

Tū Mai Taonga

A Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea-led project

2022

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Aotea Great Barrier Island

A report from the Project Steering Committee
to the beneficiaries of the Ngāti Rehua-Ngātiwai
ki Aotea Trust and project supporters.





The purpose of the Tū Mai Taonga Project is to protect and restore native species and ecosystems in the Aotea Conservation Park and Northern Aotea through feral cat removal and intensified rat management, with the long-term goal of removing them from the whole of Aotea.

The project has received initial funding from the Jobs for Nature - Mahi mō te Taiao programme through Predator Free 2050 Limited and the Department of Conservation, and from Auckland Council.

This is enabling Tū Mai Taonga to establish meaningful and equitable partnerships between mana whenua and the community; create long term jobs and career paths; and allow the development of new research and landscape-scale operational methodologies that transform the environmental and employment outlook of the island.

Transition to the umbrella of Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea Trust in December 2021 gave the project mana; enabling it to proceed with appropriate tikanga and to determine new ways of exercising kaitiakitanga for the island.

A Project Steering Committee was appointed to oversee and make key financial and strategic decisions for the project.



Tū Mai Taonga Steering Committee, from left: Matthew Ngawaka (mana whenua), Paula Williams (mana whenua), Izzy Fordham (Local Board), Opo Ngawaka (Chair Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea Trust), Marilyn Stephens (mana whenua), Kate Waterhouse (Community Nominee), Sue Daly (Community Nominee).

“I went into this sceptical but watching how Tū Mai Taonga has developed I’ve learned to trust the steering committee members and they’ve learned to trust Māori. It needed a partnership that is 50:50. We are holding hands and doing very well together.”

– Marilyn Stephens

“The project is an opportunity to prove ourselves. I can see a turnaround where the community is leaning toward the hapū. Māori culture is starting to be understood by more people. The project is for everyone, the whole island. I’d like to see the community get right behind it, be helpful, suggest things, push it along with us.”

– Matthew Ngawaka

Chair's message

Tēnā koutou katoa,

In August 2021 Ngati Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea sought the support of the Aotea community to lead the project known as Tū Mai Taonga; as traditional kaitiaki, with the mana that has often been denied us over generations.

In doing so Ngati Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea affirmed the vision, importance, and urgency of having taonga species thriving once again on Aotea.

Māori understand how everything is connected and important. The priority is to have those birds, plants, reptiles and insects that should be here, back among us.

We said we wished to build a strong tikanga-based foundation for the project that would honour Te Tiriti, and be conducive to long-term hapū, community and environmental well-being.

The response to our heartfelt request from the leaders of conservation and community groups across the island was affirming and unequivocal.

Encouraged and strengthened, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Aotea Great

Barrier Environmental Trust to transfer leadership of the project and developed Terms of Reference for a Project Steering Committee that could help us in our work.

I am delighted that Izzy Fordham, Kate Waterhouse and Sue Daly accepted our invitation to join the Project Steering Committee which has delegated responsibilities as a subcommittee of the Ngati Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea Trust to oversee and make key financial and strategic decisions for the Tū Mai Taonga project.

They have brought governance and relationship knowledge to complement the skills, insight and connections of mana whenua representatives Matthew Ngawaka, Paula Williams and Marilyn Stephens, nominated by our marae at Kawa and Motairehe.

This report documents the progress that has been made in the year since the Project Steering Committee first met.

We have gone from the aspirations for a predator free future set out in proposal documents developed for funders to having a peer-reviewed feasibility study on which to base a pathway to eradication and operations plan.

Going from start-up to an operational programme within a year, particularly dealing with the lingering effects of COVID-19, has been no easy task.

We have been helped by a small, hard-working, contracted management team that since February has been professionally led by Makere Jenner.

Charles Nepia, the Ngati Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea Trust's Kaiwhakahaere until September, also helped us ensure the project complied with trust policies and met the requirements of funding agencies for reporting, financial management, procurement and contract management.

In October, the project transitioned from set-up to operational phase. Our kaumatua group, the taumata, welcomed field workers for the Tū Mai Taonga project onto Kawa marae with a powhiri, then led karakia and karanga at the entrance to the Tataweka track where work in Te Paparahi has begun.

It was a moving start to the journey ahead.

Tū Mai Taonga is not just a project to bring back the birdsong that our tupuna once heard in the ngahere, but a new way of working.

