

Te Tai Tokerau Māori Rural Health Noho Marae

Noho Marae Aims: Provide students from Te Waipapa Taumata Rau/University of Auckland, under the Faculty of Medical and Health Science, the opportunity to actively engage and learn about rural and rural Māori health, in addition to endorsing and inspiring local rangatahi (youth) into rural health careers.

He aha te mea nui o tēnei ao?
He tangata! He tangata! He
tangata!- *What is the most
important thing in this world? It is
the people! It is the people! It is
the people*



Between the dates of June 28th-July 1st 2022, we took 17 taura (students) from Te Waipapa Taumata Rau/University of Auckland on a noho marae to Te Tai Tokerau (Northland). Our taura throughout the noho will be engaging in aspects of tikanga and te ao Māori while also actively engaging with the local community and rangatahi (youth).

Our executive member Kody Peterson is tangata whenua to Mahimaru Marae as she shares whakapapa around the Te Tai Tokerau region. Upon arrival at Mahimaru Marae in Awanui, our roopu/manuhiri (guests) were welcomed into the region and Marae via a pōwhiri lead by tangata whenua. Our other executive member Harrison Edwards was the kaikorero who led the whaikorero on behalf of our roopu. For many of our taura this was their first experience of a pōwhiri, staying at a marae and having such rich exposure to te ao Māori which made this an amazing experience for all involved. After the pōwhiri proceedings manuhiri became tangata whenua and we were all invited into the wharekai for hakari (feast) to make ourselves noa (free from tapu).

After our long journey driving from Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), we all spent the remainder of the night doing whakawhanaungatanga (building lasting relationships) via playing card games and doing ice-breakers as we all come from different programmes and different year levels. We also gathered to share our pepeha with our roopu which was also a first experience for many taura. Sharing pepeha is a way of introduction in te ao Māori and is structured in a way that states the whenua and tūpuna that make up the people we are today.



We left for Te Kura o Te Kao early the next morning for our first kura visit. Upon arrival staff from the kura stated that there had been a power cut earlier in the morning and the power had still not returned. We all laughed as one of the kaiako (teachers) highlighted that this is one of the many perks of rural living. Despite the lack of power, our roopu was welcomed into the kura with another pōwhiri that was led by the rangatahi. After the formal proceedings we began our workshop with our presentation on the support systems while the rangatahi are still in kura and those available once at te wānanga (university). We also had a korero about the different pathways and careers in rural health. To our amusement, the rangatahi took better interest

once we told them how much money you can make for each discipline, which got them excited for our stations.

After getting the rangatahi attention, we transitioned into our five stations, CPR, pupil gauges and eye charts, stethoscopes, reflexes and blood pressure. The rangatahi were ages from years 7-11 and this was their first time learning how these equipment are used in the clinics however, this was more of an opportunity for the rangatahi to have a tutū (play around) and korero with our taura about being a doctor or pharmacist. Since these rangatahi live rurally it is common to only visit the clinic or hospital when they are māuiui (sick) or to visit whānau. At the end of our stations the rangatahi thanked our roopu by singing waiata, which definitely made a few of us tear in gratitude. We were then invited to a hakari and shared korero with the kaiako before we made our way down the road to Whakawhiti Ora Pai.



Whakawhiti Ora Pai is a local Māori health provider for the Te Kao and wider Te Tai Tokerau area. An interesting aspect of this clinic is their integration of social services to provide that additional support for local whānau. We were hosted in Whakawhiti Ora Pai by Errol Murry and Maureen Allen. Both Errol and Maureen shared their whakaaro (thoughts) on being the local Māori health provider, providing competent whānau-centred care and operating throughout the pandemic. With the clinic being whānau-centred meant that people like Errol and Maureen travel to their patients' homes to deliver care and additionally enables them to meet with whānau and also involve them in the whānau member's treatment plan. Listening to Errol and Maureen's insightful korero about providing rural healthcare was eye-opening and inspiring for our taura. Many of us were interested in volunteering our time and skills to support rural clinics such as Whakawhiti Ora Pai and are eager towards a rural health career.

After our visit to the clinic we drove to Te Rerenga Wairua/Cape Reinga. Despite the rain, we made our taura hikoi to the lighthouse where our taura Te Oranoa Matthews, who also whakapapa to Ngā Puhi (Iwi in Te Tai Tokerau), shared a korero

with us about the significance of the area to Māori and the local Ngati Kuri iwi. Rerenga means flight and wairua translates to spirit/soul and therefore at death our spirits and souls ascend from our physical bodies and make their way to Te Rerenga Wairua, go to the pōhutakawa tree at the far end of the cape before transcending its way back to Hawaiki, Māori/Pacific peoples ancestral lands. We may have all been drenched from the rain however the views from the cape were breathtaking and learning about the significance of the area and about the local iwi was a privilege and a whakaaro we can all share with whānau and friends when we next visit this beautiful whenua of Aotearoa.



