

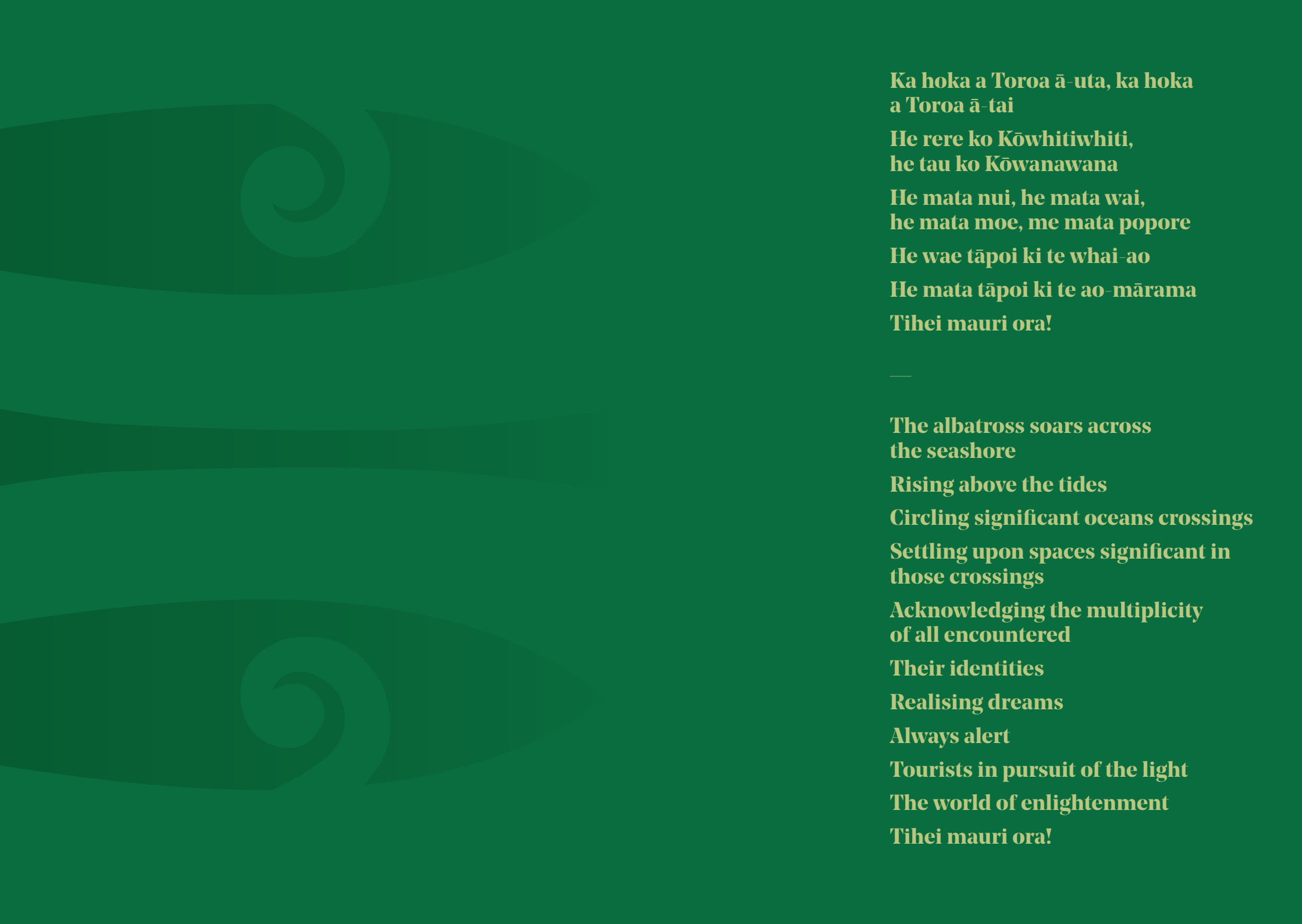


**NZ MĀORI  
TOURISM**

HE TOA TAKITINI

‘OUR STRENGTH IS IN UNITY’

