TOITU

Pūrongo ā-tau | Annual Report

2025

healthy families Rotorua

He oranga whānau

Mihi
Acknowledgement

Kia tau iho rā ngā manaakitanga a Te Wāhi Ngaro

Ki runga ki tēnā ki tēnā o tātau.

Kia mahea te hua mākihikihi,

Kia mahea te hua mātaratara.

Kia toi te kupu, kia toi te mana, kia toi te aroha, kia toi te reo, kia toitū te oranga!

Kia tūturu whakamaua kia tina. Tina!

Haumi ē! Hui ē! Tāiki ē!

healthy families Rotorua
He oranga whānau

Rārangi *Take*
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Group Manager's *Report*

Tātai whetū ki te rangi, mau tonu, mau tonu,
Tātai tangata ki te whenua, ngaro noa, ngaro noa!
Kai te wahine rangatira nō Te Tai Tokerau,
Kathleen Wharton, uri nō te whānau Keremete,
Otirā koutou ko ngā mate o te tau, te marama, te wiki, me te wā,
E moe koutou i te āiotanga o te Pō.
Tauāraitia te Pō tītoko ki te Ao Mārama,
Tihē i mauri ora!

E te ariki taungaroa o Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Te Ariki Tumu Te Heuheu, nei wō huānga nō te takere o tō tāua waka o Te Arawa e tangi tonu nei ki a koe!

He ahakoa kua tō te rā ki a koe, nō te aranga mai o Tamanui ki te rangi, kua whitikina tō piki tūranga ki wana hihi.

Nā tō iwi tonu i tohu kia tū ia hai ariki hōu mō Ngati Tūwharetoa, me te aha, e whakapono nui ana mātau, kua kainga paitia e ia ngā kai rangatira nāu anō i whāngai ki a ia, kua unumia tikatia e ia ngā wai ariki i whāinumia e koutou ko ngā koeke ki a ia.

Nō reira e Te Ariki Te Rangimaheu Te Heuheu Tūkino IX, tū mai rā koe hai ariki, hai toihau, hai kāhu tātara, hai pou manaaki, hai whakaruruhau mō tō iwi o Ngāti Tūwharetoa, mō tō waka o Te Arawa, otirā mō Te Iwi Māori whānui.

Tū, tū pai, ahahā!

As we look back on 2025, we remember those who have passed, acknowledge the many challenges faced by our whānau and communities, and celebrate the collective strength that continues to drive our kaupapa forward. Our mahi continues to be guided by mātauranga Māori, whānau voices, and strong partnerships across our community. We keep innovating to come up with new ways of thinking about and doing things. We combine the wisdom of our tūpuna with the fresh ideas of today to help create healthier futures alongside community champions and sector leaders.

This year we:

- reset our impact strategy to bring community aspirations and team capability into alignment
- adapted our reporting to remain relevant within a shifting policy environment, without losing sight of prevention and wellbeing as the foundation for long term health, and
- strengthened our evidence base by creating meaningful artefacts that tell the story of how our community led approaches are shifting systems toward better hauora and wellbeing.

Strategic highlight

The formation of the Healthy Families Te Manawa Taki Regional Collective between Te Ngira, East Cape, and Rotorua marks an exciting milestone for our kaupapa showing that when we stand together, we can create a greater platform to grow our influence.

The value of regional collaboration includes:

- Strengthened leadership alignment and strategic coherence.
- Faster translation of national priorities into regional action.
- Co-designed workforce development and scalable innovation.
- Stronger relationships, shared insights, and collective responsibility.

At the same time, locally led, collective impact initiatives such as Te Hā o te Ora (reducing whanau harm from smoking and vaping), kai sovereignty, rangatahi mental health and gathering lived voice about the Hapū māmā and Pēpi experience in Rotorua, are demonstrating the power of systems change and co-design approaches underpinned by mātauranga Māori and led by our community.

Our team

This year we farewelled Te Raipine McLeod and Hiko-o-te-rangi Curtis who headed off to Brisbane chasing their Nakawhiti (Cross Fit) dreams.

Congratulations to this courageous couple who were inspirational kaimahi in the Healthy Families movement and who have already achieved so much in the brief time since leaving Aotearoa.

To maintain the strength and balance of our team, we were delighted to welcome back Systems Innovator, Stevee Wikiriwhi, following the birth of her beautiful daughter, Wirimena. We are fortunate to warmly welcome Wharehuia Te Tokoihi into the Healthy Families whānau as our new and talented Rautaki Māori. Adding to the joy, we celebrated a wedding within our team. Congratulations to Mana and Jardine Hape and the arrival of another precious pēpi, their daughter Anahera, in February.

Leadership, Legacy, and Inspiration

In each Toitū Report, I take a moment to acknowledge those whose leadership reflects the values and spirit of our kaupapa, individuals who inspire us through their service, humility, and unwavering commitment to whānau and community wellbeing.

Last year, we honoured Kīngi Tūheitia Pōtatau Te Wherowhero Te Tuawhitu and Sir Robert (Bom) Gillies, acknowledging their legacy of service, leadership, and aroha - qualities that continue to guide our mahi and reflect the essence of the Healthy Families Rotorua kaupapa.

This year, as the mantle of Kīngitanga passed to Te Arikinui Kuīni Ngā Wai Hono i te Pō, we witnessed that same strength and humility take new form. In her first address at Koroneihana, Te Arikinui spoke of unity, identity, and collective purpose calling for kotahitanga in everyday life, and for Māori to express identity through te reo, care for the taiao, wellbeing, and whakapapa. Her vision aligns deeply with our kaupapa: empowering whānau and hāpori to design their own hauora journeys, focused on connection, mātauranga, and collective action. Here in Rotorua, we see this vision realised as communities lead change, systems shift toward Māori worldviews, and transformation grows through kotahitanga and shared purpose.

Together, we are helping to make the invisible visible by shifting the systems that shape our daily lives bringing to light the hidden drivers of wellbeing, from cultural strengths and community knowledge to the structures and norms that influence how our whānau live and thrive.

Acknowledgements

Finally, I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all those who walk alongside us in this kaupapa.
To our Healthy Families Rotorua team Pirihira, Megan Teteira, Stevee, Lois, Wharehuia, and Mana, thank you for your passion and creativity to create change that uplifts whānau and the taiao.

My sincere thanks also go to our Strategic Leadership Team led by CEO Paora Te Hurihanganui, who continue to guide and support us through their clear direction and powerful advocacy. To the wider leadership whānau from our Lead Provider, Te Arawa Whānau Ora, thank you for your continued belief, partnership, and effort. Your support, both strategic and practical, sustains our ability to do this important work.

Finally, we acknowledge our community champions and kaupapa partners whose mahi inspires and strengthens us all.

"Whiria te muka tangata; weave together the strands of our people."

In unity, we find strength; in connection, we create change.

Nāku iti noa, nā

Jen

Jenny Kaka-Scott
Group Manager,
Healthy Families Rotorua

Strategic Leadership *Group*

The SLG is a critical feature of the Healthy Families Rotorua leadership structure. SLG members are made up of thought leaders, strategic whizzes and movers and shakers across our community who help to lift, advise and inspire our team to greater heights. We have had the luxury of great SLG leadership throughout the years, and 2025 is no exception.

SLG members

- support the Healthy Families NZ movement to thrive and have impact through strategic leadership. They provide direction, advice and guidance to the team doing the day-to-day Healthy Families mahi.
- find opportunities to integrate Healthy Families principles into their own spheres of influence and share our Healthy Families stories with others while advocating for change.
- are well connected and influential at multiple levels and have a strong values alignment with our work.
- have a track record in leading and supporting systems change. They demonstrate value as SLG members through actively bringing opportunities to the table and follow through on commitments made to supporting the kaupapa.

Our SLG members include Chairperson Paora Te Hurihanganui (Te Arawa Whānau Ora, Te Arawa Waka Taua), Mapihi Raharuhi (Te Manawa Taki, National Public Health Service), June Grant ONZM, JP (Artist, Businesswoman, Breast & Cervical Screening Paeārahi, Health League), Aneta Morgan (Rotorua Lakes Council), Anahera Waru (Principal Advisor, Public Health), James Hamiora (Te Tatau o Te Arawa, Muka Tangata: Workforce Development Council), Zalene Douglas (Waka Ama NZ, Hauora).

