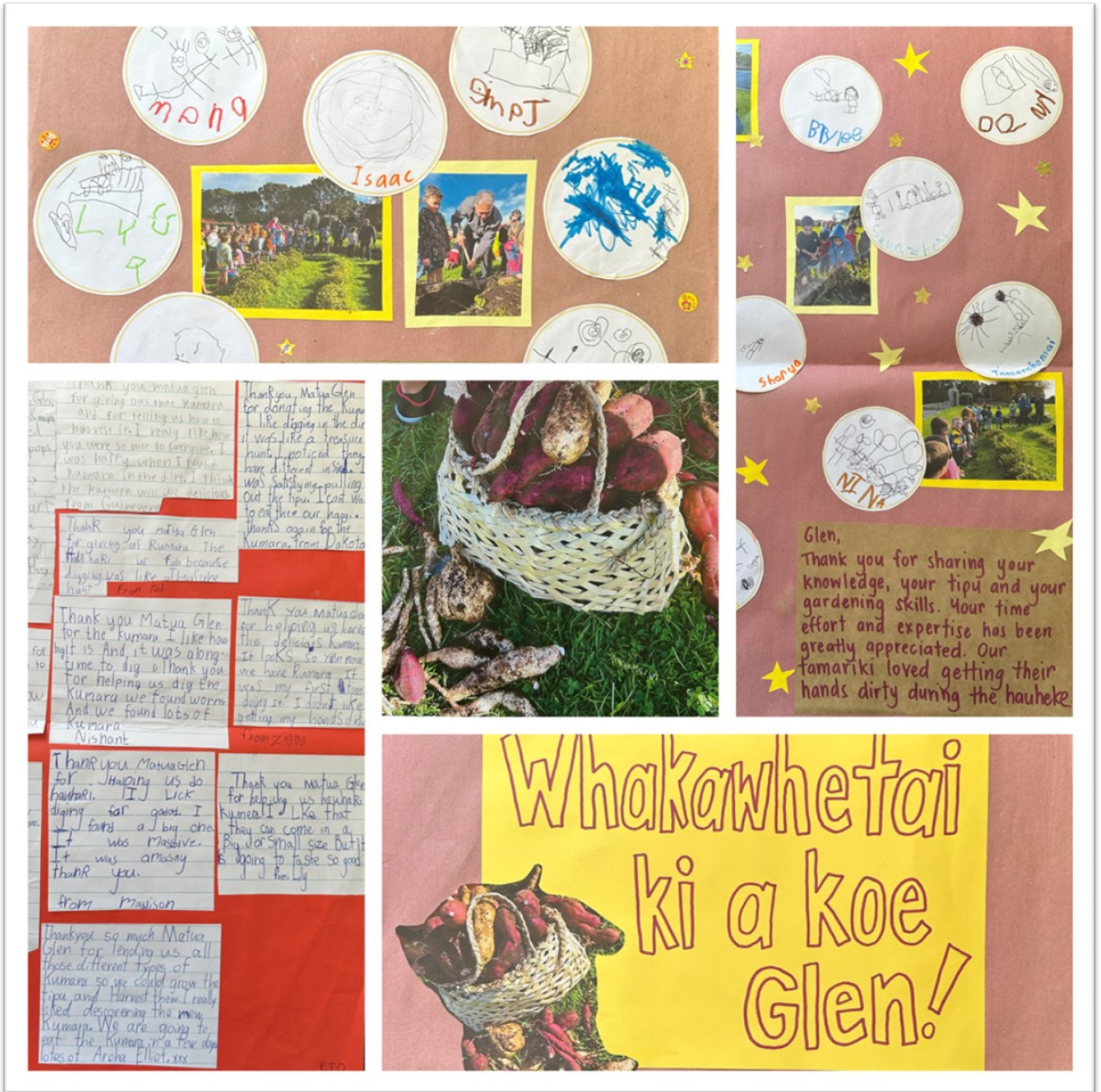




Rautāpatu Foundation Testimonials



Central School Te Kura Waenga o Ngāmotu

Central School Te Kura Waenga o Ngāmotu Tamariki (aged 5-10 years) share their thanks for establishing their maara in New Plymouth.



Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa
ki te Upoko o te Ika a Maui Inc

19 December 2025

To whom it may concern

RE: Letter of Support for Rautapatu & Glen Skipper

Tēnā koutou katoa,

I write in my capacity as Chair of Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa ki te Upoko o te Ika a Maui Inc to formally acknowledge and endorse the work of Rautapatu, and in particular the contribution of Glen Skipper, in supporting the revitalisation of customary Māori food practices.

