strategic planning, project planning and management, treaty claims negotiation, tikanga and policy analysis. Collectively, the groupøs members have links with a number of external (government and tertiary education) institutions. They are also all iwi members, and most are actively involved in marae, hapu or iwi affairs. The composition of the advisory group, therefore, provides an important working and institutional knowledge of current Te Rarawa projects, goals and concerns. Immersing Ngā Tāhuhu into the Te Rarawa environment has enabled the advisory group to take an integrated approach overall, add value to existing Rūnanga and iwi initiatives, and be alert to other useful connections as they arise. So, for example, some of the by-products of Ngā Tāhuhu ó such as the growing collection of primary sources (oral and documentary) ó are being worked into another project in which the Rūnanga will establish a cultural centre in conjunction with a new civic centre being developed for Kaitaia.

The Whānau Development Advisory Group is instrumental in keeping Ngā Tāhuhu on track. It has variously provided:

- formative evaluation to assist with the developmental stages of the project;
- direction and advice to those involved and interested in the project;
- ongoing monitoring and management;
- liaison with stakeholders;
- supervision for the community researcher; and

- progress reports to the Rūnanga and other stakeholders as required.

The group must balance some delicate tensions. The project leaders for the Mauri and Fisheries projects have to ensure that specific and measurable research outcomes are delivered to the respective contractors; one a university, the other a government ministry. Funding of the Fisheries research was relatively light so stood to benefit from the integrated approach. On the other hand, Mauri had a number of value-added outcomes to deliver, central to which was ensuring the role of the community researcher fulfilled its potential. The integrated approach to Ngā Tāhuhu opened that role to the demands of a much wider range of Te Rarawa concerns, which seem to constantly battle for human and material resources. Furthermore, the Rūnanga has no research unit, and until Ngā Tāhuhu did not have a researcher in its employ. Instead, the Rūnanga had addressed its research needs by contracting independent researchers on an as required (and as available) basis, and in some cases Rūnanga staff and members with transferable skills ó in policy or management, for example ó undertook what were essentially research projects. Even when the community researcher was employed there was no research manager and therefore no onsite research supervision. Instead, that role has fallen primarily to the advisory group, particularly the project leader for Mauri. The group also oversees the writing of the various reports research typically requires. Academics rarely welcome the thought of report writing by committee, but over time the group has developed a method that seems to work. It discusses the objectives and deadlines for each report, but leaves the relevant project leader with the task of writing it. Internal peer review by other advisory group members happens electronically, with the writer identifying the particular areas in which feedback is desired, and the group members critiquing draft material from the point of view of their particular strengths and interests. More recently, those who will author the various research and other reports have trialled a tailored writing retreat method where they come together for a fixed and uninterrupted number of days to analyse the research data, agree core themes and sketch an outline for analysing and discussing the key research findings.

Despite its success so far, the framework for implementing Ngā Tāhuhu is not without its pitfalls. The iwi environment is dynamic and complex, often changeable, and frequently suspicious of, if not repulsed by, ─researchø In addition, the advisory group is vulnerable to accusations of subjectivity from research funders, and indeed other researchers. Certainly the *Te Rarawatanga* (Te Rarawa identity) of the groupøs members makes clear their vested interest in the research and its outcomes. However, they are also well-positioned to understand and build on approaches that were already known to work for Te Rarawa. Being connected to the Rūnanga and its current (and ever-changing) schedule of work means they can integrate Ngā Tāhuhu into broader iwi goals and priorities. Even simple things, like scheduling the release of information about Ngā Tāhuhu to coincide with Rūnanga meetings and other regular *hui* (gatherings, meetings), make a significant difference to the timeliness of the research, keeping Ngā Tāhuhu in peopleøs consciousness, and demonstrating that it is tuned to the rhythms of Te Rarawa life. Researching with iwi requires a great deal of pragmatism, and the Ngā Tāhuhu approach ó in both concept and design ó effectively meets that requirement.