Organisational Structure & *PD Chart*

Jenny Kaka-Scott
MANAGER
PhD candidate AUT
Traditional Kai Systems

Manawa Callaghan
VIRTUAL EXEC. ASSISTANT
Scheduling, & Finance Systems
NZ Law Society : Legal Exec. Diploma

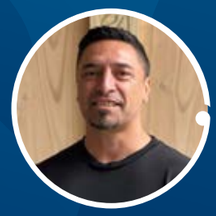
Wharehuia Te Tokoihi
RAUTAKI MĀORI

Pirihira Whata
PRACTICE & DEVELOPMENT LEAD
Master Māori & Indigenous Leadership
University of Canterbury

Megan Lacey
COMMS MANAGER
Master Māori & Indigenous Leadership
University of Canterbury

Huriana Wikiriwhi
SYSTEM INNOVATOR
PhD candidate AUT

Lois Swinton
SYSTEM INNOVATOR
Bachelor of Social Science



Teteira Ormsby
SYSTEM INNOVATOR
Te Reo & Tikanga Māori

Strategic *Project*

Te Manawa Taki Regional Collective

A significant milestone in 2024–25 was the formation and activation of the Te Manawa Taki Regional Collective.

This collective brings together three Healthy Families sites from across the region and was established with a shared vision: to amplify prevention in our region by working as one.

In this short time, we have taken deliberate steps to bring our teams together, align our strategies, and draw on the unique strengths of each site. At the heart of this work is our commitment to mātauranga Māori as a prevention solution, recognising the power of indigenous knowledge, cultural practice, and community led wisdom in building wellbeing.

The Collective is a space for innovation, collaboration, and alignment. Together, we are building stronger regional partnerships, amplifying local voices, and working across iwi, hapū, and community networks to influence systems at scale.

In our first year we have:

- Brought our workforces together for shared training, strengthening capability and connection across sites.
- Worked collectively at a management level to develop strategies and pool resources for greater regional impact.
- Shared tools, knowledge, and learnings that help accelerate what works.
- Identified initiatives with strong potential to scale and benefit whānau and communities across Te Manawa Taki.
- Built connections across the rohe that enable stronger advocacy and influence.

This kaupapa is still in its early stages, but it represents a bold and transformative step toward a healthier future for our region. As one Collective member reflected:

"When we come together as Te Manawa Taki, we move beyond individual sites. We become a regional voice for systems change, carrying the aspirations of our communities into action."

Our *Region*

Te Manawa Taki

Team Talk

Jenny Kaka-Scott
Manager

He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka
A choppy sea can be navigated by a waka.

A powerful message of resilience, determination, and perseverance, encouraging people to face and overcome difficult situations and challenges with courage, skill, and support.

In 2025, our whānau celebrated a beautiful outdoor wedding and welcomed two more mokopuna ataahua, Anahera Hape and her cousin Kōrihi Kākā. In just a few months, our whakapapa will grow again as we prepare to welcome another precious mokopuna. These moments are the ultimate highlight of our whānau life and help to balance out the tough times, bringing harmony and promise into our lives.

Wharehuia Te Tokoihi
Rautaki Māori

Over the past 12 months, I've seen much growth in my little whānau. My 15-year-old tamāhine (daughter) is thriving at kura and loving life with her cousins. My 4-year-old tama pāwaenga (middle child) is becoming independent and worldly, fascinated by Samurai and katana. My 3-year-old tama pōtiki (youngest child) remains obsessed with taiaha and taonga Māori, growing into the cutest, most confident performer. Being their matua tāne (pāpā) is my greatest honour. I've always had a passion for martial arts – this year I earned my purple belt in BJJ and placed at the BOP, Aotearoa, and SJJIF World Jiu Jitsu Championships in Chiba, Nippon.

Pirihia Whata
Practise & Development Lead

Over the past year, I reached a proud milestone by graduating from my studies, which marked the culmination of years of dedication and hard work. This achievement has given me the confidence and motivation to pursue further academic opportunities. Since graduating, I've taken a short break to rest, reflect, and prepare myself for the next stage of learning. During this time, I've enjoyed exploring new ideas, reading, and engaging in activities that keep me curious and inspired. I'm now excited to embark on a new academic adventure, eager to build on my knowledge and embrace fresh challenges ahead.

Megan Lacey
National Strategic Communications Manager

The highlight of the past 12 months for me has been the birth of my third mokopuna, Isla Waitā. I spent two weeks in Ōtautahi awaiting her arrival, and on the day of my flight home she graced us with her presence at a healthy 9 lb 12 oz. Other highlights include joining a Gisborne-based swimming crew for a collective challenge to swim the equivalent distance around Te Waipounamu, enjoying after-mahi runs in the Redwoods, and the occasional piki maunga. Now that I have three granddaughters, staying healthy has become even more important so I can be there for them as long as possible.

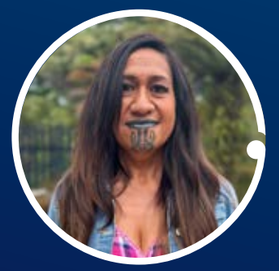
Teteira Ormsby
Systems Innovator

I've continued to find purpose and balance in both my professional and creative pursuits. My time has been shared between leading kaupapa that strengthen community wellbeing and maintaining my practice as a stone craftsman. As I reflect on this dual pathway, it has reminded me of the importance of grounding, of working steadily and with intention, ensuring that both my creative and professional contributions uphold values of integrity and collective wellbeing.

This year has also reinforced the importance of relationships and the quiet strength found in collaboration. Through wānanga, community-led initiatives, and shared learning, I have witnessed how unity and purpose can create real change. Personally, I have focused on staying well, strengthening both body and mind, and continuing to grow as a leader and lead by example for others.

Stevee Wikiriwhi
Systems Innovator

Over the past 12 months, my primary focus has been on nurturing and raising my young whānau, particularly my baby, who is now 16 months old. At the same time, I have been pursuing my PhD through AUT. With my ethics application now formally approved, I'm pleased to be a confirmed PhD candidate. This milestone has enabled me to begin conducting interviews and focus groups, including the privilege of interviewing whānau as part of my research. These interactions have been deeply meaningful and intellectually enriching, providing valuable insights that continue to shape my academic journey.



Lois Swinton
Systems Innovator

Over the past year, I've enjoyed reconnecting with old friends and spending more time with whānau, which has reminded me of the importance of slowing down and nurturing relationships. With my youngest son heading to Australia to pursue his career, it's been a time of adjustment and reflection. I've found comfort and creativity in expressing my love for interior design and working on small projects around my home spaces that reflect warmth, colour, and personality. These creative moments, along with time shared with loved ones, have helped me stay grounded, balanced, and inspired outside of work.

Healthy Families *NZ*
Approach

Healthy Families NZ is a large-scale prevention initiative that unites community leadership in a collective effort to improve health in the places we live, learn, work, and play.

Healthy Families Rotorua takes a systems approach to reducing the risk factors for preventable chronic diseases. Our goal is to improve health outcomes and promote health equity through key focus areas: better nutrition, physical activity, mental health, smoke-free living, and reduced alcohol-related harm.

The Healthy Families NZ approach focuses on addressing the underlying conditions that impact health and wellbeing, aiming to reduce the risk of preventable chronic diseases. All Healthy Families NZ localities share this common approach and set of principles, which form the foundation of our prevention movement.

We aim to understand the journey that leads to chronic disease by listening to the lived experiences of whānau and communities. This helps us work together to address the root causes of preventable chronic disease in meaningful ways.

Healthy Families NZ operates through 11 teams across 10 localities, embedded within a range of lead providers, including iwi, Whānau Ora, local government, regional sports trusts, and Pacific-led social change organisations.

Each locality has its own unique systems and environments that impact the health and wellbeing of its people. Lead providers are chosen for their ability to work in partnership with local communities and organisations to create sustainable change.

Our locality-based approach recognises that the most effective and sustainable solutions to health and wellbeing challenges are driven by the people who are most affected.

Our backbone role & *responsibilities*

Often within a Collective Impact effort, the Healthy Families team takes on the 'backbone' role initially. A robust backbone function is essential for coordinating the effort and sustaining Collective Impact over time.