Over the past year, Te Āti Awa has benefited from Rautapatu's guidance and practical support in the re-establishment of maara kai, with a specific focus on kūmara cultivation. This mahi aligns strongly with our iwi aspirations to revitalise te reo Māori me ōna tikanga, to reassert ancestral relationships with the taiao, and to bring inherited mātauranga into contemporary practice.

Of particular significance is the support provided to me personally in the establishment of my maara project, undertaken in accordance with the ritual and seasonal framework of Te Matamata o Tau. This approach grounded the work not only in practical cultivation methods, but also in the correct cultural, spiritual, and environmental observances that uphold tikanga Māori. Glen's guidance ensured that the project was carried out with integrity, respect, and a deep understanding of the interrelationship between people, whenua, atua, and kai.

Through this mahi, inherited kōrero and mātauranga have begun to be translated into lived practice, reconnecting whānau to traditional food-growing systems and reaffirming the importance of observing tohu, maramataka, and ritual processes as part of maara kai. While this journey remains in its early stages, Rautapatu's contribution has been instrumental in enabling Te Āti Awa to proceed with confidence, cultural safety, and authenticity.



We view this work as a meaningful investment in rebuilding customary maara kai practices, strengthening relationships within our iwi, and advancing food sovereignty for current and future generations.

On behalf of Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa ki te Upoko o te Ika a Maui Inc, I am pleased to formally acknowledge and endorse Rautapatu and the valuable mahi they continue to undertake in service of iwi, hapū, and whānau.

Naku iti nei

nā K T Moeahu

Chair

Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa ki te Upoko o te Ika a Maui Inc

16 o Tihema 2025

Glen Skipper
Taranaki

Tari Matua
38 Rose Street, Somerfield,
Christchurch 8024, New Zealand

www.naia.co.nz

Kei te tuakana e Glen, tēnā anō tāua

E mihi ana i ngā āhuata nga o Te Kāhui Matiti e taki ana te ara ki te mākohakohanga o te tau o Rehua e tū nei. Tahia te pō ki tua, nau mai te ao ki a tātau.

It is my pleasure to write this letter to support the Rautāpatu Trust and the work of Glen Skipper. Our company, Naia Limited based in Christchurch and Hamilton, and the wānanga of Tai-o-Rongo, based at Ruapehu, and regional wānanga, of Puanganui-o-te-rangi that supports Taranaki, Whanganui, Rangitīkei and Te Whanganui-a-Tara, express our tautoko without reservation for Rautāpatu.

We have collectively been fortunate to be supported by Glen and his efforts to guide people around the country with the return to māra kai. Glen has hosted our various wānanga and shared his knowledge of kūmara to help us connect practice to ceremony. By doing this, it rekindles our tūpuna knowledge of circular economy and manifests food sovereignty.



Glen has supported us in growing kūmara. He has hosted us to run ceremonies and has attended our wānanga in the spirit of reciprocity. He also provided the kūmara for the offering in the whakarehe at the 2025 National Matariki broadcast held at Karioi (Mt Ruapehu).

If you have any questions about the work of Glen and Rautāpatu Trust, I am happy to answer your pātai

Kāti ake me ngā mihi o te wā.

Nāku noa nei, nā



Che Wilson

Taimua of Puanganui-o-te-rangi

Taimua of Tai-o-rongo

Director – NAIA Limited.





Te Kura Kaupapa Māori O Mana Tamariki
165 Te Tiriti o Kerei
Te Papaioea 4410
(06) 356 4383
tari@manatamariki.school.nz

18/12/2025

Tēnā koutou, otirā tēnā tātou katoa.

I write in my capacity as Tumuaiki of Mana Tamariki to formally and unequivocally endorse the work of Rautapatu Trust, and in particular the leadership and contribution of trustees Glen Skipper and Ngataiharuru Taepa.

Approximately three years ago, Rautapatu Trust entered into kōrero with Mana Tamariki regarding food sovereignty and the substantial educational opportunities embedded in the cultivation of our own kai, with a particular emphasis on kūmara. Following a professional learning wānanga involving Mana Tamariki staff, Glen Skipper, and Ngataiharuru Taepa, it was collectively agreed that the establishment of a māra kūmara would become a foundational and enduring component of our kura's teaching and learning programme.

Through this collaboration, it became evident that all curriculum learning areas could be meaningfully and authentically integrated within what we now refer to as **Te Kura Wānanga o te Kūmara** — a customary Māori learning framework grounded in mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori, and the cultural practices associated with kūmara cultivation. This framework supports holistic learning, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and place-based education aligned with Aho Matua principles.