# Annual Report 2025



**Ka hoka a Toroa ā-uta, ka hoka  
a Toroa ā-tai**

**He rere ko Kōwhitiwhiti,  
he tau ko Kōwanawana**

**He mata nui, he mata wai,  
he mata moe, me mata popore**

**He wae tāpoi ki te whai-ao**

**He mata tāpoi ki te ao-mārama**

**Tihei mauri ora!**

---

**The albatross soars across  
the seashore**

**Rising above the tides**

**Circling significant oceans crossings**

**Settling upon spaces significant in  
those crossings**

**Acknowledging the multiplicity  
of all encountered**

**Their identities**

**Realising dreams**

**Always alert**

**Tourists in pursuit of the light**

**The world of enlightenment**

**Tihei mauri ora!**



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**Tērā te uira, hiko mai i  
runga o Taupiri!**

**Taku tōtara haemata  
tēnā, ka paea ki raro,  
kei te whenua.**

**Me ko Tāne koe! Te  
mana nō tua whakarere  
i mātaitia e ngā hau.  
Te mana o ngā Ariki!**

Angi whakamamao atu ki ngā Ariki i te rangi  
Te Arikinui Kīngi Tūheitia Pōtatau  
Te Wherowhero Te Tuawhitu, kōrua takitahi  
ko Tā Bom Gillies ngā ika nui o te tau.  
Rangatūtia tō tira nui ō mate ki Hawaiki-nui, ki  
Hawaiki-roa, ki Hawaiki-pāmamao. Ko te tai  
ahiahi ki a koutou, ko te tai awatea ki a mātou.

Te Arikinui Kuini Māori Nga Wai hono i te po.  
E ara! Tapuwae haruru ki Tūrangawaewae mo  
te ao katoa, he wāhinga Ariki, ka hīri, ka hīri!

He tau nui te tau! Makuru ana te hua o te ora,  
inā hoki ko Tāpoi Māori te kaitō mai i ngā  
manuhiri, i ngā waewae tapu ki Aotearoa nei.

I terea hoki Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa e NZMT,  
e tangaengae ai te aho e here nei i a tātou  
ki ngā tuakana e noho mai rā i tawhiti.  
He here whakawhanake i te ora o te ahurea  
tāpoi o ngā iwi taketake o Te Moana-nui-ā-  
Kiwa. E ea ai te kōrero, 'Mā te tēina e tōtika  
te tuākana, mā te tēina e tōtika te tuākana.

Waihoki, i rangahaua hoki te ahurea o te  
Tāpoi Māori, e ea ai he Ripoata Tāpoi Māori e  
kitea ai te nui o ōna hua, otirā e whakaarahia  
ai ōna whanaketanga.

Kua ea anō hoki te wā ki ētahi o ngā kaihoe  
o te waka nei. Koia rā ko Honsol rāua ko  
Kylie ka makere mai i te waka. E kore te puna  
o te aroha e maroke i te rā, inā te nui o ngā  
mahi i tutuki i a rāua.

Heoi anō, he nui anō ngā mahi i ea i te huringa  
tau. Whāia te ia tāheke kōrero o tēnei pūrongo  
ā tau, kei konā te rōanga ake o ngā kōrero.

Tēna koutou, otirā tātou!

# Our Board



**Prof Tom Roa**  
Ngāti Maniapoto, Waikato  
Kaumātua / Officer of the Board



**Dale Aotea Stephens**  
Te Rarawa  
Chair



**Dan Te Whenua Walker**  
Ngāti Ruanui, Ngāti Maniapoto,  
Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa,  
Tūhourangi, Ngāruahine  
Deputy Chair Independent  
Board Member



**Minnie Clark**  
Te Āti Awa,  
Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga  
Board Member



**Lee Ann Muntz**  
Ngāti Korokī-Kahukura,  
Ngāti Ranginui  
Board Member



**Verity Webber**  
Ngāi Tahu  
Board Member



**Dr Xiaoying Fu**  
Independent Board Member

# Chair's Report



When I reflect on the past reporting year, I feel proud that what comes front of mind has been the achievements our sector has accomplished in the wider tourism and trade landscape. Though the passing of Kīngi Tūheitia was a poignant moment for our people, his final address at the Hui-ā-motu stands as a lasting legacy — embracing our Māoritanga through the way we live our values, speak our reo and care for our people, our awa and taiao. The inauguration of Te Arikiniui Kuini Nga Wai hono i te po carries forward the legacy of kotahitanga, just like her namesake, by serving as a unifier and connector among our people.

