

Ventia

NGĀ ĀHUATANGA O TE TIRITI

MEDIUM-LARGE ORGANISATION FINALIST



THE STORY

Whāia te iti kahurangi ki te tūohu koe me he maunga teitei.

Aim high for what is truly valuable, and to be persistent in pursuit of those goal.

Te Ara o Rehua is the Ventia roopū whakahaere (working party), a group dedicated to driving diversity, inclusion, and equitable outcomes. This group ensures that Māori perspectives and interests are prioritised in every forum, fostering authentic cultural awareness that provides a sense of belonging and belief. The name of the roopū refers to the aspirational journey of aiming high on the sacred pathway of Rehua, a Māori deity who resides in the highest realms.

Ventia is one of the largest essential services providers in New Zealand and Australia. It supports clients on a range of projects in the areas of road, water, power, and communication network infrastructure and the facilities management of built and green assets.

The establishment of te roopū whakahaere a Te Ara o Rehua was a significant step towards increasing the cultural capability within the organisation in Aotearoa.

Kaitohutohu Māori Ricky Steedman says the initiative aims to foster positive relationships with local communities, whānau (families), hapū (sub-tribes), iwi (tribes), and all stakeholders across Aotearoa, spanning various sectors and regions.

Guided by the principles of te Tiriti, tikanga (Māori practices), mana (respect and kindness), wairua (holistic wellbeing), and mātauranga Māori (the pursuit of knowledge), it includes leaders and team members from across the motu and all sectors of the business.

The roopū developed a detailed charter, outlining its purpose, vision, and strategies, aligned to Ventia's values, sustainability objectives, and growth strategies. A strategy day was held on the marae, with invited leaders, to deliver the charter. This gesture highlighted the authentic te ao Māori approach of the development process; collaboration, respect, adherence to kawa (protocols) and tikanga.

Ricky adds, "Aroha and manaakitanga were upheld to maintain the highest levels of integrity, guided by te Tiriti mātauranga."

The charter was then presented kanohi-ki-te kanohi (in-person) to three levels of Ventia leadership including the full Ventia Board. These same leadership groups were taken on a cultural journey to better understand the strategies and initiatives in the charter.

"The initiatives outlined in the charter, along with the engagement with Māori communities and organisations, showcase our proactive approach to fostering positive relationships and creating opportunities for Māori within Ventia."

Over the past 12 months, Te Ara o Rehua has made great progress. Māori employment has increased from 19 per cent to 30 per cent. The progress made culturally within the organisation has enabled Ventia to foster close relationships with various iwi and whānau in regions where the organisation has current or future projects, while also continuing to maintain strong working relationships with more than 50 Māori and Pasifika businesses.

"Ventia has been implementing our strategy or kaupapa effectively, with the active involvement of our leadership team, employees, and stakeholders. The kaupapa is supported internally and is led in the organisation through the efforts of the New Zealand leadership team and Te Ara o Rehua," Ricky says.

THE CHALLENGE

Ventia wanted to build cultural capability in its Aotearoa business and enhance Māori employment, procurement and participation within the organisation.

“Aroha and manaakitanga were upheld to maintain the highest levels of integrity, guided by te Tiriti mātauranga.”

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Establishment of Te roopū whakahaere a Te Ara o Rehua, a working group to lead the organisation in achieving their objectives
- Development of a charter outlining the purpose, vision, strategies and initiatives of Te Ara o Rehua
- Ricky Steedman promoted onto the New Zealand Leadership team in the role of Kaitohutohu Māori Strategic Relations Manager, alongside co-chair of Te Ara o Rehua Caroline Haku
- Support of all stakeholders and full commitment throughout organisation
- Development of three Pou focusing on areas that aim to significantly improve outcomes for Māori
- Mix of resources developed for the management team and employees to support this mahi
- Cultural support and advice across different kaupapa (areas) from Kaitohutohu Māori and Te Ara o Rehua roopū
- Utilisation of Māori models, accompanied by Māori visual representations designed by Māori artists
- Cultural Awareness Module which shares learnings about te Tiriti o Waitangi and the rich history of our Māori people
- Incorporation of cultural practices in meetings, and the translation of policies



RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Māori employment has increased from 19% to 30%.
- Strong relationships with mana whenua and iwi groups.
- Māori representation at decision-making levels across organisation.
- 43% of Ventia's wider team, including kaimahi in Australia, have completed the Cultural Awareness Module

KEY LEARNING

Collaboration with stakeholders, leaders and team members right across an organisation increases the effectiveness of a strategy designed to enhance Māori participation and increase cultural capability within an organisation