Healthy Families Rotorua, as a backbone organisation, plays several key roles:

- Provides the infrastructure to coordinate work among partners and advance the initiative as a whole.
- Ensures strategic coherence and offers functional leadership across the project.
- Acts as a neutral convener, facilitating effective dialogue and mediating conflicts among stakeholders.
- Manages data collection and analysis, using measurement as a tool for continuous learning.
- Supports community engagement and builds critical relationships across the initiative. To do this, the backbone must have established connections and credibility within the relevant rohe and focus areas.
- Develops effective communication strategies and advocacy agendas to create a sense of urgency for change among participants, policymakers, funders, and the wider community.
- Commits significant time to the initiative, potentially on a full-time basis, especially as the initiative scales for sustainability.
- Has the capacity to raise funds or contribute resources to support the backbone function. The backbone should be able to secure a substantial share of the necessary resources.
- While this backbone role is often carried out by a single organisation, networks of individuals or shared models across multiple organisations can also be effective.

While this backbone role is often carried out by a single organisation, networks of individuals or shared models across multiple organisations can also be effective.

Prevention System *Roadmap*

INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & PLAY

Co-designing innovative opportunities to increase physical activity.
Moving & playing more.

HEALTHY KAI & WAI

Transforming the local kai system.
Increasing and improving kai security & kai sovereignty.
Choose wai Māori.

ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Transportation has a role in promoting physical activity and achieving healthier (net-zero carbon/energy efficient) environments.

STRENGTHENING CULTURE, IDENTITY & LANGUAGE WITH MĀORI COMMUNITIES

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Protecting & restoring our taiao, including waterways.

PLACEMAKING

A community-led approach to shaping public spaces that reflect the needs & aspirations of the people who use them.

BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

Health & wellbeing must be integrated into a broader systems change approach towards buildings & cities if we are to transition to a healthy sustainable future.

Integrating health and wellbeing into a broader systems change approach towards buildings and cities will help transition us to a healthy sustainable future. Connecting our people to our places & spaces.

REDUCING WHĀNAU HARM & LEADING HEALTHIER LIVES

Reducing alcohol harm & Reducing smoking harm

Changing the narrative: destabilising negative stereotypes Smokefree 2025 future. Connecting our people to our places & spaces.

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH & RESILIENCE

Positive lifestyle factors like proper nutrition, ample sleep, mindfulness, hydration & regular exercise reduce the toll of stress.

healthy families Rotorua
He oranga whānau

EVIDENCING MĀTAURANGA MĀORI SYSTEMS AS PREVENTION SOLUTIONS

Rautaki *Whakaaweawe*

Our Impact Strategy | 2024 - 2025

The operational focus for 2024 - 2025 is set out in our Impact Strategy, with a continued commitment to the agility and innovative nature of Healthy Families, to be a strong systems leader in prevention health for the Rotorua community.

Deep & Enduring Change with Rich Evidence of Collective Impact

healthy families Rotorua

PRINCIPLES

- EQUITY OF OUTCOME
- TE TIRITI O WAITANGI
- LEADERSHIP
- COLLABORATION FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT
- EXPERIMENTATION
- ADAPTION
- IMPLEMENTATION AT SCALE
- LINE OF SIGHT

STRATEGIC INTENT

To Increase Equitable Health Outcomes Where We Live, Learn, Work & Play

TRANSFORMATIONAL OUTCOMES

Reduced Whānau Harm

Collaborative designed systems change the narrative, messaging, & guidelines for the prevention of alcohol & smoking related harm.

Greater Health & Wellbeing Solutions by Communities for Communities

Settings are transformed to enhance individual & collective health wellbeing.

Evidence Mātauranga Māori Systems as Prevention Solutions

Whānau across our communities are more engaged in health prevention practices & more proactive in managing their environments.

Demonstration of Systems Change

Initiatives are successfully scaled deep (cultural change), out (replication/reach), or up (to influence policy, practice, &/or resource flow).

HEALTHY FAMILIES ROTORUA KAUPAPA

Māori Systems Return

Horohoro School Asphalt Bike Track

Creating built environments that encourage active transportation, generating more opportunities for physical activity.

Active Transport & Built Environment

Tahuroa o Te Ora

Focusing on creating supportive environments where rangatahi can thrive mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Create safe spaces for kōrero, support, and collective well-being.

Improving Mental Wellbeing & Resilience

Te Hekenga ā Rongo

Elevating mātanga Maramataka, reconnecting with traditional knowledge systems, fostering a deeper sense of belonging and identity.

Improving Mental Wellbeing & Resilience

Te Hā o te Ora

Supporting Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 by collaborating for collective impact on initiatives underpinned by mātauranga Māori intelligence.

Reducing Smoking & Vaping Harm

Hīkoi Takiwā

Settings are transformed to enhance greater opportunities for physical activity, incl. movement & play that are community or workforce designed & driven.

Increasing Physical Activity & Workforce Wellness

Ruru Parirau

Destabilising negative stereotypes about Māori & alcohol, & rebalancing with local stories of inspiration and transformation.

Reducing Alcohol Harm

Te Ōhaki o Whakaotirangi

Co-creating kai secure communities by activating community responsiveness & transformation within kai systems, incl. kai sovereignty approaches.

Improving Nutrition & Kai Security

PHASES:

1. **LOOKING:** Explore
2. **LISTENING:** Discover
3. **LEARNING:** Co-Design
4. **LEVERAGING:** Scale & Sustainability

Healthy Families *Strategic Intent*

MOEMOEĀ – VISION

Resilient whānau, connected communities, healthy environment.

ARONGO - PURPOSE

To drive deep & enduring system change alongside our community.

Changing the negative narrative to news of community success.

OUR IMPACT

- Mana whenua and local community are the foundation of every ecosystem.
- Increasing equitable health outcomes where people live, learn, work and play.
- Prototyping scalable and sustainable initiatives to transform communities.

NGĀKAU TITIKAHA

Our commitment to our communities

- Building meaningful relationships and making authentic connections.
- Supporting community-driven initiatives.
- Co-designing to prototype inspirational activations across communities.
- Growing leader-ful ecosystems.

MĀTĀPONO VALUES

- Creating community-focused solutions using mātauranga Māori-based approaches.
- The lived voice – community are the experts
- A whole-of-community collective approach.

WHAT WE WILL SEE

- Leadership uniting for system change
- Transformed settings
- Iwi and hapū collaboration
- Whānau expressing mana motuhake
- A co-ordinated prevention system
- Connected communities; people and place
- Māori visible driving change
- Insights generating new evidence

OUR APPROACHES

- Underpinned by research and active reflection
- Specialised backbone infrastructure
- Taiao activations
- Application of cutting edge innovation tool and frameworks
- Dedicated and skilled prevention workforce
- Normalising Māori systems to uplift priority populations

ARCHETYPES

Pōtae we wear with our 'curious innovator mindset'

- Activator
- Sense-maker
- Collaborator
- Enabler
- Mobiliser
- Negotiator
- Champion
- Convenor
- Back-bone support.

HOW WE INFLUENCE

- Challenge inequity; champion equity.
- We respond to the nuances and needs in our local area.
- We focus on addressing the underlying conditions impacting health & wellbeing.
- We work with the willing.
- Access deep wisdom.
- Positively disrupt and activate.
- Partner with leaders, movers and shakers.

Our *Partners*

It is easy to lose sight about the simple truth about systems. They are made up of people. All the frameworks, tools, strategies, knowledge and experience at our disposal will not make a 'dot of difference' in shifting power or changing deeply held beliefs on their own. We must support people and communities to change in ways that help shift their consciousness – or the system they are a part of, will not significantly change. Fundamental to enabling that, is the belief that people are the experts in their own lives. We call this the power of 'lived experience'.

A snapshot of where we believe we are making impact:

1. Prioritising relationships is the key to achieving successful collective impact. It is the heart and soul of collective impact. Our team has aimed to develop relationships in ways that build empathy and compassion enabling authentic connections. We have shared the unique knowledge we have, with others who bring the unique knowledge they have, creating bridges to facilitate understanding. Building deep relationships takes time, tenacity, and a willingness to keep showing up. It also takes humility, patience, and kindness. Having the ability to access deep wisdom, such as that which is embedded within our own mātauranga provides us with direction, insights and the inspiration we need, to keep our tanks full. We acknowledge our many partners, sector leaders, system influencers, community champions, whānau, hapū and iwi across the generations who have prioritized working closely together with Healthy Families Rotorua to find systemic solutions to our local challenges.