I want to acknowledge those we have lost and to celebrate new beginnings. For our sector, we walk in many worlds together, and in every season many of us journey through together.

It is an honour to be writing to you all as the re-elected Chair for NZ Māori Tourism and I extend my congratulations to Lee Ann Muntz on her re-election as a Board Member, as well as to all candidates and members who participated in this year's election.

NZ Māori Tourism has been looking at what could be beyond the horizon for our sector. One of our key contributions in the past 12-months has been our input in to the Government's Tourism for Growth Roadmap, where we continue to advocate for our Māori tourism sector to be appropriately equipped to provide high quality experiences for manuhiri.

We've invested in research, focusing on evidence-based data to inform how we manage our stakeholder relationships and efforts towards lifting our sector. Our most significant signpost of this has been the release of the Value of Māori Tourism report in February 2025. Held amongst many of our Māori tourism operators at Te Pā Tū in Rotorua, we launched this report alongside Minister for Māori Development Hon Tama Potaka, who expressed the significance of this piece of research, being the first of its kind, and its insights captured. While you will be able to read more about the findings in this annual report, I want to acknowledge all those who contributed to the success of the release of this Report. To our research partners, Hillmarē Schulze and Connor McIndoe, and other members of the team from Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL), to our operators who featured as case studies in this report; Whale Watch Kaikōura, Kāpiti Island Nature Tours, Dive Tatapouri, Kohutapu Lodge and Tribal Tours and Tauhara North No. 2, who were also our hosts for the launch and provided the fantastic setting for us. And finally to our NZMT team, led by Chief Policy Advisor Richard Pollock, for pulling this together. We look forward to our next milestone of research for our sector.

This past year also saw major strides in our international engagements in Indigenous tourism. Alongside our partners from the American Indigenous Tourism Association and Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, we were proud to officially launch

DO-IT and make progress towards the further development of this entity. In line with our Chief Executive's call to action at He Kura Tawhiti in 2024, we have also kicked off our advisory group to explore a proposed development of the Aotearoa New Zealand iteration of Original Original accreditation and marketing campaign.

Our international engagements also saw our senior leadership team participating in international delegations, in particular our Chief Executive Pania Tyson-Nathan was part of the business delegation for the Prime Minister's Visit to China with other representatives from Māori businesses such as Rachel Taulelei, Ngāi Tahu and Te Matatini champions Ngāti Whakauae — a highlight for many! These opportunities provide a strategic advantage for our sector as we expand our presence and highlight the significant contribution Māori tourism makes to international trade.

In the year ahead, our commitment remains steadfast to the advancement of Māori tourism and its people. Thank you for your ongoing support and I look forward to the year ahead with you all.

***Mahia te mahi,  
hei painga mō te iwi.***

Noho ora mai, nā

**Dale Aotea Stephens**  
Chair, NZ Māori Tourism









Manea Footprints of Kupe.

# Value of Māori Tourism

The release of the Value of Māori Tourism report was a significant milestone for our sector. With the support of Business and Economic Research Ltd (BERL), NZ Māori Tourism presented the report, a first of its kind, to estimate the size and value of Māori tourism in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Until now, there hasn't been a full picture of what Māori tourism brings to the economy and to the country. This research fills that gap. It gives us clear data on how Māori-owned tourism businesses operate, how they perform, and what they offer, both economically and culturally, to Aotearoa.

In 2023, Māori tourism contributed \$1.2 billion to the country's production GDP, a 23% increase from 2018. Over \$1 billion of that came directly from Māori-owned businesses. Together, 3,595 Māori tourism businesses supported more than 15,000 jobs across the country, including 756 self-employed whānau.

To deepen the research and reflect the lived experience of our members, five Māori tourism operators were selected as case study businesses — Kohutapu Lodge and Tribal Tours, Kāpiti Island Nature Tours, Dive Tatapouri, Whale Watch

Kaikōura, and Tauhara North No.2. These case studies helped bring the data to life, showing the many ways Māori values shape our sector. The selected operators represent different ownership structures and a range of offerings — from adventure and accommodation to storytelling and hospitality. We want to thank our operators for helping achieve this milestone and demonstrating the report's key findings through their daily work.