In 2023, Glen Skipper and Ngataiharuru Taepa were invited to establish a tāpapa (kūmara seed bed) at Mana Tamariki and to provide ongoing specialist guidance. Their contribution has extended well beyond technical expertise, supporting our kaiako and ākonga to engage deeply with the ecological, cultural, historical, and spiritual dimensions of Te Māra Kūmara through a Māori worldview.

Since its establishment, this kaupapa has delivered sustained and measurable benefits. Learning continues to deepen each growing season, with tamariki from kōhanga through to wharekura actively participating in a coherent, scaffolded programme of learning. A number of waiata have been specifically composed to support this kaupapa. One of these was performed by junior students at the recent Mana Kuratahi National Kapa Haka Competition in Tauranga with the aim of further embedding cultural knowledge and reinforcing collective responsibility and identity.

Now in our third growing season, and following two successful harvests, Mana Tamariki has achieved a significant milestone: the ability to generate tupu (new kūmara plants) from the previous season's crop. This outcome represents a tangible step toward self-sustainability and demonstrates the effectiveness of the kaupapa in building long-term capability, resilience, and food sovereignty within our kura community.

The work of Rautapatu Trust, and Glen Skipper's leadership in particular, has been instrumental in delivering authentic, high-quality learning experiences that reconnect tamariki to Papatūānuku in meaningful and practical ways. This kaupapa provides a proven model of how mātauranga Māori,

environmental stewardship, and education can be woven together to create enduring outcomes for current and future generations.

I offer this letter of support without reservation and strongly endorse Rautapatu Trust's application for funding. Continued investment in this kaupapa will enable the Trust to further extend its impact, strengthen community capability, and support kura and whānau to realise long-term aspirations of sustainability, mana motuhake, and intergenerational wellbeing.

Nāku iti nei,

Kaimoni Soutar



Tumuaki | Principal
Mana Tamariki





To Whom It May Concern:

I had the privilege of hovering over the Rautāpatu Foundation and their leadership team through the Our Land and Water National Science Challenge, specifically their transformative Te Kāhui Rau project. What I witnessed was far more than a research initiative—it was a living demonstration of how indigenous knowledge, scientific rigor, and genuine partnership can create pathways to regeneration that benefit entire communities.

Their approach wasn't simply about implementing another environmental project; it was about fundamentally reimagining how we might revitalise te taiao through the lens of mana whenua leadership and kaupapa Māori principles. This wasn't easy work, and they navigated complex challenges with integrity, adaptability, and a steadfast focus on outcomes that would serve future generations.

What distinguished the Rautāpatu team was their ability to bridge worlds authentically. They hosted kaupapa Māori research wānanga that brought together whānau and hapū representatives, creating space for some of Aotearoa's most distinguished Māori scholars to share knowledge. They worked collaboratively with councils, scientists, and community partners using co-design principles that genuinely addressed power imbalances rather than simply paying lip service to partnership.

The Te Taiao Strategy that emerged from their work is a testament to their values-driven approach. It's not a document imposed from outside—it's a living framework born from the aspirations, knowledge, and voices of whānau and hāpori. It demonstrates how circular economy principles, indigenous regeneration practices, and contemporary innovation can work together when grounded in cultural integrity and deep connection to place.

Perhaps most importantly, Rautāpatu Foundation operates with manaakitanga at its core. They understand that revitalising te taiao is inseparable from healing whānau and restoring the relationships between people and place. Their work spans from practical māra kai projects to ambitious regional food systems strategies, always with an eye toward building capacity within their communities and creating enduring transformation rather than quick fixes.

*Rangitāne Tū Māi Rā,
Tū Mai Rā Rangitāne*



I tautoko Rautāpatu Foundation to any organisation seeking partners who can deliver genuine co-innovation, honour indigenous knowledge systems, and create solutions that are culturally grounded, scientifically sound, and designed for intergenerational benefit. Their work represents the best of what's possible when we approach environmental and community development with integrity, vision, and a commitment to walking alongside communities rather than telling them what they need.

Noho ora mai, na

Richard Jones

Richard Jones
President
Tū Mai Rā Energy
[+64 21 619 075](tel:+6421619075)
www.tmre.nz

*Rangitāne Tū Māi Rā,
Tū Mai Rā Rangitāne*

c/- McCaw Lewis Lawyers
PO BOX 8348 • DX GP 20020 • Hamilton 3240 • New Zealand

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for Rautāpatu Foundation and their ongoing work advancing *Te Taiao* through whānau-led, place-based approaches to environmental stewardship, enterprise development, and community resilience. I write in my capacity as Co-Director of the Circular Economy in Business Research Centre at the University of Auckland Business School, and based on a sustained relationship of collaboration, shared learning, and co-design with Rautāpatu Foundation.

