

Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation

NGĀ ĀHUATANGA O TE TIRITI
MEDIUM-LARGE ORGANISATION WINNER



THE STORY

In traditional pūrākau, te toi huarewa was the pathway followed through the heavens to retrieve ngā kete o te wānanga, the baskets of knowledge. It's also the name given to the Health Strategy of the Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation, representing their storied journey towards equitable health outcomes for Māori and all communities in their rohe.

The organisation operates across the Western Bay of Plenty from Kaikati to Ōpōtiki. Existing as a real life example of a Te Tiriti partnership, it is a joint venture between Ngāi Te Rangi iwi, Ngāti Ranginui iwi, and Western Bay of Plenty Primary Care Providers Incorporated.

Says Kiri Peita, General Manager Māori, Population Health and Equity, “The Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation is focused on keeping people well in their communities.

“We play a crucial role in both supporting and delivering community-based primary health care and wellness services directly to consumers and their whānau through supporting general practice networks, community-based primary health care, and our iwi partners,” she explains.

Like the journey taken to retrieve to the baskets of knowledge, the pathway to establish the joint venture was new and, at times, challenging territory.

Kiri says the organisation is the first, and still only, Primary Health Organisation to be governed by a partnership between mana whenua and providers.

A dream envisioned a decade before its official foundation in 2003, it was born out of a pilot project that led to the First Health and Prime Health organisations of the early 90s.

One of the founders and its inaugural chairman Dr John Gemming recalls that when it came to form the Primary Health Organisation, the relationships to create a genuine partnership were already in place. “The idea of doing it together wasn’t a new idea for us.” he added.

As Māori liaison during these early days and board member for 15 years, Colleen Te Arihi was instrumental in the formation of the joint venture as a 50/50 partnership between providers and iwi. Going further than the recommendation from the Ministry to have a Māori Advisory Committee, and with some criticism, the partnership was established.

Since then, the Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation has been authentically working to meet their obligations and uphold the partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

“The power and value of authentic partnerships are more than just contractual arrangements. They are anchored in transparency, open communication, and a sincere desire to achieve common goals,” Kiri says.

“We firmly believe whānau, hapū, and iwi must lead, determine, and guide pathways to live long and healthy lives today and for generations to come.”

Te Toi Huarewa and the enhanced set of principles informed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi held within the strategy provide clarity and guidance on how to engage with, promote, and support Māori health aspirations.

Some initiatives that express these principles include supporting Māori kaimahi in bimonthly hui, Māori Health Cultural Training around Te Tiriti, cultural safety and biases, and developing internal capabilities to support General Practice partners.

More explicitly, the organisation’s expression of Te Tiriti o Waitangi talks about priority and commitment, and is guided by equity, quality healthcare, sustainability, and passion.

Titiro whakamuri, kōkiri whakamua. Look back and reflect to move forward.

An annual cultural haerenga is one initiative that brings this whakataukī to life. Kaimahi and General Practice partners visit local sites of significance for Māori. to get to know the stories and impacts of colonisation, wars, and land loss.

“Our cultural journey is influencing and changing our mahi and we’re looking forward to making more changes within this space,” Kiri says.

“Whānau, hapū, and iwi must lead, determine, and guide pathways to live long and healthy lives today and for generations to come.”

THE CHALLENGE

The Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation wanted a true partnership between mana whenua and service providers as part of its drive to create equitable health outcomes for Māori and all communities in their rohe.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Implementation of Health Strategy Te Toi Huarewa and Te Tiriti principles to provide clarity and guidance on how to engage with, promote, and support Māori health aspirations
- Creation of a wāhi āhurutanga (safe place) for Māori kaimahi, named Te Āhurutanga Rōpū, within the organisation
- Māori health cultural training and other support for the area's network of general practices
- Cultural training videos developed covering building relationships, cultural intelligence, racism, discrimination, and biases
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi training through Te Whāriki ā Toi
- Induction programme for all kaimahi facilitated by the General Manager Māori, Population Health and Equity
- Onboarding processes to honour Te Tiriti, from job advertisements, Position Descriptions, interview process and orientation
- Incorporate tikanga into significant events and day-to-day activities, mihi whakatau for new kaimahi and karakia sessions
- Annual cultural haerenga for leadership and staff

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Te Toi Huarewa Health Strategy helps the organisation and kaimahi to continue on their Te Tiriti journey and maintain their unique partnership
- Induction programme about Equity, Equality and the importance of prioritising Māori Health is delivered by the General Manager Māori, Population Health and Equity, ensuring a partnership approach to key messages
- Te Tiriti training ensures that the organisation progresses as an authentic Te Tiriti partnership



KEY LEARNING

Providing space for an authentic partnership between service providers and mana whenua can result in better outcomes for kaimahi and our communities.