The findings confirm what many of us already knew: the Māori tourism sector puts people before profits. Māori tourism creates jobs, grows the Māori economy, and strengthens Aotearoa's international offering through manaakitanga.

Our operators continue to lead through their values. This report shows that Māori businesses pay higher wages, put whānau first, and build workplaces where care and respect are central.

Having data that reflects the real contribution of Māori tourism helps us plan better. It also means we can back our decisions with evidence, and challenge systems to have the appropriate settings for our sector to offer high quality, world-class experiences.

This work was launched at Te Pā Tū in Rotorua in February by Hon Tama Potaka, Minister for Māori Development. It is the first report of its kind, and it will not be the last. NZMT will continue building our research capability to support strong, informed advocacy for our sector.

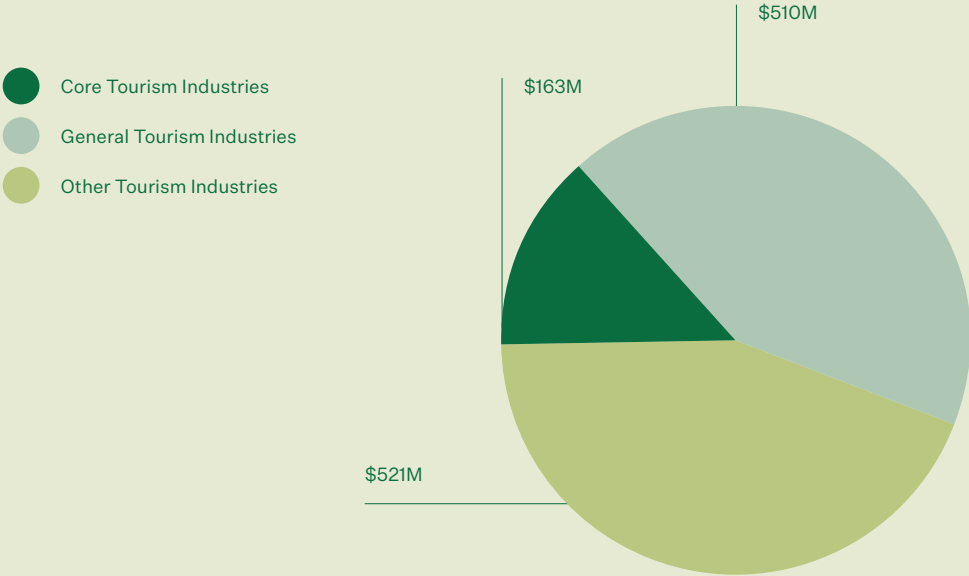
# Māori Tourism Value-Add by Tourism Component, 2023

Value-add, as measured through production GDP, provides insight into economic activity generated and, ultimately, the value added to Te Ōhanga Māori from Māori tourism.

It measures the value added from experiences and services provided by Māori tourism businesses and Māori collectives in Aotearoa New Zealand.