***Kanohi ki te Kanohi* (Face to Face): Te Rarawa Communities Encounter the Research**
So far this article has introduced Ngā Tāhuhu as a unifying concept to assist with meeting the challenges of researching with iwi, and a framework designed to manage, monitor and

implement the research arising from an integrated suite of projects that might otherwise have occurred as separate and distinct. But no matter how influential, a well-developed concept plus sound structure and design do not necessarily equate to perfect research practice. Nor are they sufficient on their own to identify and respond to those research challenges that occur when the specifics of the research are put into practice on the ground, and researchers engage with the researched. At R nanga level, Ng T huhu was discussed in broad terms as a research project that streamlined a range of wh nau development strategies and goals. It was presented at a regular hui of the R nanga, at a hui of the *kāhui kaumātua* (eldersøgroup), at hap planning hui, and a hui of the delegates who represent their marae on the R nanga. Presentations in person were supported by an information sheet about the project. It was a useful and standard means of making the project known to Te Rarawa people. But there was still something of a divide to be crossed to transform support in principle, for a project merely talked about, into active participation in the kinds of research interviews and hui on which Ng T huhu is heavily reliant. To research in the Te Rarawa environment is to contend with a range of attitudes towards and experiences with the R nanga and with research. And Ng T huhu was introduced during a time that other issues had greater currency ó implementation of the fisheries settlement, negotiation of treaty claims, and consequent inter-iwi territorial disputes, for example.

Though Te Rarawa people easily supported the goals of wh nau development, Ng T huhu had to deal almost immediately with negative views of research, and some pessimism about the R nanga also. Negative views of the research were well-known and therefore unsurprising. They stem from a degree of research fatigue which can be discerned among Te Rarawa communities. Kuia and kaum tua in particular recounted previous unsatisfactory research experiences. There was a sense that ÷everyoneø(university and *wānanga* (learning institute) students, local authorities and government departments) wanted to interview local M ori. But they tended to put their own goals ahead of those of the research participants and could not be relied upon to use the information given to them in positive ways or to return to the communities from which the information was gathered to ó at the very least ó report on the results of the research. Furthermore, there were clearly other researchers already at work on their own projects in Te Rarawa communities. University and w nanga students in particular were identified as actively seeking interviews and information. Kuia and kaum tua asked that the research be better organised so that they did not have to deal with a steady stream of researchers coming to ask essentially the same questions, and rarely returning with any results of value. Even if the advisory group could demonstrate that Ng T huhu would be different (in application and outcome) these views needed to be navigated and worked with if interest and participation in the research were to be maintained. A number of strategies have assisted, including: extending the role of the community researcher beyond research and into Te Rarawa communities; training community interviewers; streamlining the approach to the research interviews; and maximising opportunities to communicate the Ng T huhu project to Te Rarawa communities.

The Fisheries and Mauri components of Ng T huhu sought to gather information from one-to-one and focus group interviews. The Hap Planning project required hui with marae communities to be convened and reported on. The advisory group was clear from the outset that it was simply untenable to support three different but concurrent information-gathering streams; any willing interview contributors would quickly reach exasperation point. Instead ó taking some time and care ó the interview schedules proposed for Fisheries and Mauri were streamlined into

one, and information shared between and across all the Ng T huhu sub-projects. Fortunately, there were some natural overlaps. Interviews have drawn from *kōrero* (stories, discussion, talk) about Te Rarawa experiences, histories and perceptions of the environment; land use and practices; fisheries and fishing practice; sites of significance; and links with health and wellbeing. Despite the logic of this streamlining approach, it too presented its own challenges.

The interviews are regarded as fundamental to the collection of hap histories for hap purposes, and not just the means to a research funder's end. An appreciation of both oral history and social science methods has therefore influenced the development of the interviews, striking a delicate balance between drawing out life experience as an access to understanding historical context, and extracting current Te Rarawa commentary and views on a selection of interlinked themes. Even with this balance worked out, initial testing of the draft interview schedule indicated it was unwieldy and cumbersome, and that some parts would not be relevant to all interviews. For example, not all interview contributors would have either the experience or the inclination to talk about resource management practices, especially as they pertain to legislation and local government. These challenges have been worked with by choosing a focus area for each person interviewed, that is, fisheries or land or wellbeing. Similar questions can be asked in each focus area. For example, questions about transmission of knowledge (how people learned about their environment, who they learned from and who they taught in turn) can be asked in relation to fisheries or land or wellbeing. In reality, many Te Rarawa people could probably give good interviews in any or all of the focus areas. But they would be long interviews, best undertaken in a series of shorter recordings, and only acceptable if undertaken with sufficient preliminary discussion. The integrated approach of Ng T huhu means that both focus area interviews and broader (oral history) interviews can be undertaken as negotiated with the individual contributors. To have that happen smoothly, clarity is critical. Careful negotiation with interview contributors is standard when undertaking research interviews, and generally governed by the rules and protocols of ethics committees, and fundamental principles such as informed consent. Ng T huhu demanded an extra level of care to ensure clear explanation of the all the components of Ng T huhu, and thorough discussion of how the interview material will be used across the range of Ng T huhu research goals. Another consideration was the emphasis He K rero Wh nau placed on holding the interview recordings for prosperity, as the beginning of what is expected to become an oral history collection. Every person who contributes an interview needs to be sufficiently aware of the multiple ways in which their recording might be used or called upon. One of the main reasons for taking extra care is to ensure that contributors can opt in (or out) of the components of Ng T huhu freely.