2. We have focussed on process – or the Healthy Families approach – rather than pre-determined outcomes. We respond to the nuances and needs in our local area and do not take a one size fits all approach.

3. We are committed to growing 'leader-ful ecosystems.' Focusing on building a sense of unity and supporting individuals to perceive themselves as an important part of a 'collective', means Healthy Families Rotorua can hold the backbone support position and leadership can be shared by various stakeholders who step up when their strengths are needed.

4. Mana whenua and local community are the tuāpapa (foundation) of each collective impact ecosystem. Our role is is to put those closest to the issues and most impacted by the challenges – at the heart of the problem-solving process. Our role is to support them with the resources and tools they need to be effective. This is fundamental to power sharing and giving agency to communities.

5. We co-designed local initiatives in every Healthy Families NZ focus area that address the underlying conditions that impact health and wellbeing in order to reduce the risk of preventable chronic disease. Some of the initiatives are ongoing but several are now scaled to the level where Healthy Families Rotorua have stepped back into a support-from-a-distance role, with the community fully committed to driving the change. We remain committed to re-join the collectives and offer support, when called.

Community *Voices*

Rangatahi Mental Health and Wellbeing

The following quotes were shared by rangatahi during hui held in 2025.
Their words reflect themes of belonging, connection and the desire to lead change within their communities.

> I felt seen when someone just sat with me and didn't try to fix it straight away.

> We don't just need support — we can give it too.

> Sometimes I don't want to be a burden.

> Make a space that isn't about problems — just somewhere we can be ourselves.

> When I stand and speak my pepeha, I feel grounded.

> Sometimes all I need is someone to message and say 'are you sweet?'

> Let us lead the design.

> Train us up to be the mentors for others.

> Knowing who I am — my whakapapa — helps me feel strong when things get hard.

These insights continue to guide Healthy Families Rotorua's approach to rangatahi wellbeing and leadership, reinforcing the importance of spaces where young people feel seen, connected and empowered to shape the future.

Kai and Whānau Wellbeing

This kōrero reflects the deep connection between kai, whenua and identity that underpins community-led systems change. It highlights how hands-on, intergenerational experiences continue to strengthen whānau wellbeing and collective resilience in Rotorua.

> When our tamariki dig in the soil and see the kūmara come up, they see what mana motuhake looks like.
>
> *– Kai Rotorua educator*

Significant Events in the HFR *2025 Calendar*

Healthy Families NZ Evaluation (May 2025 to June 2026)

What is the aim of the Healthy Families NZ Evaluation?

This four-yearly, independent evaluation explores the implementation and development of Healthy Families NZ and assessing its impacts on the prevention system. Healthy Families NZ is a large-scale initiative which aims to improve people's health where they live, learn, work and play. The findings of the evaluation will assist Government with future directions for Healthy Families NZ and the wider prevention system in New Zealand.

We sincerely thank all those who participated in our Evaluation including stakeholders who took part in the survey and those who met kanohi-ki-te-kanohi with Assoc. Professor Dr. Anna Matheson and Nan Wehipeihana from Victoria University including Cushla Paice (Kai Sovereignty), Lauren James (Rangatahi Mental Wellbeing), Mapihi Raharuhi (Strategic Leadership Group), Eugene Berryman-Kamp (Te Arawa Whānau Ora, Lead Provider), Pirihira Whata (HFR Staff) and Jenny Kaka-Scott (HFR Management).

- **National Te Matatini ki te Kāhui Maunga (26-27 Feb)** Attended one day of Te Matatini to cheer on Hiko, Te Raipine and all our Te Arawa roopu performing this year.
- **Hosted National Managers & Leadership Hui Rotorua (18 – 19 March)** This year we hosted the annual National Leadership Hui in Rotorua, facilitating the planning and delivery of the agenda alongside HF Te Ngira and HF East Cape.
- **Inaugural Te Manawa Taki Regional Management Hui, Gisborne (27 - 29 May)** to develop the strategic planning for our new Regional collaboration.
- **Tohunga Tumau Event (13 June 2025)** HFR's Matariki event celebrating Kai Māori and the industry it is impacting through the work of innovative Māori chefs.
- **Kai Conference, Te Mānuka Tūtahi Marae, Whakatane (29 - 30 June)** A conference looking at environmental impacts on food production and health, food safety on marae, Māori philosophies of and kai production, and stories from the past and present.
- **Haerenga to Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu: (9 -11 July)** Te Manawa Taki Managers had a positive and inspirational visit to the Research and Innovation Unit (HFWRR) umbrelled by Te Oranganui Hauora in Whanganui.
- **Regional Engagement: Hosted the first Te Manawa Taki Combined Regional Workforce Hui (5–7 Aug)** in Rotorua, enabling meaningful engagement across roles and sites, with a focus on scaling promising initiatives and embedding systems-thinking.
- **Lead Provider Hui (4 Aug)** Met with TAWO leadership to discuss arrangements beyond June 2026, with a focus on direction setting, strengthening alignment and exploring what the future relationship between HFR and TAWO could look like.
- **Evaluation Site Visit:** Welcomed the Healthy Families NZ Evaluation Team (15 Aug), gaining valuable insights that affirmed our direction and highlighted our impact from a national perspective.

Ko ngā painga mai i ngā tau *2024-25*

Snapshots

Sharing System Change

Teteira Ormsby delivered an inspiring presentation to Toi Ohomai students studying their Bachelor of Social Work.

His presentation on Community Innovation & Kaupapa Māori Approach to Social Change was a great reflection on how we can drive meaningful, culturally grounded change in our communities. His insights on using innovation to support social development were appreciated by the students and directly aligned with their current module.

It's wonderful to see how these dedicated students are incorporating innovative, Māori-centred approaches into their practice, and we're proud to support their learning journey.

Toitū Te Reo

For the second year in a row and as part of our Te Awhero reo and tikanga kaupapa, our team recently participated in Toitū Te Reo 2025 - Aotearoa's national Māori language festival in Heretaunga .

We enjoyed two days of celebration, challenge, and inspiration. This year's theme, Titiro Whakaroto – Look Within, is a call to reset, renew, and bring fresh thinking to the revitalisation of te reo Māori.

Seed saving workshops

Our seed saving workshops were designed to bring together local growers, whānau, and marae to exchange knowledge on traditional and modern seed-saving techniques.

These workshops aimed to strengthen community capability, preserve biodiversity, and enhance local food resilience. By sharing practical skills and experiences, participants built confidence to maintain their own seed banks and contribute to a growing culture of kai sovereignty across Rotorua.

Rewriting our alcohol story

We are preparing to deliver Rūrū Parirau: Rewriting Our Alcohol Story, a wānanga set to take place in 2026 that aims to shift the way the community understands and responds to alcohol harm.

The wānanga is about moving beyond deficit-based approaches to alcohol harm and reframing the narrative through Māori strengths and solutions. Early community engagement has revealed strong support for this direction, with many calling for more alcohol-free spaces, rangatahi-led initiatives and positive prevention strategies that focus on belonging, connection and collective wellbeing.

Drawing from the first kauhau of Te Arikinui Kuini Ngā Wai Hono i te Pō, the kaupapa explores themes of identity, unity and reclamation.

A New Home for He Oranga Whānau Rotorua

This year marked a new chapter for Healthy Families Rotorua, with the team moving from the Te Whitiwhiti building, which we shared with our lead provider Te Arawa Whānau Ora, into our new whare, Te Pīwhara.

Te Pīwhara takes its name from Whitiwhiti a Te Pīwhara, a toka tūtohu whenua (boundary stone marker) that once stood in the centre of what is now Fenton Street, between Hinemoa and Pukuatua Streets. In naming our whare after this marker, we acknowledge the enduring presence of Te Arawa history within Rotorua's urban landscape and the significance of place in our mahi. Our whare is a welcoming space for collaboration, reflection and innovation. It connects our team with Rotorua, its people and its stories.

Finding Our Toka Tiaki

We travelled to Maketū to find two toka for our new tari, Te Pīwhara. These stones serve as spiritual protectors for all who enter our space.