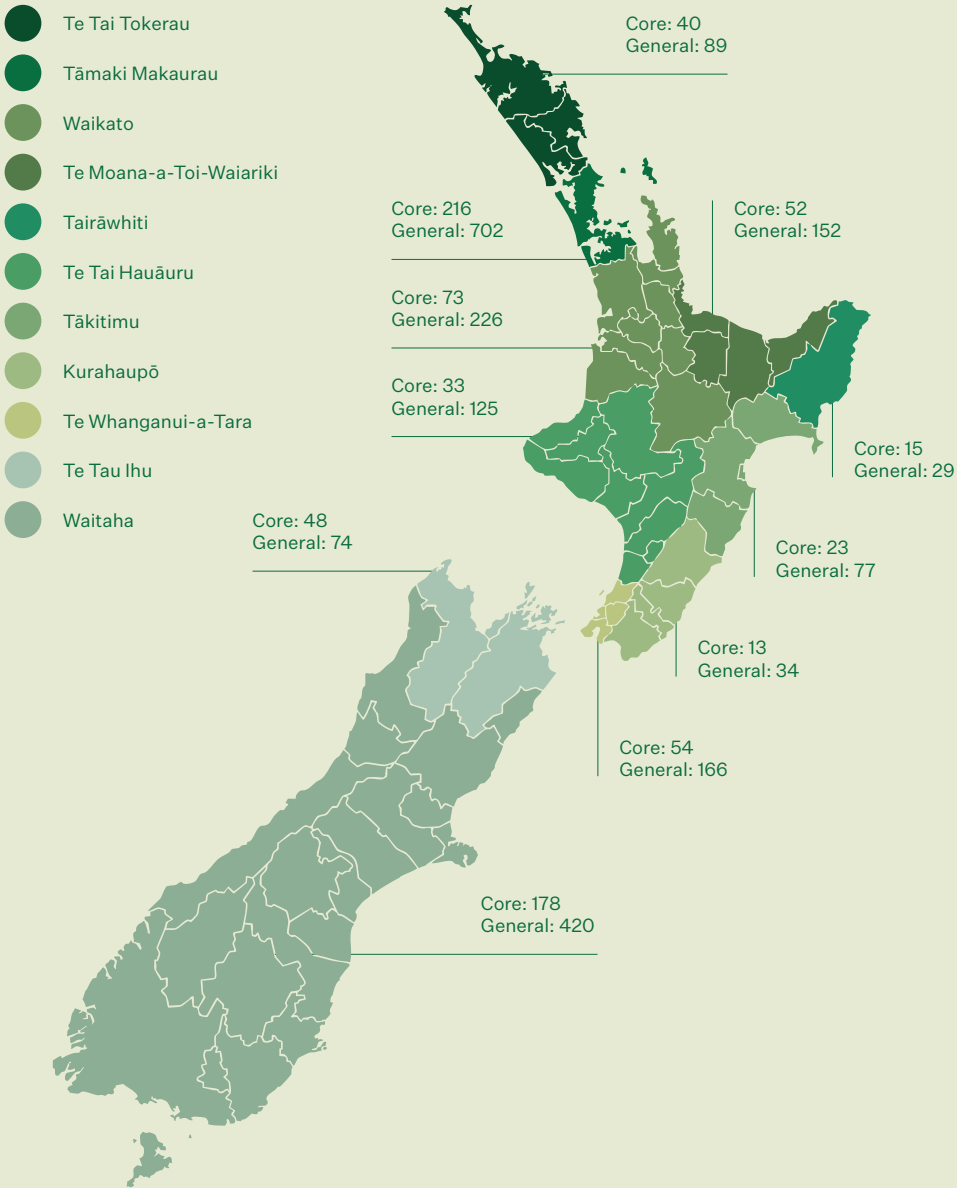
**Core** tourism industries are industries that have a strong proportion of demand resulting from tourism and directly contribute to the tourism experience.