Advisory group members developed a three-day skills based training programme as a basic introduction to research and to train community interviewers to undertake the Ng T huhu research interviews. Wh nau and hap members had clearly identified and demanded such training as a part of He Korero Wh nau, and the Fisheries component was contractually obliged to use community interviewers. As a part of its wh nau development goals, the R nanga committed to building Te Rarawa capacity in research and interviewing in readiness and for future opportunities and projects ó albeit without the luxury of a skills development budget. Nonetheless, up-skilling a pool of community people for Ng T huhu was seen as part of a longer term investment to build the skill base of Te Rarawa at both an individual level, where hap and wh nau were keen to train their own people to work on their own projects, and

collectively as an iwi. The training programme has been offered twice since Ngā Tāhuhu began, and of the twenty people who completed several community interviewers have conducted interviews either for Ngā Tāhuhu or their own whanau or marae projects.

For the training to be effective, it had to be – and was – tailored to the aims of Ngā Tāhuhu as applied in the Te Rarawa environment. And, like all the other parts of Ngā Tāhuhu, it brought with it its own pitfalls and challenges. Specifically, the strong demand for the training programme was motivated by a range of priorities and circumstances – some participants were university or wānanga students who sought to augment their studies with the acquisition of practical skills, others were keen to apply the training to their own interests in recording whānau histories. All training participants were briefed on Ngā Tāhuhu and told that, for the Rūnanga especially, one of the main goals was that a core group would be trained to conduct the many interviews that Ngā Tāhuhu required. Some reservations about the Rūnanga emerged in this context. A number of participants viewed the training as a service the Rūnanga ought to provide its beneficiaries as a matter of course, and not as a deliverable of one of its own projects. Some trainees were concerned about the political currency of the interview topics. For example, inquiring into Te Rarawa fisheries when distribution of fisheries quota was being debated might attract questions for which community interviewers were ill-prepared. It was a valid concern, and one that pointed to another of the challenges of Te Rarawa research: research participants often have expectations that draw the researchers beyond the parameters of the project at hand. Ultimately, it was accepted that Rūnanga projects may not be a priority for trainees and that becoming a Ngā Tāhuhu interviewer may not be an attractive proposition. Although it may be a disappointing reality, some satisfaction can be taken from the very real contribution Ngā Tāhuhu has made to the research capacity of Te Rarawa. But even that satisfaction is tempered somewhat by the knowledge that under current conditions the Rūnanga can only do so much. Its own research capacity is in its infancy, and the tendency of funders to support research on a project-by-project basis limits the development of consistent and long-term commitment to Te Rarawa-wide research needs.

The work of the community researcher has emerged as the linchpin that holds the daily practicalities of Ngā Tāhuhu together. On a daily basis she has to be both a researcher and a research manager. She sets up and conducts interviews herself, and organises and manages the community interviewers, their equipment and their recordings. She also administers the advisory group, and has become the face of Ngā Tāhuhu before the Rūnanga and in Te Rarawa communities. Research qualifications and experience alone were never going to be enough to ensure the success of the position. Local whakapapa connections, a genuine interest across the broad spectrum of Te Rarawa issues, communication skills that would strengthen and maintain relationships with Te Rarawa communities were all important considerations in making an appointment. The community researcher is, indeed, out and about in Te Rarawa communities, entirely immersed in the Te Rarawa iwi environment, with its mix of cautious and conditional support for the Rūnanga, for the research, and for the policy-driven objectives of the contracts that reside under the umbrella of Ngā Tāhuhu. Often, therefore, she must work with an underlying attitude of *hoha* (fed up), respond to requests that are outside the ambit of Ngā Tāhuhu, and seek interviews from people who have more pressing priorities, such as the leaking roof at the marae. Moreover, Ngā Tāhuhu is a long project – expected to run for another eighteen months at least. This means the community researcher is tasked with maintaining community

interest and enthusiasm ó in a process (research) often viewed with cynicism ó over a period of years.