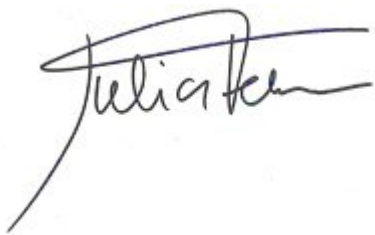
Rautāpatu Foundation's work aligns closely with the research at the core of our Centre, which focuses on sustainable and circular bioeconomy development and locally grounded pathways to regeneration and nature-positive business. Through wānanga and ongoing collaborative engagements, I have come to know Rautāpatu as a highly professional organisation that combines strong governance, project management skills and operational capability with deep accountability to whānau, whenua, and kaupapa Māori values. Their way of working is thoughtful, deliberate, and consistently oriented toward long-term social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing.

Rautāpatu Foundation demonstrates strong capability in convening and coordinating diverse stakeholders and in navigating the complexity inherent in kaupapa Māori-led development. Their trusted partner network—including Parakore, The Bioeconomy Science Institute at AgResearch, Climate Connect Aotearoa, and Āmiomio Aotearoa and The University of Auckland Business—reflects both the credibility they hold across research centres and their ability to build enduring, values-based relationships.

A particular strength of Rautāpatu's work is their focus on strengthening whānau agency, developing commercially viable kai systems, and exploring harakeke fibre industries as pathways to restoring whenua, supporting economic participation, and building intergenerational resilience. This integrated approach reflects not only best practice but also leading-edge knowledge transfer in circular economy and regenerative development, where environmental care, cultural integrity, and economic viability are advanced together.

Based on my experience working alongside Rautāpatu Foundation, I have deep respect for both the organisation and the people who bring this work to life. Our partnership has been professionally enriching and personally meaningful, and it has been a genuine highlight of my work this year. I have full confidence in Rautāpatu Foundation's integrity, capability, and continued contribution to whānau-led, regenerative development in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Sincerely,



Dr Julia Fehrer
Associate Professor of Innovation and Strategy
Co-Director, [Circular Economy in Business Research Beacon](#)

T 021 252 2894
A Sir Owen G Glenn Building, Room 389
P 12 Grafton Road, Auckland CBD, Auckland 1010



BUSINESS SCHOOL



Rautāpatu Foundation
93 Gover Street
Pukekura
Ngāmotu 4310

17 December 2025

To whom it may concern,

Climate Connect Aotearoa (Auckland Council) has worked with the team at Rautāpatu Foundation on a range of opportunities relating to climate mitigation and adaptation, circular economy and future economic opportunities for Aotearoa in sustainable production.

In 2025 a consortium of business professionals, local government and academics concerned about textile waste and wanting to explore more circular opportunities for Aotearoa, came together to procure research exploring the social, environment and economic costs and benefits of a regulated approach to product stewardship for clothing and textiles in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We specifically wanted to explore the strategic context of circular production models and the alignment of those models with the Māori economy kaupapa.

The team at Rautāpatu Foundation helped us to understand the framing of these issues through a Kaupapa Māori lens, engaging with the research deeply and took the time to analyse and communicate feedback so thoroughly. The insights and synthesis of the issues and opportunities they fed back offered everyone involved an opportunity to learn and reflect.

Through an existing partnership with Auckland University's School of Business, we had another opportunity to participate in a three-day wānanga hosted by Rautāpatu Foundation in Taranaki.

The process, which was designed to enquire how we could build pathways for Māori knowledge systems to be more integrated, to enable economic development that works for Māori. The workshop event was a growth opportunity for everyone involved, with time allowed for reflection that led to deep layers of meaning being drawn from the group interaction.

I would recommend working with Rautāpatu, I have found them to be communicative and collaborative and have brought significant insights and value to the projects we've been involved in.

Warm regards,

Alex Kirkham
Climate Project Innovation Lead – Energy
Auckland Economic Development Office
Auckland Council.



PŪRANGAKURA
PEOPLE. RESEARCH. KAUPAPA.

16th December 2025

Re: Testimonial for Rautāpatu Foundation

This letter is provided as a testimonial from Pūrangakura, based on our engagement with the Rautāpatu Foundation and their kaupapa.

