

MAURI WHENUA ORA

Research began

July 2016

Challenge funding

\$2,000,000

Research theme

Collaborative Capacity

Programme contact

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This project is about unlocking the potential of Māori land by advancing new production systems and market opportunities, and translating the learning from this to other regions.

The greater context for this work sees many kin groups facing unprecedented phases of economic development through Treaty claim settlements and new entrepreneurial ventures. Treaty claims are major issues for Taitokerau land claimants who are on the cusp, or have just reached settlement. But kin communities today are no longer simply 'local'; they are resident worldwide and are not necessarily attached to, or involved in their lands.

Meaningful developments within the primary sector require us to address these complex social realities and balance them with economic and environmental issues.

Māori agribusiness is highly complex and requires collective thinking guided by communities themselves. An underpinning question facing communities is: what is the right land optimisation for our people now so that they can set in place the right kind of legacy for their descendants? This research is investigating this question through collaborative social and environmental science and community expertise.

At its heart, this programme responds directly to Vision Mātauranga to the fullest extent possible while delivering three key research outcomes. The research has outcomes which include the development of a shared, multi-iwi led innovation which results in enterprise owners and descendant communities being better positioned to lead and operate land innovation within environmental, cultural and economic parameters. A comprehensive economic platform will be created which results in regional Māori representative groups being able to progress their own land schemes and develop improved decision-making with the aid of new science and tools. Another key outcome is a socio-cultural indigenous micro economy concept 'Pā to Plate' (enterprise to descendant consumer study), resulting in a new micro-economy model being developed that captures the optimal land qualities and community values, including cultural and economic wellbeing.

Close to 100 per cent of survey respondents in the initial research stages of the micro economy concept have suggested they would like to purchase produce from an initiative like 'Pā to Plate'. The results also showed that many were willing to pay more for it or add a koha to the asking price. Next steps will include finding a low-cost distribution model.

Each focus area is uncovering specific environmental, economic and cultural value points to advance productivity from land use that optimises productive earnings with cultural and societal needs. This is collectively contributing towards developing a broader Taitokerau land and people advancement and wellbeing strategy.