Maketū was the final landing place of the waka Te Arawa. Given that the tohunga of the waka, Ngātoroirangi, and his tuāhine are depicted on our outside wall, it was fitting that we returned to this sacred place to find the toka that would protect our manuhiri, our team and our whare.

We were guided by the humble and knowledgeable tohunga, Te Waata Cribb, a descendant of the tūpuna who landed at Maketū and an ahikā there today. He shared insights about the takiwā and helped us understand more about the mana of toka and other atua-made treasures valued by Māori, such as toka puia, ōnewa, tūhua and pounamu.

The day was filled with learning and reflection. We are deeply grateful to our ipukarea of Maketū for the gift of our two toka tiaki, which will continue to uphold and protect Te Pīwhara and all who gather within it.

OUR IMPACT & *INITIATIVES*

Rangatahi Mental Health

Rotorua rangatahi have been calling for change – not only in how support is delivered, but in who gets to design it.

At a Rangatahi Networking Hui hosted by Rangatahi Ora at Ōwhata Marae, young people from across the rohe came together to share kōrero about wellbeing, identity and what they need to thrive. Healthy Families Rotorua took part to gather lived experiences and insights that will inform systems change in the mental health and wellbeing space.

The kōrero was rich with honesty, urgency and vision. Rangatahi spoke about the need for culturally safe, consistent and relational approaches to support. They described the importance of being seen, understood and trusted, and of belonging to spaces that reflect their realities rather than focusing only on their challenges.

Common themes included fear of judgement, whakamā and the pressure to appear as though everything is under control. Many emphasised the value of genuine connection rather than transactional services, and the need for creative, inclusive environments that allow them to express themselves freely through music, kai and whanaungatanga.

The hui generated clear recommendations from rangatahi, including:

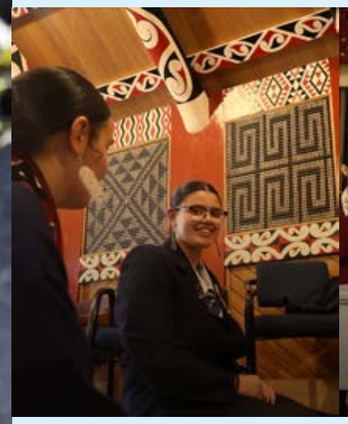
- Creating spaces that are fun, inclusive and welcoming, with kai, music and activities.
- Providing consistent, long-term support rather than crisis-based responses.
- Strengthening access to te ao Māori and cultural identity as a foundation for wellbeing.
- Offering real opportunities for rangatahi to shape systems and lead design processes.
- Supporting young people to become mentors for others.

These insights reflect a clear shift from service delivery to youth leadership. Rangatahi are signalling that they are not just recipients of care but active contributors to the systems that affect them.

Healthy Families Rotorua is continuing this mahi through a kaupapa focused on mental wellness, working alongside local organisations, iwi and community partners. The focus is on listening to rangatahi and whānau, understanding what strengthens them, what creates barriers and what is most needed first. By centring lived experience, the kaupapa ensures that rangatahi and whānau voices guide more effective, whānau-centred approaches to wellbeing. Prevention remains a key focus – creating environments where young people feel safe, connected and valued before reaching crisis point.

Sustainable, long-term change will rely on strengthening identity, whānau and kaupapa Māori approaches that build resilience and belonging. The collective knowledge and insight of rangatahi and whānau are vital to shaping systems that truly respond to their needs.

Healthy Families Rotorua remains committed to supporting this transformation, ensuring that future approaches to mental health and wellbeing are responsive, inclusive and grounded in Māori ways of being, belonging and caring – led by rangatahi, for rangatahi.



Kai Healthy Families Rotorua continues to strengthen community-led approaches to kai sovereignty and sustainable systems change. The mahi focuses on amplifying local leadership, integrating mātauranga Māori, and supporting communities to design environments that nurture wellbeing, connection, and access to healthy kai.

The growing interest in food resilience, traditional knowledge and collective learning continues to shape the kai ecosystem in Rotorua. Initiatives such as the Kūmara Research and Food Forest kaupapa, alongside community workshops on seed saving and local food systems, are contributing to a stronger foundation for sustainable, locally driven kai networks. Together, these efforts reflect the growing momentum for kai sovereignty and collective action in Rotorua.

Kūmara Research: Honouring Ancestral Knowledge, Strengthening Kai Futures

The Kūmara Research initiative is both a practical trial and a celebration of mātauranga Māori. It explores traditional growing methods to strengthen kai sovereignty and soil sustainability within the Kaharoa papakāinga.

At the centre of this kaupapa is the question of how to successfully grow kūmara in pumice-rich soils that are naturally free-draining and low in nutrients. The trials test how different soil amendments and growing practices can support healthy, scalable yields suited to local soil and climate conditions. This work builds on learning gathered over previous seasons and continues to balance ancestral knowledge with contemporary research to adapt to changing environments.

The research focuses on the Owairaka Red variety, while heritage varieties hutihuti and taputini—brought to Maketū on the Te Arawa waka—are being cultivated separately for preservation and future planting at Matariki 2026. Instead of starting with new seed, existing tipu (vines) from last year's Ōhinemutu plantings are being used to explore propagation through vine cuttings, an approach that aligns with traditional growing cycles and sustainable practice.

Trial variables include testing soil amendments such as compost, sheep pellets, vegetable mix, comfrey and horse manure, along with comparing planting orientations, depths, mulching types and watering methods. The use of biochar is being explored to improve nutrient retention and soil health, while companion planting with clover and nasturtium supports natural pest deterrence and soil enrichment.

Healthy Families Rotorua has participated in hui alongside scientists, researchers and kai leaders to understand how best to support and amplify this kaupapa. These hui have brought together mātauranga Māori and scientific perspectives, ensuring that the research remains culturally grounded while benefiting from technical expertise.

This collective approach strengthens collaboration, connects people, and shares learning that supports systems change, ensuring mātauranga Māori remains central to innovation in kai. Through this work, the kūmara kaupapa continues to nurture resilience, intergenerational connection, and the relationship between whenua, kai and whakapapa.

Food Forest Initiative: Growing Kai Futures with Whenua and Whānau

The Food Forest Initiative is a developing kaupapa that aims to create self-sustaining, community-led food systems across Rotorua. In collaboration with local iwi, kura and kōhanga reo, the initiative explores the establishment of food forests at marae and other community spaces.

Food forests are designed to mirror natural ecosystems. They provide a continuous source of nutritious kai while promoting biodiversity, improving soil health and encouraging native regeneration.

This approach not only increases food security but also supports learning, environmental stewardship and intergenerational connection.

Healthy Families Rotorua supports this kaupapa through partnership building, knowledge sharing and coordination across sectors. By drawing on both mātauranga Māori and ecological design, the initiative creates opportunities for communities to reconnect with their whenua and reimagine local kai systems that are resilient, sustainable and led by whānau.

Physical Activity

This kaupapa supports communities to design environments where movement is easy, safe and enjoyable. Through a focus on active transport, the mahi aims to shift local systems toward environments that promote walking, cycling and wheeling as everyday activities that build wellbeing, connection and confidence.

Horohoro School Asphalt Bike Track

Horohoro School, a rural school south of Rotorua, has an initiative that reflects that vision. Healthy Families Rotorua supported the school in its effort to deliver a safe and inclusive asphalt bike track for tamariki, whānau and the wider Horohoro community.

The kaupapa was born out of community concern about road safety, where narrow, winding country roads make cycling unsafe for children. In response, the school and its whānau came together to design a dedicated asphalt pump track and perimeter trail on school grounds, creating a space where people of all ages and abilities can ride, walk or wheel safely.

The project is designed to support cycling, scootering, rollerblading and walking, providing opportunities for movement that are accessible to everyone. The pump track will include banked corners and rolling terrain to help riders develop balance, coordination and agility. A smoother perimeter trail will surround the area, making it suitable for walking, wheelchairs and mobility aids, ensuring kaumātua and disabled community members can participate fully.

Key milestones

- $172,500 goal secured through grants, community fundraising and local donations
- Co-design process led by tamariki, whānau and school staff completed
- Final design ensures the space is inclusive, safe and reflects community aspirations.