**General** tourism industries mostly represent the supporting facilities of tourism.

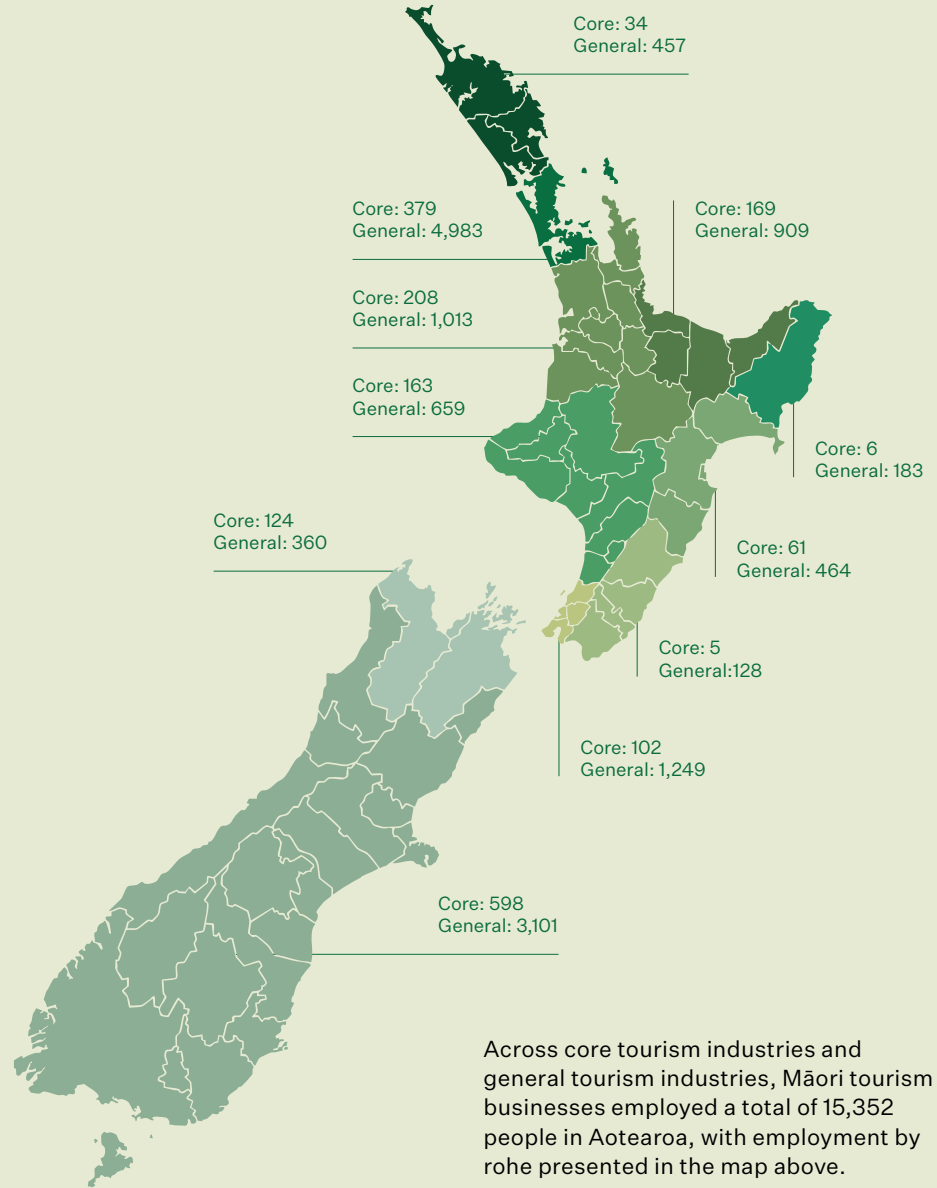




# Number of Māori Tourism Businesses by Rohe, 2023



# Māori Tourism Businesses' Employment Count by Rohe, 2023





Wai Ariki Hot Springs and Spa.

# Year in Review



## Trade events — TRENZ Asia Buyers Breakfast

The domestic trade calendar has been buzzing in the past reporting year. We have been fortunate that over the years, NZMT has had a close and growing relationship with our tourism industry partners which enables us to participate in the development of various elements of trade events.



We were especially fortunate to join forces with Tourism New Zealand to host and deliver a successful Buyers Breakfast, with a focus on our Asian buyer market in Rotorua, as a side-event to TRENZ 2025. The event took place at Wai Ariki Hot Springs and Spa which provided a splendid backdrop to showcase what manuhiri can expect of Māori tourism. In attendance were Māori tourism operators attending TRENZ 2025 and Asian buyers from India, Vietnam, Singapore, China and South Korea.

Many of the Asia-based buyers who attended expressed a strong interest in cultural tourism. The breakfast provided a chance to learn more about Māori perspectives and the principles that guide how tourism experiences are shaped and delivered.

Stronger engagement between Māori operators and Asian markets reflects growing demand for authentic, values-based travel experiences. These relationships carry potential for long-term partnerships that support sustainable business growth and positive outcomes for communities.

As we reflect on the Asia Buyers Breakfast, it's clear that genuine connection and cultural exchange are at the heart of our industry's future. We look forward to building on these relationships and invite all our members to continue sharing their stories and insights as we shape the next chapter of Māori tourism together.