Pūrangakura has engaged with the Rautāpatu Foundation in relation to their kaupapa and Te Taiao Strategy. Through this engagement, the Rautāpatu Foundation has demonstrated a strong commitment to kaupapa Māori values and a whānau-centred approach. Their work reflects indigenous-led practice that brings together environmental responsibility, climate-responsive thinking, and circular economy principles.

The Rautāpatu team operates with care and integrity, drawing on kaupapa Māori principles alongside evidence-informed approaches. Their work reflects a thoughtful balance between mātauranga Māori and applied research practice.

The Rautāpatu Foundation shows clear leadership intent and a developing capacity for collaboration and innovation within the indigenous-led climate and environmental space. Their kaupapa is well positioned to contribute meaningfully to ongoing conversations and action in this area.

Ngā mihi nui,

Prof. Jenny Lee-Morgan
Managing Director of Research
Pūrangakura
Jenny@Purangakura.co.nz



Pūrangakura Ltd



63 Huia Road,
Pt Chevalier, 1022



www.purangakura.co.nz

“My involvement with Rautāpatu Foundation has been grounded in respectful kōrero and a commitment to kaupapa Māori values. I’ve appreciated the way they engage with openness, care, and a willingness to listen, always with an intention to centre whānau, community, and Te Taiao in their thinking. As my engagement with them grows, their emphasis on partnership, learning, and community wellbeing comes through clearly, and I wish them every success as they continue to grow and develop their mahi.”

Awhina Cameron
Chief Executive Officer
Tū Tama Wāhine o Taranaki



“As CEO of Manawa Honey, I have had the privilege of meeting with Rautāpatu Foundation in 2023, and I attended and presented at their inspiring Tribal Summit for a Circular Economy (2024). Our emerging relationship has been a powerful experience rooted in shared values of sustainability, innovation, and community empowerment all deeply connected to the spirit and aspirations of us here in Ruatahuna.



Rautāpatu Foundation’s approach to elevating indigenous knowledge within forward-thinking frameworks truly resonates with our kaupapa at Manawa Honey. Their commitment to nurturing meaningful partnerships, sharing ideas, and working collectively to support whānau and environmental wellbeing is evident in everything they do.

Being part of the Rautāpatu Summit allowed us to explore unique synergies between indigenous wisdom and circular economy principles, advancing both economic opportunity and ecological responsibility. I value our ongoing relationship deeply and look forward to continued shared successes that uplift our communities together.”

Brenda Tahi
CEO, Tuawhenua Trust
T/A Manawa Honey NZ



“I have had the privilege of working with Rautāpatu Ltd through the development of the Taranaki Kai Systems Strategy, and I strongly support the vision and leadership behind this work.

What stands out is their genuinely indigenous-led, place-based approach, grounded in mātauranga Māori and translated into a clear, practical strategy for food systems transformation. Rautāpatu is connecting whenua, kai, enterprise and community in ways that challenge conventional models and create meaningful, long-term impact. From my perspective, this work has the potential to influence not just Taranaki, but how sustainable food systems are reimagined more broadly.”

James Turner

Senior Scientist & Research Priority Champion
Research Operations
Bioeconomy Science Institute: AgResearch Group



“It has been an absolute privilege to work alongside Rautāpatu Foundation through my involvement with Bry and Glen in the pilot project Te Kāhui Rau (2022–2024), which sat within the National Science Challenge: Our Land and Water. Through this kaupapa, Rautāpatu developed their Taiao strategy, clearly articulating the aspirations of ngā uri o Ngāti Tāwhirikura for the Taiao while maintaining a strong focus on intergenerational wellbeing and future generations.

Our partnership has been grounded in shared values of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and mana motuhake. In 2023, I was fortunate to be invited to the kaupapa Rangahau workshop series delivered through Te Kāhui Rau. This wānanga created a powerful platform for Taranaki descendants to learn from esteemed kaupapa Māori researchers, including Professor Leonie Pihama, Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and Professor Graham Smith, while also providing space for Taranaki whānau to share their own aspirations and contribute to a growing collective knowledge base around Taranaki maunga.

Rautāpatu Foundation leads with integrity, care, and a clear commitment to kaupapa Māori approaches that centre people, whenua, and taiao. Their work exemplifies what meaningful, values-led collaboration can achieve for communities now and into the future. I look forward to seeing the future endeavours of the whānau at Rautāpatu”.