Our Role

Healthy Families Rotorua has supported the initiative by helping to strengthen funding bids, connecting the school with partners and aligning the project with wider community wellbeing outcomes. The approach emphasises equity and opportunity, ensuring rural communities have access to the same active transport infrastructure as urban areas.

This kaupapa demonstrates systems change in action. It shows how communities can mobilise local leadership, influence planning and work collaboratively to create environments that support collective wellbeing. It also shows that active transport is not only about infrastructure; it is about creating shared spaces where tamariki, parents, caregivers and grandparents feel welcome and included.

The construction of the track will bring years of community aspiration to life. The project is an example of how small rural schools can lead large-scale change by building partnerships, applying systems thinking and ensuring that the voices of tamariki and whānau are at the centre of design.

Reflection

The Horohoro School Bike Track helps drive a community-wide shift to safety, health and connection. Alongside our kai and other physical activity kaupapa, this initiative continues to show how co-design, cultural values and collective leadership can reshape environments into places that nourish and empower Rotorua whānau.

Through active transport, whānau are not only moving their bodies but strengthening relationships with each other and with place, creating a future where cycling, walking and wheeling are everyday expressions of wellbeing, connection and belonging.

Matariki

Healthy Families Rotorua was proud to support *Te Hautapu Umu Kohukohu Whetū o Ngāti Whakaue*, a dawn Matariki ceremony held at the Rotorua Lakefront.

Where the team once played a lead role in establishing the umu kohukohu whetū in Rotorua, this year's ceremony represented a significant shift. Ngāti Whakaue now leads and delivers the kaupapa, supported by Te Paepae Tapu o Ngāti Whakaue, Te Komiti Nui o Ngāti Whakaue, and Rotorua Lakes Council.

This evolution reflects a natural and positive transition toward iwi-led leadership. It builds on relationships that have been carefully nurtured over time and demonstrates how collective planning and shared learning create the foundation for sustainable community-led practice.

The ceremony drew on knowledge and experience gained from earlier prototypes in 2022 and 2023, ensuring it was safe, authentic and grounded in tikanga. Despite unpredictable weather, the morning opened perfectly. The ceremony flowed smoothly and was well received by all involved, including kaumātua, community leaders and supporting groups such as Waikite Senior Rugby, Raukura students, Whiria, and the Māori Wardens.

Healthy Families Rotorua's early involvement with Matariki has also inspired other areas of work, such as supporting Kai Rotorua in growing and harvesting kūmara for hautapu, and contributing to the revival of ancient food storage practices, like the ana kūmara. These initiatives, which have drawn national attention, highlight the value of mātauranga Māori in shaping wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

The mahi forms part of a wider focus on enabling iwi to determine how Matariki is acknowledged and celebrated in their own rohe. It provides space for whānau to remember loved ones, reflect on the year that has passed, and prepare for the year ahead.

Matariki continues to grow as a unifying kaupapa in Rotorua, connecting people through shared reflection, aroha and hope for the future. Healthy Families Rotorua is privileged to walk alongside iwi as they continue to strengthen this annual expression of cultural renewal and collective wellbeing.

Reducing Whānau Harm

Te Hā o te Ora: Traditional sounds inspire a new approach to quitting

The Te Hā o te Ora wānanga series explored the healing power of taonga pūoro to support whānau on their journey toward smoke-free and vape-free wellbeing. The kaupapa blends mātauranga Māori and hauora practice, using traditional instruments, breathwork and cultural reconnection as tools for healing and transformation.

Developed collaboratively by Healthy Families Rotorua, Te Arawa Whānau Ora, Manaaki Ora, Tangata Ora (Ranolf Medical Centre) and kaupapa champion Sam Runga, the prototype represented a new way of thinking about prevention. It shifted the focus from addiction to oranga, moving from talking about smoking and vaping to strengthening respiratory health, balance and overall wellbeing.

The six-part wānanga brought together whānau, hauora providers and cultural practitioners. Each session blended pūrākau, maramataka, tikanga and taonga pūoro to guide participants toward reconnection with breath, taiao and self.

The kaupapa acknowledges that innovation does not always mean inventing something new. Sometimes it means returning to traditional systems that have always supported wellbeing and reintroducing them in ways that meet the realities of today.

A Māori lens on health and healing

Te Hā o te Ora explored taonga pūoro, the traditional Māori instruments, as both a cultural and clinical tool for healing. The sound and discipline of the koauau, in particular, are used to help people manage cravings, reduce stress and restore emotional balance through mindful breathing and rhythm.

Participants began with baseline health checks to record their hauora status, ensuring informed consent and providing a foundation for measuring change. They then engaged in whakawhanaungatanga, collective intention-setting and guided reflection informed by the maramataka.

As the wānanga progressed, participants learned about the sacredness of taonga pūoro, created their own instruments, and deepened their understanding of the connection between wairua, hinengaro and tinana. Later sessions brought whānau back together to reflect, track health outcomes and share experiences of transformation. The series concluded with a whakanuia to celebrate growth, where participants planted taonga as living symbols of renewal and ongoing oranga.

Systems Change Through Cultural Restoration

Te Hā o te Ora represents a systems-change approach that brings together health, culture and community. It aligns clinical knowledge with cultural practice, recognising that Māori-led frameworks for wellbeing can enhance and complement mainstream cessation efforts.

The kaupapa also reflects the strength of collaboration across Rotorua's wellbeing ecosystem, with health providers, iwi organisations and practitioners working collectively to develop approaches that place whānau at the centre.

Through this prototype, Healthy Families Rotorua and its partners demonstrate how cultural practice can become a viable prevention strategy that supports whānau to reduce harm, build resilience and reclaim traditional pathways to oranga.

The potential of this mahi lies not only in its outcomes but in its philosophy: healing begins with breath, connection and belonging. By returning to ancestral knowledge, communities are finding new ways to address modern health challenges, built on values that have always sustained Māori wellbeing.

Hapū Māmā

Historically, hapūtanga and child-rearing were collective whānau responsibilities. Support came from aunties, kuia, koroua, pāpā and the wider hapū. Tamariki were raised within a network of aroha, surrounded by tikanga and mātauranga Māori.

Every new life was nurtured, guided and celebrated. Within a Māori system of wellbeing, the care of hapū māmā was whānau-centred and holistic. Before colonisation, hapū māmā had access to mirimiri, rongoā, karakia, wānanga and nutritious kai prepared with care. Pregnancy and birth were recognised as tapu and collective, honouring both the māmā and the sacredness of new life.

Rotorua has one of the highest proportions of Māori births in Aotearoa and faces ongoing social and economic challenges. Early research shows that access to local birthing facilities is limited, and many families rely on services that are already stretched. The dominant model of maternity care often focuses on individual mothers moving through fragmented systems. This approach does not reflect kaupapa Māori values of collective wellbeing, and many wāhine describe feeling isolated and under-supported during pregnancy.

Healthy Families Rotorua has been developing the Hapū Māmā initiative through its systems change practice framework. The team is currently in the Looking and Listening phases, building relationships, mapping local services and gathering insights from hapū māmā and maternity providers. Rotorua has around 12 different maternity-related services. Our research is helping to identify where the system is working well, where it is under pressure, and where inequities continue to affect whānau. This work confirms the importance of designing better, locally led approaches for our community.

Voices of our Māmā

Through local interviews, hapū māmā shared their experiences of pregnancy and care. Their stories highlight both the strengths and the gaps in the current system.

> ***Māmā 1 (28, first pregnancy):***
> *"My midwife is okay, but my appointments feel really rushed. Because it's my first baby, it's special for me and my whānau. I want to know everything. I spoke with another midwife once and she told me so much more. It made me realise how different care can be. It's a pretty lonely journey sometimes. I wish there were monthly meet-ups for pregnant women, somewhere we could talk, share advice and not feel so isolated."*

> ***Māmā 2 (35, third pregnancy):***
> *"It feels repetitive and scripted. There's no connection. The services feel robotic. I've lost faith in them."*
> *These reflections show how some women experience pregnancy as a disconnected and transactional process rather than a supported and shared one. They also show that the current system often misses opportunities to provide genuine connection and continuity of care*

A New Approach

The Hapū Māmā kaupapa focuses on strengthening relationships, improving communication, and creating pathways that reflect Māori values of care and collective responsibility. The work is not about creating another service, but about understanding how existing systems can work together more effectively for whānau.