## NZ Tourism Awards



The 2024 New Zealand Tourism Awards in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland were a true celebration of excellence, shining a spotlight on Aotearoa's most inspiring tourism operators. Among the standout winners were Kohutapu Lodge & Tribal Tours, honoured with the Toroa ā-Uta, Toroa ā-Tai Māori Tourism Award, and Tauhara North Tourism's Te Pā Tū, who claimed both the Tourism Excellence and Visitor Experience Awards. We want to acknowledge all the finalists of the evening, who we were delighted to celebrate with!

## International Delegation — Best Practice Mission

NZ Māori Tourism welcomed a Canadian delegation featuring representatives from Indigenous and federal organisations.

This included our long-standing partners at the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC). Together, we explored shared priorities in Indigenous tourism — from sustainable investment and workforce development to preserving cultural authenticity and strengthening government partnerships. The visit marked another milestone in our enduring relationship with our Canadian First Nation whānau, made even more special by the warm hospitality of the North Island operators who helped bring the exchange to life.



## Minecraft Campaign



NZMT teamed up with Tourism New Zealand and Minecraft to bring Aotearoa’s breathtaking landscapes and Māori culture into the virtual world. The “Aotearoa New Zealand” experience featured six iconic locations — from the glow of Waitomo Caves and geothermal wonder of Rotorua’s Te Puia, to the natural beauty of Kāpiti Island, Abel Tasman, Takapō / Tekapo, and Patea / Doubtful Sound. Our incredible Māori tourism operators — including Kāpiti Island Nature Tours, Waka Abel Tasman, Dark Sky Project, and Te Puia — played key roles in shaping authentic cultural narratives, while our CEO Pania Tyson-Nathan even made a cameo to share Tiaki — Care for New Zealand.

## Regional Engagement

During the off-peak season, our team has been out on the road connecting with operators across the motu.

A huge thank you to everyone who took the time to meet with our Relationships Lead, Harmony and Director — Regions, Matt, as well as our seasoned travellers, Evan Nathan and Richard Jones. Their visits across the motu were a wonderful chance to reconnect with our Māori tourism whānau and experience the incredible manaakitanga that defines our industry. These engagements are helping us stay closely connected and inform how we can best support our sector.



## Teaming up with Te Taura Whiri



We have been extremely fortunate to work closely with Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori over the past year, strengthening our shared commitment to celebrating and normalising te reo across the tourism sector. Together with our Pou Tikanga — Cultural Advisor, we’ve co-designed a special webinar where Te Taura Whiri will share practical ways to weave te reo Māori into everyday mahi and interactions, no matter where you are on your reo journey. As we move toward Te Wiki o te Reo Māori 2024, themed “Ake Ake Ake — A Forever Language,” this session is a chance to learn, be inspired, and continue championing our language as a living, enduring part of every visitor experience in Aotearoa.

## Launch of the NZ Māori Tourism website

After much anticipation, New Zealand Māori Tourism released phase one of the refreshed website.

The new site offers a fresh look and feel that truly reflects our values, stories, and the incredible diversity of Māori tourism experiences across Aotearoa. This update marks an exciting step forward in how we connect with operators, manuhiri, and partners — celebrating our collective strength and sharing the spirit of Māori tourism with the world.