Oriwa Tamahou

Tūhoe, Tainui
Scientist/Kairangahau Māori Research and Partnerships



I am pleased to provide this letter of support for Rautāpatu Foundation’s innovative projects as they drive implementation of their Te Taiao Strategy through key partnership engagement and whānau-led innovation. Their work aligns closely with our commitment to sustainable, circular bioeconomy development and indigenous enterprise growth.

Their proven expertise in project design and management, alongside a robust network that includes Parakore, The Bioeconomy Science Institute AgResearch, The University of Auckland Business School, Climate Connect Aotearoa, and Āmiomio Aotearoa, positions them as community-led change-makers in advancing climate-smart innovations rooted in kaupapa Māori values. Their focus on strengthening whānau agency, developing commercial kai systems and exploring harakeke fibre industries, to restore whenua and whanau resilience exemplifies best practice.

I, enthusiastically endorse them and look forward to collaborating and contributing to this critical kaupapa for the benefit of whānau and communities of Taranaki”.

E mihi ana,

Rawinia Leatherby

(Taranaki Community Member and Whānau Supporter)



“I had the privilege of supporting He Kāhui Mano Tribal Summit, in October 2024 through Manaaki, and it was a powerful experience to see Rautāpatu Foundation’s kaupapa in action. The summit created a thoughtful and welcoming space where Māori perspectives on circular economy, sustainability, and te Taiao were genuinely centred.

As a PhD candidate researching Māori enterprise, I found the kōrero especially valuable. The discussions offered grounded, real-world insights into how kaupapa Māori values, circular economy thinking, and Indigenous knowledge can intersect in ways that support both community wellbeing and economic futures. Seeing these ideas brought to life through collective dialogue and practical examples deepened my understanding of how Māori-led approaches can shape more regenerative and relational economic pathways.

What stood out most was the emphasis on collaboration and shared learning. The summit felt less like a conference and more like a wānanga — a space where people could think together, challenge assumptions, and imagine solutions rooted in whānau, whenua, and responsibility to te Taiao.”

Ngā manaaki

Robina Bedwell

PhD Candidate - Innovation and Entrepreneurship
School of Business
Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland





"Rautāpatu Foundation demonstrates a clear commitment to creating meaningful, intergenerational outcomes by taking deliberate action in the present to enable sustainable opportunities for the future. Its approach is strategic and values-led, balancing immediate impact with long-term vision.

Rather than focusing solely on incremental progress, the Foundation is grounded in a strong understanding of its identity, history, and purpose. It actively assesses current realities, identifies future possibilities, and charts a considered pathway to achieve them, engaging partners and communities throughout the journey.

The initiatives led by Rautāpatu Foundation are designed not only to address immediate needs, but to deliver enduring benefits that strengthen capability, resilience, and opportunity across generations."

Brian Cole
Research Projects Developer | Associate Director – Research
Research and Enterprise



Rautāpatu Foundation is leading a deeply important shift for Taranaki and Aotearoa. I'm inspired by their commitment to building holistic, sustainable, and prosperous futures grounded in Taranaki Māori values and aspirations. I've seen how Rautāpatu empowers whānau and hapū to lead their own solutions, grounding innovation in applied tikanga so progress never comes at the cost of identity.

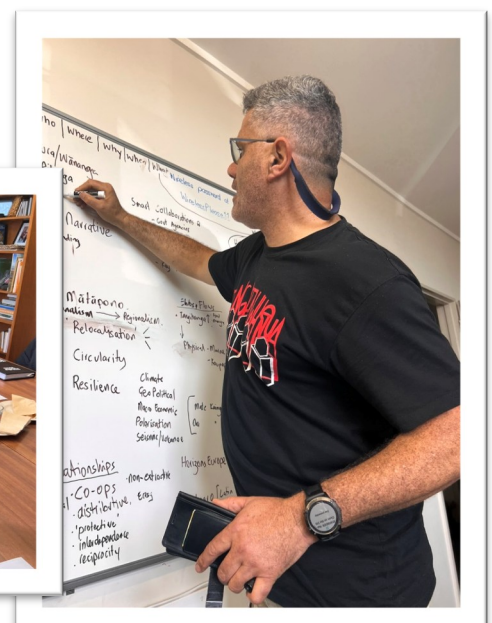
The Foundation's success to date is a tribute to great leadership. For more than two decades, Glen Skipper has worked tirelessly—often behind the scenes—combining deep thinking and visionary leadership with an uncommon level of practical hard work. It's rare to find someone who can dream big and then roll up their sleeves, and lead in the physical realm of māra kai season after season, year after year, to make those dreams real.

