

Connection to Taiao - the Natural Environment

There are a number of community-led initiatives in Katikati that suggest a strong connection by members of the Katikati community to protecting and improving the local environment. These initiatives extend from large sub-catchment improvements to water quality (as with the Uretara Estuary Managers) and improvements to the marine environment (with Project Parore), to small initiatives, such as 'Boomerang Bags' as a practical alternative to the use of plastic bags.

Katikati Taiao (Enviro Katikati Charitable Trust) is the touchstone and holder of the kaupapa for this community-led research. Taiao actively promote community-led development as a framework for furthering ideas and opportunities coming out of the research process.

There is already a strong community-led environmental initiative in the Katikati area headed by the Uretara Estuary Managers. The Uretara Estuary Managers has a large volunteer group consisting of local residents, passionate about protecting and improving our local environment. The group is well supported by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, and Western Bay of Plenty District Council continue with financial assistance and expert advice. It is also supported with donations of time and money from local organisations and individuals.

This stream of research, on the nature and degree of connection of Katikati residents to taiao (the natural environment), suggests that there are strong emotional and spiritual ties to the natural world, but that biodiversity in the Katikati area is weak and needs restorative and maintenance work on public and private land. The Katikati bypass is still a topic in need of urgent action.

In order to provide more clarity about how important the natural environment is to community identity and connection, the lead to this stream of research was given to three members of the community. Two had already engaged through the research and were keen to take a community lead, and the third was sought out through existing community relationships in order to have a te Aō Māori perspective included. A holistic framework, based around physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, cultural and family

connection, was used to provide a baseline to questions. Each of the three researchers then chose five people they held in high regard in relation to their own specified areas of environmental interest.

In addition to qualitative interviews, an online survey was conducted to fill in some of the gaps and gather a wider range of opinions. The survey link was advertised in the local newspaper and through email network databases held by Katikati Taiao, Katch Katikati and the Katikati Community Centre, amongst others.

A conscious decision was made not to include questions specific to a long-awaited bypass, however 133 of the 288 respondents to the survey showed this is still an issue at the front of many people's minds. Q: When you think about the environment, (including air, water, plants, animals, birds, soils, noise levels, pollutants) what changes do you think would most improve Katikati? Comments were summarised to include: traffic congestion in the main street, the need for a bypass (even if just for heavy trucks), and the health and safety impact created by the volumes of traffic through town.

Wider responses from interviews and the online survey included the need for reduction and elimination of toxic pollution to land, air and water as well as more support for initiatives to enhance harbour and river health, biodiversity and whitebait spawning grounds. Environmentally sustainable/regenerative management of waste, action to address climate change, and protection for sites of cultural and spiritual significance, were all seen as important to community wellbeing.

The analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative research around human connection to the environment is included in the final report. It gives summary insight as to why and how the natural environment is integral to well-being – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Sound recordings of some of the qualitative interviews provide a deeper narrative of the thoughts and conversations, and some of these will be made available via links in the interactive website in the future.

Service to Community

This section in the full report touches on the roles that groups – such as Katikati Community Centre, faith-based organisations, MPOWA Youth, Rotary, Katch Katikati, Katikati Taiao, the Western Bay Museum, and others – play in terms of service to the wider community.

There are many long-standing relationships between agencies, and an ability to collaborate on specific projects. There are also regional agencies such as satellite health and social services and local government who have the ability to initiate, or be accepted into, collaborative conversations. For some of the action-oriented community members, there is an unwillingness to participate in committees, citing 'too much hui and not enough do-ey'.

Developing more efficient decision-making, and building social and community capital to activate ideas, could be a good topic of collaborative planning in order to start moving away from the current dependency model of funding through philanthropic trusts, and local or regional government.

Social Enterprise and Circular Economies – particularly around food and green waste re-use and diversion from landfill – are touched on as examples to steer away from dependency models of funding. These potentials for sustainable community-led development could also provide a collaborative framework for an above-mentioned need in the section on Youth Well-being, namely for individualised learning and employment pathways.

Want to know more?