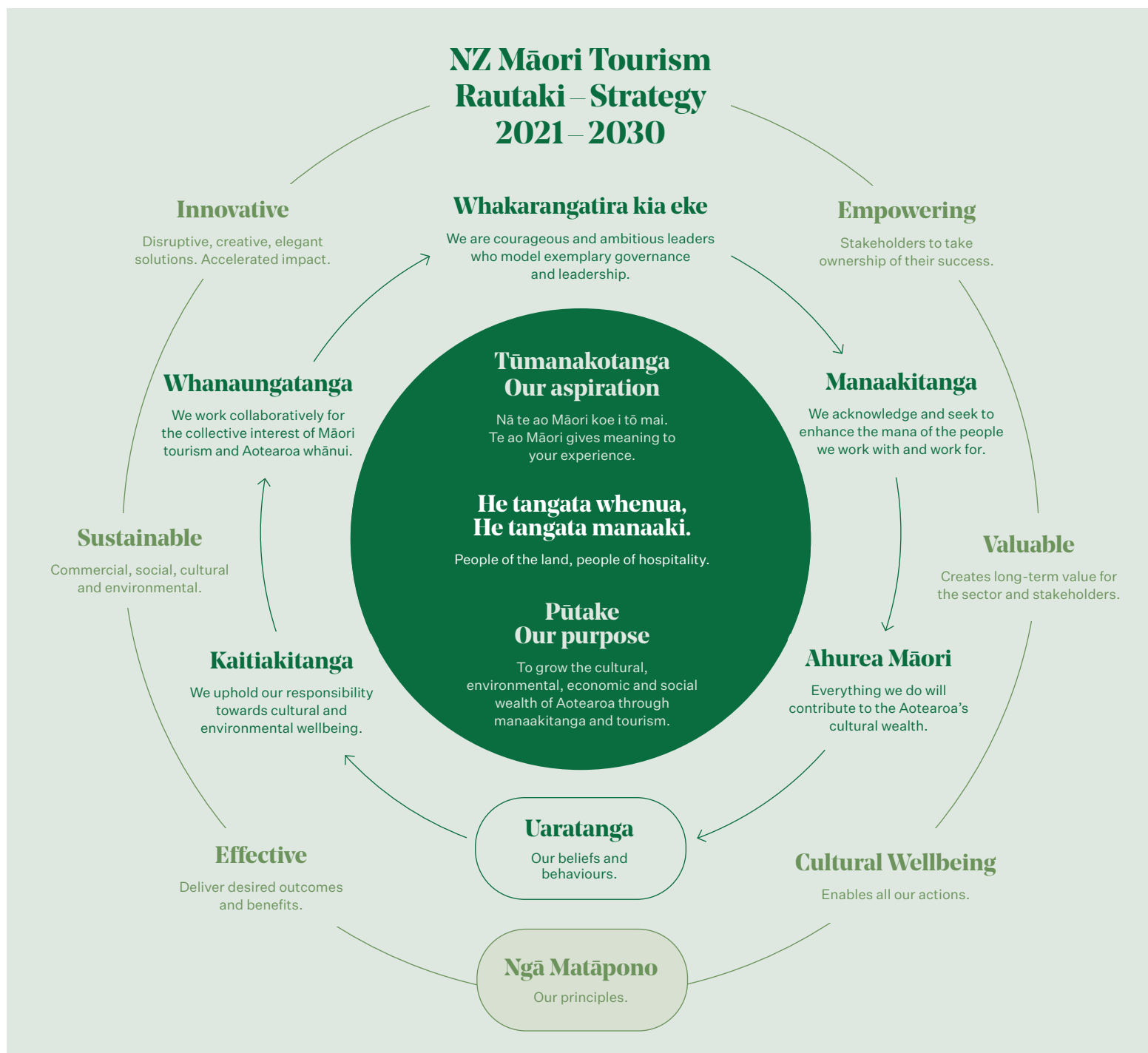




# Our Strategy

**To re-imagine our industry so the host-manuhiri connection enriches both.**

Contributing to the cultural, economic, environmental and social wealth of our sector and people continues to be at the forefront of our long-term strategy.





# Our People

## We wish the following kaimahi well as they embark on their new adventures:

**Honsol Chan Tung**, our beloved Special Projects Advisor returns to the beautiful islands of Sāmoa where he will take on an exciting and extraordinary role at SPREP.

**Kylee Daniel**, who joined us back in 2022 to fill the role of Director — Partnerships, has reunited with her darling in Perth to pursue new dreams.



NZ Māori Tourism tīma with some of our support crew at He Kura Tawhiti. Absent: Acacia Edmonds, Arkaid Edmonds, Kaylim Poese, Alyse Lynch.







# Staff Directory

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Waitomo Caves.



# NZ MĀORI TOURISM

HE TOA TAKITINI

'OUR STRENGTH IS IN UNITY'

## **New Zealand Māori Tourism Society**

Date of Incorporation:  
11 October 2004

Director Liability Insurance:  
Vero Liability

### **Registered office**

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### **Telephone**

+64 4 474 4682

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### **Social Media**



@maoritourism



@maoritourism



@nzmaoritourism