Alongside Glen, Bry Kopu brings sharp savviness and a global outlook that ensures Rautāpatu is locally grounded yet internationally relevant—and potentially world-leading. Her ability to navigate complex spaces with confidence and foresight adds incredible strength to the vision for our future.

I'm proud to support Rautāpatu in their endeavours. I believe my mokopuna will thank me for doing what I can to support this powerful and transformative kaupapa.

Mauri ora ki Rautāpatu, mauri ora ki te taiao, mauri ora ki te tangata.

Dr Will Edwards
(Taranaki Māori community leader)
Head of Māori Partnerships Ara Ake (New Zealand's Energy Centre)



Tēnā koutou e aku rau rangatira,

He honore nui mōku ki te whakamānawa i ngā mahi o Te Rautāpatu. Kua kite tūturu ahau i ngā hua rau oranga o ngā kaupapa mahi kua kokirihia e ngā māngai kaitiaki o Te Rautāpatu.

Kua hīkoi ngātahi au i tō rātou taha. Kua kite ā-kanohi i te kaha, te māia, me te rangatiratanga o [Te Rautāpatu](#).

He kitenga, he moemoeā, he whāinga ara mahi kua hikina e rātou hei painga mō ngā whānau, hapū, iwi me te hapori whānui o Taranaki, otirā o Aotearoa nui tonu.

Nōku te whiwhi, te maringi nui, mō ngā tau e toru i whai wāhi atu ahau ki ngā wānanga rangahau kaupapa Māori i whakatūngia e Te Rautāpatu ki Ngāmotu. I whakatōpūhia mai ngā rangatira o te ao Māori nā runga i te whakapono ki te kaupapa, ā, ki te whakamana i te karanga.

He puna mātauranga ēnei wānanga; kīkī rawa tōku ake kete, hihiko ana tōku ngākau, mau ana i te kaha kia haere tonu i roto i āku mahi rau oranga mō tōku ake whānau, hapū, iwi.

E whakapono katoa ana ahau ahakoa te aha he ara rangatira mauri ora kei mua i te aroaro o Te Rautāpatu.

Ka waiho ake au i tēnei tongikura nā Kīngi Tāwhiao hei whakatairanga ake i ōku kōrero mai tōku marae. I ako ahau i te ohaaki o tēnei whakakitenga i tētahi o ngā hui i whakatūngia e Te Rautāpatu ki Taranaki.

“Me whakatipu ki te hua o te rengarenga, me whakapakari ki te hua o te kawariki.”

Naaku noa naa,

Renee Kahukura Iosefa

(Waikato Tainui, Ngāti Kahungunu Rongomaiwahine, Ngāti Rārua, Te Ātiawa)



Tēnā koutou e aku rau rangatira,

It is a great honour for me to acknowledge the work of Te Rautāpatu. I have personally witnessed the positive outcomes of the initiatives advanced by the kaitiaki of Te Rautāpatu.

I have walked alongside these leaders. I have witnessed firsthand the strength, courage, and leadership embodied in the work of [Te Rautāpatu](#).

They have raised visions, aspirations, and pathways of action that serve the wellbeing of whānau, hapū, iwi, and the wider community of Taranaki, and indeed Aotearoa as a whole.

I have been deeply privileged and enriched over the three years in which I was able to participate in the kaupapa Māori research wānanga established by Te Rautāpatu in Ngāmotu. Leaders from across Māoridom came together through belief in the kaupapa, to uphold and respond to the call of Te Rautāpatu.

These wānanga were fountains of knowledge. My own kete was filled to the brim; my heart was energised and strengthened with the resolve to continue my own work for my whānau, hapū, and iwi.

I hold complete faith in the pathway ahead for Te Rautāpatu. I leave with you this tongikura from Kīngi Tāwhiao that adorns our marae to reinforce my words: It was at one of the wānanga held by the leaders of Te Rautāpatu that I was given insight and understanding to the message of this tongikura which is based on the collective resilience and power of a people to not only survive but to thrive.

“Me whakatipu ki te hua o te rengarenga, me whakapakari ki te hua o te kawariki.”

Naaku noa naa,

Renee Kahukura Iosefa

(Waikato Tainui, Ngāti Kahungunu Rongomaiwahine, Ngāti Rārua, Te Ātiawa)





Testimonial for Rautāpatu Foundation

To Whom it May Concern,

Ko Te Raumahora Hema tēnei, he uri nō Ngāti Te Whiti, Ngāti Tawhirikura, Puketapū hapū, Te Atiawa Nui Tonu, Taranaki Iwi, me Ngāti Tama. I am the founder of Papa Toa and currently serve as Pou Tikanga for Taranaki Retreat/Waimānako. Through my work as a rongoā practitioner, cultural supervisor, junior researcher, and systems thinker, I have dedicated my career to the revitalisation of mātauranga Māori and its application across contemporary challenges from kai sovereignty and taiao regeneration to community healing and organisational transformation.