Want to know more? The final Hearts and Minds of Katikati report and the interactive community tree is available online at www.katikatitaiao.org

If you have any questions please email the lead researcher Tessa Mackenzie: tessa@naturalassets.co.nz

Hearts and Minds of Katikati Ngā Ngākau me ngā Hinengaro o Katikati

A research project funded by the Lotteries Commission from an application sought by the Katikati Taiao to investigate the potential and possibilities for a reinvigorated community sense of identity and belonging.

Hearts and Minds of Katikati Ngā Ngākau me ngā Hinengaro o Katikati

*Our Places our People
To tātou Kāinga to tātou
Iwi o Katikati*

The purpose of Katikati Taiao Hearts and Minds Research, was to investigate the potential and possibilities for a reinvigorated community sense of identity and belonging.

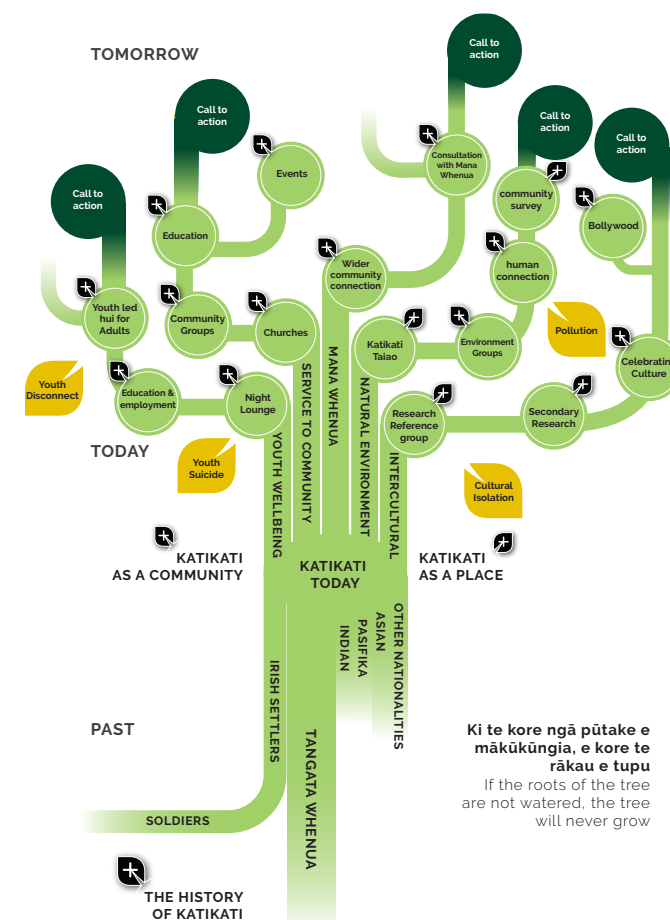
The research focused on whether there was one unique aspect to Katikati that created a united sense of community. What was found was that although there is much to celebrate within the Katikati community, there are also significant disconnections that hold people back from reaching a more unified and equitable sense of who they are in shared relation to Katikati.

The research was community-led, participatory and action oriented. Many one to one interviews with diverse cross sections of community were undertaken. Some of these resulted in actions, such as events and collaborative projects. What was found was that many who engaged had a desire to connect with others, particularly other ethnicities than their own, but they did not for a variety reasons. These included: shyness, naivety about how to connect appropriate to specific cultural need, pre-judgement including racism, worry of offending without meaning to, difficulty and lack of understanding language and cultural protocols, working long hours and needing time and motivation to connect.

The themes of connection and disconnection were reflected in each of the limbs that developed through the research process. Community led the research to five main limbs which are represented in the adjacent tree graphic, and explored further over the next pages.

The tree graphic is available as an interactive website to the final research document at www.katikatitaiao.org/hearts-and-minds/

It includes links to three videos filmed over the course of the research, as well as links to each section of the final report. This is available as a tool for community to access parts of the research relevant to their own area of interest in a way that is more universally user friendly than the extensive written document.