We had another busy day today with two kura visits and a visit to Kaitaia Hospital. Our first kura of the day was at Te Kura Kaupapa o Te Pukemiro with years 9-13. We were welcomed into the school with another pōwhiri led by the rangatahi before completing the formalities and getting into our workshop. The presentation ran similarly to yesterday's kura visit and then we went into our stations, by which we added another pharmacy station whereby the rangatahi competed against one another counting pills/skittles which they all enjoyed. These stations provided the rangatahi the opportunity to korero and asked pātai (questions) about pathways into health and the support systems available for them. The rangatahi were very engaging in the different stations and showed a lot of interest in a career in health. While we were teaching the rangatahi about health careers and how to use the clinical equipment, they also taught our tauira some te reo Māori phrases. We thought this was awesome and a true reflection of manaakitanga and made the kura visit very special for our tauira. The kura also hosted a hakari for our roopu before we headed down the road for our last school visit at Kaitaia College.



Three of our tauira including Kody Peterson, are alumni of Kaitaia college and are all studying medicine. After our whakatau (welcoming) our presentations were primarily led by these three tauira having a korero on aspiring towards programmes and careers in health. Additionally, the health programmes at te wānanga need to have more Māori, Pacific, and rural tauira as we provide invaluable insight into rural and indigenous health. Kaitaia College also had non-Māori rangatahi and so

we added aspects about the Rural Admission Scheme which provide support for our rural tauira. We initially anticipated the workshop for the years 10-11 however were fortunate to have rangatahi from years 9-13! This meant that our stations were a bit bigger in comparison to the previous kura however we soldiered on! Since the groups were bigger than usual, some of the rangatahi were a bit whakamā (shy) however over time they opened up and actively participated. The kaiako were overwhelmed with our roopu giving their time to the rangatahi and exposing them to careers they wouldn't have thought was possible coming from a small rural town. One kaiako commented on how important it is to see Māori tauira in these spaces as it gives the rangatahi the ability to fully visualise themselves as health professionals. We completed our kura visits all feeling privileged and honoured to inspire rangatahi towards careers and studies in health.





One of the benefits of living in a small rural town is that often places are either far away or just down the road, and luckily for us, the hospital was within walking distance from the college. We were welcomed into the hospital by kaumatua for a whakataui. We were then privileged enough to listen to Peter Kitchen's korero on the rongoa Māori and mirimiri services his department provides for not only patients but also hospital staff. He mentions how we can look to our gardens at home for remedies to particular ailments and that we don't have to always be reliant on pharmaceuticals. He also discusses the need to take care of the hospital staff because while they are providing care for their patients, especially during these covid times, who is taking care of them? As clinical health students ourselves we don't really consider the toll of working in healthcare and of self-care so we found this korero very enlightening. Another staff member Neta Brown then shared whakaaro on the whakapapa of the hospital and the direction the hospital is focusing on in the future in being a whānau-centred/kaupapa Māori-based hospital to better meet the needs of the region. After that, Dr Sarah gave us a tour of the hospital and shared korero about the different departments and services offered by the hospital. After the tour, we continued our korero on pathways toward rural placements in the Te Tai Tokerau area as many of our tauira were inspired to one day return to the region and serve their community, whānau and iwi.



On our last morning in Mahimaru marae we had a maramataka workshop by Heeni Hoterene. For many of our taura and events for our taura Māori, this was their first time learning about this matauranga maori (Māori knowledge). Māori use the maramataka as guidance for when to be productive, days for good communication as well as unproductive days. Such guidance is based on observations of people, the environment, the moon and science. As we are all busy clinical health students, the maramataka workshop taught us to plan our days and months to maximise productivity and to also plan days to focus less on our workload and more a day for self-care. Following the teaching of maramataka is important for our future careers as clinicians as well as integrating these teachings into our everyday lives. After our maramataka workshop, we thanked Heeni for her invaluable teachings and shared a cup of tea and biscuits before starting our journey back to Tamaki.

Acknowledgements

We would like to provide a big ngāmihi nui to Mere for giving us the privilege of staying at the beautiful mahimaru marae.

Also a ngamihi nui to Te Oranoa Matthews for helping Harrison with his whaikorero in addition to being our roopu's kaikaranga during our many powhiri during the noho.

Ngāmihi nui to Kanewa and the team at whakapiki ake for supporting our kaupapa and providing us with the prizes for the rangatahi.

We would also like to thank Hemi from Te kura o te kao, Mere from Te kura o te Pukemiro and Mrs Mareea Paitai from Kaitaia college for the manaakitanga and giving us the opportunity to korero and hopefully inspire many taura into aspiring towards a career in rural health. We would also like to thank all the kura for welcoming us via a pōwhiri and providing kai for our taura after our workshops! It was all very much appreciated and many of our taura said that while we were there to teach the rangatahi, we all left the kura learning something new from the rangatahi.

We must acknowledge Te whakawhiti Ora Pai and Kaitaia Hospital for hosting our taura in your respective clinics. These visits open our eyes to the opportunities and promising aspects a rural health career has for us taura. We would also like to acknowledge all the mahi these rural and Māori health providers do for the communities in the Te Tai Tokerau region, as many of these clinicians work above and beyond their means to provide the best and equitable healthcare to their community.

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Mā te wā

Kody Peterson and Harrison Edwards

Grassroots Māori and Pacific Representatives 2022