By listening carefully to māmā and their families, the kaupapa aims to rebuild trust, improve the quality of support and ensure that pregnancy and birth are once again recognised as community experiences, not isolated ones.

The ultimate goal is that every māmā and pēpi in Rotorua are supported, valued and celebrated, surrounded by people who understand that the wellbeing of one is the wellbeing of all.

Mātauranga Māori

Ngā Kawekawe Me Ngā Kaupapa

Our Impact and Initiatives

Over the past year, He Oranga Whānau Rotorua has continued to strengthen the presence and application of Mātauranga Māori across all areas of its mahi. Mātauranga Māori – the collective wisdom, knowledge and ways of knowing handed down through generations – is central to how we understand wellbeing, engage with whānau, and influence systems across Rotorua.

Our approach is grounded in Te Arawa knowledge systems and acknowledges that Māori frameworks are not only cultural resources but living, evolving foundations for sustainable, intergenerational wellbeing. Mātauranga Māori shapes both our strategic direction and our daily practice. It ensures that kaupapa Māori perspectives influence local systems including health, education, kai, movement, environment and transport. By weaving ancestral knowledge with contemporary innovation, we are supporting whānau to reclaim practices that strengthen identity, belonging and collective resilience.

Te Tuituitanga o Te Ao Māori ki ngā Pūnaha ā-Rohe

Embedding Te Ao Māori in Local Systems

Over the past 12 months, we have continued to work alongside iwi, hapū and community leaders to embed Te Ao Māori thinking into decision-making spaces. Through wānanga, kōrero tuku iho and partnerships with marae, communities are leading change in ways that reflect their own tikanga and aspirations. This approach strengthens local leadership, ensures cultural integrity, and repositions Māori knowledge at the centre of wellbeing design.

In July, Healthy Families Rotorua supported the dawn Matariki ceremony, Whakatahuna Ngaru, held at Koura-māwhitiwhiti (the Rotorua Lakefront). The ceremony was led by Ngāti Whakaue and represented a shift from facilitation to tautoko, affirming iwi leadership and honouring tikanga, kaitiakitanga and whanaungatanga.

Hoahoa ā-Whānau me te Waihanga Ngātahi

Whānau-Led Design and Co-Creation

Our initiatives prioritise co-design processes grounded in values such as manaakitanga, kotahitanga and whanaungatanga. By engaging whānau as experts in their own lives, we continue to move away from traditional service delivery models and towards collective ownership and innovation.

Through the Nau Mai e Ngā Hua workshops, local kai advocates and community leaders came together to deliver practical māra-based learning sessions. Topics included soil health, seed saving and the restoration of traditional growing practices, each contributing to the broader goal of whānau-led food system change.

At the same time, Horohoro School's asphalt pump track and perimeter trail project has shown how movement and place-making can be community-led and co-designed. The initiative reflects the shared aspiration to create safe, inclusive spaces for tamariki and whānau, encouraging active lifestyles and connection through locally driven leadership.

Te Whakarauora i ngā Kōrero Tuku Iho me te Reo o te Takiwā

Revitalising Local Knowledge and Language

A new pilot kaupapa, Te Hā o te Ora, explores the use of taonga pūoro as a pathway to smoking and vaping cessation. Developed in collaboration with whānau, hauora providers and cultural practitioners, the kaupapa reconnects breath, sound, identity and healing, reframing prevention through a te ao Māori lens. In parallel, the Te Hekenga ā Rongo podcast continues to elevate Mātauranga Māori and regenerative practices, sharing how Maramataka and indigenous frameworks are influencing modern decision-making.

These platforms enable Māori voices to lead discussions about health, sustainability and cultural restoration in ways that are accessible and relevant to today's context.

Ngā Kawekawe

Our Impact

Over the past year, we have seen a deepening of connection between whānau and their ancestral knowledge. More people are applying Te Ao Māori principles in their homes, workplaces and communities. Partnerships with iwi have strengthened, te reo Māori is increasingly visible in community spaces, and Māori practitioners are stepping into leadership roles within systems change mahi.

Whānau are not only engaging with initiatives but driving them, shaping wellbeing solutions that reflect whakapapa, culture and place. This growth demonstrates how positioning Mātauranga Māori as both foundation and driver of innovation leads to lasting impact.

For He Oranga Whānau Rotorua, this kaupapa reinforces the belief that when Māori knowledge is valued, practiced and upheld, the entire community benefits. Mātauranga Māori continues to be the guiding force behind our work, supporting the vision of a Rotorua where systems of wellbeing are grounded in Te Ao Māori and designed by the people they serve.

Te Awhero

Building Cultural Capability and Confidence

Te Awhero is Healthy Families Rotorua's internal kaupapa designed to strengthen te reo Māori, tikanga and mātauranga across the team. Developed in response to staff aspirations, it provides an immersive learning environment that supports kaimahi to grow in confidence, connect with Te Arawa knowledge systems, and embed reo and tikanga into everyday practice.

Rather than a classroom setting, Te Awhero takes a hands-on approach with short weekly sessions, wānanga and haerenga that integrate grammar, waiata, karakia and mātauranga. Led by kaiako Te Raipine McLeod and Hiko-o-te-Rangi Curtis, the programme has become a cornerstone of workforce development and Māori systems regeneration at Healthy Families Rotorua.

Through this kaupapa, kaimahi have developed confidence to lead mihi, karakia and waiata in professional and community settings, and to apply mātauranga in authentic ways across their mahi. The use of te reo Māori has become a natural part of daily life in the office, while the learning continues to influence how the team engages with whānau, hapū, iwi and hāpori.

Te Awhero has also supported hauora and identity, helping to reduce stress and whakamā while building pride and belonging. The ripple effects extend into whānau life, inspiring tamariki to learn te reo and reconnecting families with their cultural roots.

A lasting legacy of Te Awhero has been the creation of practical maramataka resources – including the Puka-ā-Tau journal, desktop flip chart and annual wall planner – which make mātauranga accessible and part of everyday wellbeing practice.

Te Awhero continues to evolve as a learning journey and a model of innovation. It demonstrates how investing in reo and tikanga capability builds both confidence and cultural safety, creating a workforce that is connected, capable and ready to lead systems change for the future.

Ngā Pātaka Kōrero

Ngā Pātaka Kōrero o Te Arawa functions as a dynamic community of practice, facilitated with support from He Oranga Whānau Rotorua. Over the past year, the collective has continued to bring together experts, educators and practitioners to share, apply and grow Mātauranga Māori across Rotorua and the wider Te Arawa region. The collective supports whānau, hapū, iwi and organisations to integrate ancestral wisdom and values into contemporary approaches to wellbeing, planning and environmental care.

Te Maramataka o Te Arawa
The Solar Lunar Calendar of Te Arawa

This year, the collective curated and released updated digital resources that express the Maramataka of Te Arawa – mapping lunar phases, stellar months, energy cycles and seasonal rhythms. These resources inform decision-making in planting, harvesting, and kai gathering, as well as guiding social, spiritual and environmental practices. The 2025–2026 edition builds on earlier learnings and continues to strengthen connections between rangi, whenua, wai and tāngata, grounding community action in the cycles of Te Taiao.

Ngā Rauemi Ako me te Whakatīnanatanga o Ngā Mahi
Learning Tools and Applied Practice

To make Mātauranga Māori accessible and practical, Ngā Pātaka Kōrero o Te Arawa has produced a range of learning tools such as Mātai Tohu and He Pukapuka Rātaka. These resources support individuals and whānau to observe Te Marama, reflect on daily interactions with Te Taiao, and apply Maramataka principles in everyday life. The tools encourage people to recognise patterns in nature, align daily rhythms with the environment and foster deeper relationships with the world around them.

Ngā Kawekawe
Our Impact

Throughout the year, Ngā Pātaka Kōrero o Te Arawa has continued to influence how Te Arawa knowledge systems are shared and applied. Whānau are increasingly using Maramataka to guide planting, kai preparation, environmental decisions and wellbeing routines. Digital resources and workshops have made these practices accessible to a new generation, supporting intergenerational learning and reconnection with Te Taiao.