Ki te kore ngā pūtake e
mākūkūngia, e kore te
rākau e tupu
If the roots of the tree
are not watered, the tree
will never grow



Mana whenua

*Toitū te marae a Tane-Mahuta,
Toitū te marae a Tangaroa
Toitū te tangata.
If the land is well and the
sea is well, the people will thrive*

In a literal sense, mana whenua refers to the mana or energetic principle connection to the land, and how that informs cultural beliefs, territorial rights and a sense of belonging. Land in this sense also provides sustenance and the ability to provide hospitality for guests. The English language is insufficient to describe the intangible feeling or importance of the meaning.

From the outset of the research process, engagement with Māori through formal channels (Māori researcher approach to the Rūnanga), and informal process (introduction through the existing relationship between the then Taiao Chair, Peter Maddison, and Te Rereatukahia Kaumātua, Kereama Bluegum), was tentative and received with some suspicion.

Initial comments included, “Who invited you?” and “We’ve participated in research before and nothing has come of it.”

Over the course of the research, however, those mana whenua who chose to engage and participate in the process showed many qualities that touched a heart space with particularly the tauwiwi members of the Reference Group (Tongan, Indian, NZ European), and tauwiwi of the Research Team. The lead researcher identified as an English-born New Zealander, and the facilitator as a New Zealand-born Cook Islander. Much of what was found through the additional ‘with, by and for’ Māori research stream, led by Jodie Robertson, was also reflective of the findings of the wider community-led research process.

The concurrent co-design research process of Māori for Māori only, and Māori inclusion as an integral part of the wider community is an important distinction to make, as both streams complemented each other to allow those that only wanted to engage with other Māori to do so autonomously. The Māori research component was conducted via three hui and an online survey over a seven-month period. The co-design process was undertaken by the Māori researcher, Jodie Robertson, in consultation with mana whenua. The facilitator on the Research Team brought with him his connections to Māori musicians from Tauranga Moana, which was a major drawcard in attracting greater numbers of participants to one workshop by providing live music and the opportunity for people to connect through music.

Mana whenua who engaged in both streams of research, had a significant effect on the participative action outcomes overall, which contributed to developing sustainable relationships with the wider community.

“Now I get invited to participate at community meetings because they have an interest in what I have to say, not just because they want me to open the meeting.”

“I feel like my opinion is valued rather than just being asked to come to sing a waiata.”

A contributing factor to mana whenua engagement in the wider community-led research was the decision to request through the Marae, that the Reference Group meetings be held at Te Rereatukahia wharekai. This was in line with the intention from the outset of the research to ‘start at the roots’ with tangata whenua. What was unknown at that time was how few non-Māori in Katikati had ever set foot on the Marae, let alone held meetings there.

“We’ve never had so many Pākehā down here before you started this research, Tessa. It’s a good thing.”

By the end of the research the then Marae Chairman made the observation that now other community organisations were booking their meetings at the wharekai, whereas often the Marae themselves would be booking meeting spaces in town. This reciprocation of a willingness to engage may be the single most important outcome of the research to date.

Youth wellbeing

Three youth events eventuated from research participation by and with young people. The first and third events were youth-led, and the second was a research-led collaboration that was youth-centred. How these arose are presented as examples of the strength of a participatory research approach for developing trusting relationships within the community through tangible, action-oriented outcomes.

The first event was led by Lose and Uliti Uilou, with support from their family, and peripheral support from the Research Lead and the Facilitator. Held in September 2018, the month of suicide awareness, ‘Night Lounge’ was a youth-focussed event to bring awareness of the kaupapa of suicide prevention. This was prior to young people being a specific focus of the Reference Group, but may have contributed to it subsequently becoming a focus.

A follow up video interview was conducted with Lose, during which her maturity, caring nature and insight is apparent. The interview paints a picture of how life is for some of our young people in Katikati, and the difference people could make to improve interconnection as a community.