To an extent, the advisory group anticipated and prepared for the challenge of maintaining community interest over time. Hap Planning, for example, includes a mechanism for payments to be made as marae work through their hap plans. In keeping with the goals of He K rero Wh nau, a one-off contestable fund sought applications to support focussed, marae-based historical projects, such as photo restoration. It was a process that allowed the R nanga to pilot a method for managing such a fund (in anticipation that it might want to do something similar on a regular basis), while at the same time demonstrating some of the possibilities of the overarching goals of wh nau development and Ng T huhu. Such incentives have proved effective, yet still relied on the communication skills of the community researcher to engage with people\u00f8s interest inside their communities with their priorities in mind. She has become something of a go-between at whanau, hapu and iwi levels, balancing her communication to provide enough information to keep interest, but not so much as to overload participants. She has had to promote Ng T huhu while also addressing the incidence of past negative experiences with research and interviews by ensuring an enjoyable research experience for participants. Again, clarity of communication is critical to take Ng T huhu into Te Rarawa communities *and* to hear any concerns those communities might have about Ng T huhu.

Towards Te Rarawa, Towards Excellence
Immersion of Ng T huhu into the iwi environment has shifted the power of the project from the disparate contracts to Te Rarawa. Some goals are yet to be attained. As a research pro*ject* Ng T huhu is a work in progress, nervously awaiting the production of research results and the rush of reporting deadlines. As a research pro*cess* Ng T huhu is being pioneered by Te Rarawa for a range of Te Rarawa purposes; it is dynamic and complex, and subject to ongoing monitoring and review. Resolution of the challenges faced awaits not only research results and reports but also the conversion of those things into practical outcomes for Te Rarawa wh nau and hap . Some outcomes may be ticked off: the training programme, and the community researcher\u00f8s position, for example. Others are yet to come: like hap plans for every Te Rarawa marae, hap and iwi fisheries plans, and the fruition of an iwi manuscript and archive collection. In the meantime, the advisory group in particular hopes that the work completed under the banner of Ng T huhu will prove foundational for future wh nau, hap and iwi development, and contain transferable, reusable methods and designs.

This essay has shown that Ng T huhu o Te Taiao ó conceptually and in practice ó has sought to undertake research while immersed and actively involved in iwi concerns. It is an approach that may well attract allegations of subjectivity, practically a swear word to some researchers. But, if demonstrable commitment to iwi development is subjectivity, then subjectivity is exactly what Te Rarawa requires in its research relationships and projects. It may be time, then, to expand the meanings and measures of research \u2011excellence\u00f8 Meeting contractual obligations is a given, professional measure; similarly the usual academic requirement of publication. But the success and effectiveness of research projects like Ng T huhu ought to be measured ó in part at least ó by their direct practical contributions to iwi development, as set by iwi goals. It is a measure that makes innovation not only desirable, but necessary; sharp learning curves and unpredictable

challenges par for the course. As a step towards those ideals, writing this article makes use of an opportunity for the Ngā Tāhuhu team to pause, reflect, inquire and learn. Simultaneously it achieves the academic goal of publication in a refereed journal, and in the company of the enlightening views and experiences of other indigenous projects.

Glossary

Aroha ki te tangata	respect for people
Hap	sub-tribe
H h	fed up, tiresome
Hui	gathering, meeting
Iwi	tribe, tribes, tribal
K hui	group, order, gentry
Kaitiakitanga	guardianship, custodianship
Kanohi ki te kanohi	face to face
Kanohi kitea	the seen face
Kaum tua	tribal elders
Kaupapa	plan, policy, principle, proposal, project
K rero	Talk, discussion, story
Kuia	elderly women
Marae	Traditionally the courtyard in front of the tribal meeting house. Used here to mean the entire complex including meeting house, dining room, ablution block and grounds plus related facilities such as cemeteries and churches.
Mauri	principle, life principle
Ng here	bush, forest
R nanga	council, assembly, board
T huhu	ridgepole, ancestry
Taiao	environment
Taonga	treasures, property, belongings
Te Rarawa	iwi of the Far North of New Zealand
Te Rarawatanga	meaning of being Te Rarawa, Te Rarawa identity
Tikanga	M ori values, customs
Ukaip	mother, breast (that feeds)
W nanga	learning institute
Wh nau	family, extended family
Whenua	land

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