For He Oranga Whānau Rotorua, this partnership continues to strengthen our systems change mahi by demonstrating how the protection, activation and sharing of Mātauranga Māori can drive locally led innovation. As a living repository, Ngā Pātaka Kōrero o Te Arawa reflects the continuity of Te Arawa identity and the regenerative power of ancestral knowledge in shaping a healthy, connected future for all.

Te Arawa
Kaumātua Olympics

The Te Arawa Kaumātua Olympics continues to stand as a vibrant, community-led celebration of movement, connection and cultural pride.

Designed by kaumātua for kaumātua, the kaupapa affirms the immense value of older Māori as leaders, knowledge holders and anchors of whānau and community life.

First held in 2019 and led by Oranga Tinana o Ue, the event provides a safe and inclusive space for kaumātua to participate in friendly competition, strengthen relationships and celebrate Te Arawatanga.
Games such as Noodle Hockey, Poi Ora, Connect 4 a nd Jigsaw encourage balance, focus and coordination while sparking laughter and whanaungatanga. Every activity reflects a holistic view of hauora, nurturing taha tinana, hinengaro, wairua and whānau through play, movement and cultural expression.

Healthy Families Rotorua has supported the kaupapa since 2024, initially leading volunteer mobilisation before moving into a facilitative role as community capability strengthened. This progression reflects the principles of systems change, recognising that sustainable transformation grows through collective action, trusted relationships and local leadership.

In 2025, our lead provider, Te Arawa Whānau Ora, coordinated with support from Healthy Families Rotorua, local kura, and more than 100 volunteers, including 80 rangatahi who helped bring the day to life.

The Olympics draws hundreds of kaumātua and whānau from across Te Arawa and beyond, with t eams travelling from as far as Hokianga, Tauranga, Whanganui and Wellington. Cultural performances, kapa haka and te reo Māori enrich the atmosphere, grounding the event in Te Arawa tikanga and values.

The kaupapa offers a powerful model of prevention that fosters movement, connection and purpose.
It helps reduce risks linked to falls, isolation and long-term conditions while uplifting the mana of kaumātua. It also strengthens intergenerational bonds, with rangatahi learning directly from elders in an environment of respect and aroha.

The Te Arawa Kaumātua Olympics continues to demonstrate how kaupapa Māori design and collective leadership can transform community wellbeing.

Communications

This year has been one of steady growth, creativity and consolidation for Healthy Families Rotorua's communications. Our focus has remained on amplifying local stories, strengthening community engagement, and improving how we share our kaupapa through both digital and print media.

Digital Platforms

A major highlight was the launch of our new website in September 2025. The refreshed platform provides a clear, accessible and visually engaging space to showcase our initiatives, partnerships and research. Designed for strong storytelling and intuitive navigation, the site enables visitors to explore our kaupapa, access reports and stay connected with our mahi.

Our presence on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok continues to grow. We regularly share short videos, event highlights, reports and wānanga updates that reflect the vibrancy of our mahi and community. Engagement has been particularly strong for kaupapa focused on kai and the taonga pūoro breath cessation initiative, showing that stories shaped by mātauranga Māori and hauora Māori continue to resonate with our audiences.

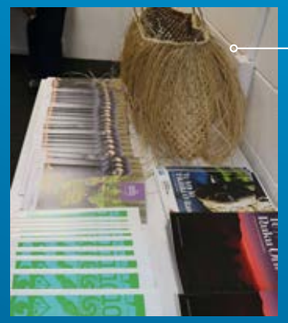
Major Reports and Publications

A significant focus this year was documenting our collective impact through a series of comprehensive reports. These publications reflect on ten years of Healthy Families Rotorua and provide compelling evidence of the depth of systems change led by our team and community partners. They also serve as enduring records of learning and transformation across multiple wellbeing areas.

The reports produced include:

- Kai
- Te Arawa Kaumātua Olympics
- Piki Maunga
- Ka Pai Kai Rotorua
- Te Awhero
- Rūrū Parirau
- Waitawa Stream Restoration
- Maramataka and Hauora
- Wairua Hotspots
- The Rotorua Bike Library

Each report highlights unique partnerships, insights and community-led solutions that continue to shape a healthier future for Rotorua.



Storytelling and Engagement

Storytelling remains central to our communications approach. Through photography, video and written articles, we continue to celebrate local leadership and innovation in action. Our focus is on stories that are meaningful to whānau and partners, and that demonstrate progress, learning and impact in real and relatable ways.

Healthy Families Rotorua also contributes regularly to the national Healthy Families NZ monthly e-pānui, which shares stories from sites across the motu. Our contributions are often recognised for their high-quality photography and authentic storytelling, both of which help to bring each kaupapa to life.

Analytics

Overview

Analytics for the year show continued growth in visibility and engagement, supported by consistent and purposeful storytelling. Content that highlights systems change, celebrates local leadership, and shares kai-related kaupapa continues to perform most strongly across all digital platforms.

Social Media Reach

4,449	Facebook Followers
338	Tik Tok Followers
609	Instagram Followers

Our audience continues to expand steadily, with Facebook remaining the most active and responsive channel. Engagement is especially strong for kaupapa connected to kai, taonga pūoro and mental wellbeing, where authentic imagery and storytelling foster strong community connection.

Top 5 Facebook Posts

These results reflect strong community engagement with kaupapa that celebrate people, whānau wellbeing and collective action. Posts featuring authentic storytelling and quality visual content continue to achieve the highest levels of interaction.

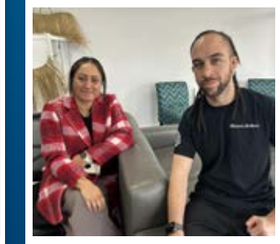
Healthy Families Rotorua

Kīwaha o te rā
(Photo tiles)

905 55,616 reach 86.8K views

Healthy Families Rotorua

Welcome to the team Wharehuia and welcome back Stevee
(Photo and commentary)



283 16,831 reach 26.5K

Healthy Families Rotorua

Te Hā o te Ora wānanga
(Photos and commentary)

108 5,887 reach 10.7K views

Healthy Families Rotorua

Meeting with Dr. Laurie Morrison – Te Arawa Kaumātua Olympics

131 15,175 reach 20.5K views

Healthy Families Rotorua

Community-led symposium on alcohol harm reduction (Video)

219 7,895 reach 13.5K views

Healthy Families NZ

Principles

Implementation at Scale

Strategies are delivered at a scale that impacts the health and wellbeing of a large number of the population, in the places where they spend their time - in schools, workplaces and communities.

Adaption

Strengthening the prevention system requires constant reflection, learning, and adaptation to ensure strategies are timely, relevant and sustainable.

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Collaboration for Collective Impact

Long term commitment is required by multiple partners, from different sectors, at multiple levels, to generate greater collective impact on the health of New Zealanders. Knowledge is co-created and interventions co-produced, supported by a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, ongoing communication and a 'backbone' support organisation.

Experimentation

Small scale experiments provide insight into the most effective interventions to address chronic disease. These experiments are underpinned by evidence and experience, and are monitored and designed to then be amplified across the system - if they prove effective.

Leadership

Leadership is supported at all levels of the prevention effort, including senior management, elected officials, and health champions in our schools, businesses, workplaces, marae, sporting clubs, and other settings in the community

Workforce

A dedicated prevention workforce who are embedded within their local community, driving and supporting systems change. Healthy Families NZ kaimahi are skilled in systems thinking, creating adaptive responses to complex issues in local and cultural settings, and are able to identify prevention activity with potential for sustainable outcomes.

Equity

Health equity is the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Equity recognises that different people with different levels of advantage require different approaches and resources to achieve equitable health outcomes. Healthy Families NZ will have an explicit focus on reducing inequities for groups at increased risk of chronic diseases

Line of Sight

The line of sight provides a transparent view on how investment in policy is translated into measured impacts in communities, ensuring best value from every dollar spent on prevention.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Healthy Families NZ is committed to fulfilling the special relationship between Māori and the Crown under Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti).

Healthy Families NZ prioritises the inclusion and protection of mātauranga Māori as an important enabler of Māori health and wellbeing. We collaborate with partners across our communities to improve Māori health outcomes and active pae ora. Māori participation and decision-making at all levels of planning and implementation is critical.

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