This video can be viewed at
www.katikatitaiao.org/night-lounge-video/

The second event arose from the theme of youth disconnection and a perceived need for alternative education options. The contact for research participation took place at a Council meeting where presentations were made by 16-year-old Noelene Tewhakaara, followed by the College Principal, Carolyn Pentecost, who acknowledged students can feel disconnected. The College do support students to help develop ‘relating to others’ skills, and embrace cultural differences, however finding ways to better facilitate kotahitanga and cohesion needs a whole of community response. This led to conversations with many involved in education, particularly in relationship to the horticulture industry. Another limb of the research emerged from this theme, and a collaborative conversation was instigated to look at current and future options for individualised

learning and pathways for employment. Young people and representatives from cross-sector stakeholders identified needs not currently met which included:

- Emotional Intelligence to be taught in schools – starting at Primary School and being taught right through College: how to cope with life situations and relationships, instil values of self-worth, kindness and community connection.
- Youth Mentors to be adequately resourced to engage with youth at risk of disconnecting from College, or already disconnected, and to broker individualised relationships to education, employment and support around holistic well-being.
- Framework to achieve NCEA credits outside College. A programme called Papā Taiao was presented as a potential framework.

The connection made with Noelene resulted in her joining the Reference Group, where she spoke up for a youth perspective in any conversations, gaining confidence over time, and also gaining respect from the adults around the table. In Noelene’s presentation previously made to Council she emphasised the importance of culturally responsive teachers, and a need for Māori youth particularly to feel a greater sense of equality to others – “so they don’t feel like they are different or separate”. The idea for a youth-led hui, for adults to experience what it was like to be a young person in Katikati, came from later Reference Group discussion, and Noelene subsequently led ‘Rangatahi Rangona o Katikati’ – ‘Katikati youth to be heard’. The event was attended by 60 members of the adult community, from community groups, local government, tertiary institutes and the College amongst others.

A link to a video of the event and subsequent follow up interview with Noelene is provided at
www.katikatitaiao.org/youth-led-hui-for-adults/



Intercultural connection

Katikati has a rich diversity of cultures living, working or passing through the community. Māori were the first known pioneers to this area and lived here for several hundred years before soldiers arrived, followed by Irish settlement in the 1800s. The research found that the way the impact of Irish settlement has been acknowledged fuels cultural disconnection, rather than working towards reconciliation. This includes better recognition through street names, open-air art, and respect towards the history of mana whenua, tikanga and cultural values. Feedback from the Māori stream of the research is that the approach can be the thing that prevents further connection – people just ask and expect Māori to share their knowledge and show up when needed to meet protocol requirement, without any understanding around that. The approach is tokenistic to something that is of deep intrinsic value.

Although this is not something unique to Katikati, it is an important topic for understanding each other in terms of community connection.

Other cultures well represented in Katikati include Pasifika from Tonga, Samoa and many other Pacific Island nations, along with people of Indian and Asian descent. The vibrancy and colour of music, dance, singing and spiritual practice that are intrinsically intertwined through such cultures, have been seen to be something that brings joy to many others for whom engagement is facilitated.

Aside from the faith communities who offer their churches to the Pasifika communities, the research found that there was very little connection between the various cultural communities in Katikati. The advent of the Council initiated Welcoming Communities pilot has provided a pathway for a Festival of Cultures to happen in June 2019, which is proving a good project for bringing many cultures together to collaborate.

The Reference Group – which consisted of around 14 people from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, and roles in community who had little or no existing relationship with each other – were a model for how little it takes to become connected when there is a facilitated opportunity to do so. Asking the questions, ‘Who would you like to connect with, and what stops you?’ resulted in a unanimous expressed desire to connect across the diversity noted above, as well as with others in community such as shopkeepers, those that need help, children and young people, migrant workers, and with the natural environment.

What stopped people connecting included: shyness/naïvety about how to connect, not being invited, negative attitudes, pre-judgement including racism, worry about being offensive without meaning to, lack of cultural understanding/protocol, language, and lack of time and motivation to make the effort.

The relationships that developed over the course of only four meetings as a group are reflected through video interviews at the final meeting of the Reference Group, which can be viewed at
www.katikatitaiao.org/research-reflections-video/