Over the past 13 years, I have had the privilege of witnessing, observing, and being part of Glen Skipper and Bry Kopu's remarkable journey with Rautāpatu Foundation. Our paths have crossed and intertwined across numerous kaupapa: community development initiatives, kai sovereignty projects, hapū development spaces, and collaborative community organising. What I have observed over more than a decade is rare: a consistency of vision matched by an unwavering commitment to walking the talk.

In my line of work, I encounter many organisations and practitioners who speak eloquently about partnership, about centring mātauranga Māori, about community led approaches. Glen and Bry are among the few who genuinely live these values. They build and maintain relationships with depth and reciprocity, practice manaakitanga in ways that honour the mana of every person and community they engage with, and actively restore and strengthen relationships between people and place through kaitiakitanga.

From my perspective as a cultural practitioner deeply embedded in community spaces, what distinguishes Rautāpatu Foundation is their ability to hold complexity without compromising integrity. Through their five interconnected pathways (partnerships, mana centred kai, kaupapa, circular economy, and the elevation of indigenous knowledge within their Te Taiao Strategy) Glen and Bry have created a framework that genuinely responds to the interconnected needs of our communities. They navigate between traditional knowledge systems and contemporary organisational realities with both cultural grounding and sophisticated analysis.

In the kai sovereignty space, where much of my own mahi is focused, I have watched Rautāpatu Foundation develop approaches that genuinely honour the relationship between people, kai, and whenua. Their mana centred kai pathway translates into real action supporting maara kai initiatives, food rescue networks, and circular food systems throughout our rohe. Glen and Bry understand that food is not merely a resource to be managed but a taonga that carries whakapapa, cultural knowledge, and spiritual significance.

As someone who works extensively in healing and transformative practices, I recognise the skill required to create spaces where genuine change can occur. Through Rautāpatu Foundation's kaupapa pathway, Glen and Bry facilitate transformative wānanga, support community led initiatives, and create opportunities for whānau to reconnect with cultural practices and knowledge systems.

Over 13 years, I have seen them refine these skills, learning from both successes and challenges, always with humility and the wellbeing of whānau and communities at the centre.

Their commitment to hapū development is particularly meaningful to me as someone deeply connected to my own hapū. Through their partnerships pathway, Glen and Bry have demonstrated an exceptional ability to build genuine, reciprocal relationships with hapū, iwi, community organisations, and government agencies. They support hapū led initiatives in ways that strengthen rather than undermine hapū autonomy and mana motuhake.

The circular economy work and Te Taiao Strategy of Rautāpatu Foundation exemplify kaitiakitanga in action. I have witnessed Glen and Bry work tirelessly to restore relationships between tangata and whenua, to advocate for environmental practices that honour our responsibilities as kaitiaki, and to ensure that approaches to sustainability are guided by mātauranga Māori rather than imposed Western frameworks. This work is vital not only for our generation but for our mokopuna and the generations beyond them.

What I appreciate most about working alongside Glen Skipper and Bry Kopu is their authenticity. They are genuine in their commitment to learning, growing, and serving. They listen deeply, adapt thoughtfully, and remain accountable to the communities and kaupapa they serve. In an environment where cultural appropriation and tokenism are all too common, this authenticity is precious.

The work of Rautāpatu Foundation matters because it demonstrates what becomes possible when cultural integrity meets strategic thinking, when community wisdom meets organisational capacity, when vision meets sustained action. Over 13 years, I have watched Glen and Bry build something enduring: not just projects or programs, but relationships, capacity, and pathways toward collective flourishing.

As I continue my own mahi through Papa Toa and my role as Pou Tikanga for Taranaki Retreat/Waimānako, I am grateful to have Glen Skipper, Bry Kopu, and Rautāpatu Foundation as allies and collaborators in the broader movement toward cultural revitalisation, community self determination, and the restoration of right relationships with our taiao. I offer my wholehearted support for their kaupapa and my deep respect for the integrity, vision, and aroha they bring to this mahi.

Ngā mihi nui, ngā mihi aroha,

Te Raumahora Hema

Founder, Papa Toa

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*I'm honoured to be part
of this kaupapa because
it aligns with my
passions, and being
closer to our whānau
networks.*

Te Raumahora Hema



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