It is an opportunity for Ngati Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea to show that it has the capability and cohesion to deliver large and complex projects.

It will challenge us to come together – as owners of whenua Māori, as conservationists, as workers, as kaitiaki – to deliver a coordinated operation.

With the project anchored in the tikanga and mātauranga of Ngati Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea we will invite neighbouring landowners, community groups, partner agencies and new funders to join us.

The work and goodwill of many has built a solid foundation for Tū Mai Taonga and with the embrace of mana whenua we are confident of success.



Opo Ngawaka
Chairperson

Tū Mai Taonga Project
Steering Committee



Tākoketai (black petrel) on Hirakimatā (Mount Hobson). Photo by Shaun Lee.

Why is Tū Mai Taonga needed?

Since European arrival on Aotea at least 12 taonga bird species have been lost, as well as bats, reptiles, invertebrates and plants.

The last to go was the kōkako, when two remaining male birds were removed to Hautūru in 1994. It has been the dream of many, including

Noelene Ngawaka-Fortzer, that the offspring of these birds be returned.

Many other species remain vulnerable to predation by feral cats and rats which are at very high densities over much of the island.

This includes seabirds like the tākoketai (black petrel), Oi (grey-

faced petrels) and tītī (Cook’s petrel); forest dwellers like the toutouwai (North Island robin, miromiro (tomtit) and red-crowned kakariki; the water-lovers matuku (bittern), mātātā (fernbird) and pāteke (brown teal); and the pepeketua (Hochstetter’s frog) and lizards like Duvaucel’s gecko, moko kākāriki (Auckland green gecko) and the niho taniwha (chevron skink).

The benefits of sustained predator control are being seen in island sanctuaries like Kotuku Peninsula

and Motu Kaikoura. At Windy Hill (where more than 60,000 rats and nearly 400 feral cats have been removed over 23 years) annual bird counts show increasing abundance of birds like kererū, tūī and kākā.

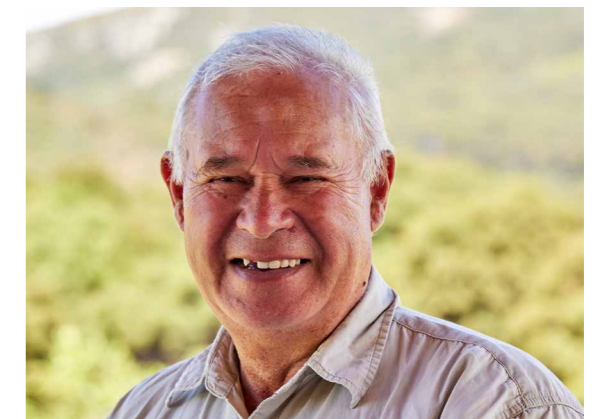
Yet effort is patchy, and predators are quick to invade when it wanes. Remote forested areas like Te Paparahi are the most silent.



“Thirty years ago, I lay on a mattress in the whare at Motairehe marae watching pāteke come up from the creek and cross the grass outside the door. But when I moved to live on the island a decade ago, the brown teal was gone. And once they’re gone, they don’t come back.

The kererū gorge themselves on guava trees in the bay and get so fat they can hardly fly. But it saddens me that they are down there eating guava when they should be up in the bush eating taraire and miro and pūriri.”

– Marilyn Stephens



“After rats were removed from Rangiāhua in 2008 two pairs of kākāriki, the red crowned parakeet came back, and red-billed gulls started to nest around the southern end of the island.

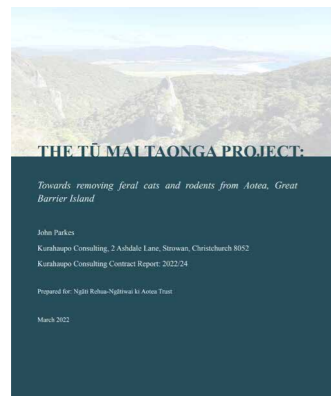
But the rats have returned and the kākāriki have moved on. I’d like to see predators off the whole island, not just knocked down. Then native species will flourish.”

– Matthew Ngawaka

Our approach

A practical, adaptive operations plan

The operational plan developed by Tū Mai Taonga is informed by an independently authored feasibility study that has been peer reviewed by technical and cultural advisors.



View the feasibility study here:
<https://tinyurl.com/rats-cats/>

It showed the job of ridding the island of feral cats and particularly rodents will be a difficult and long-term job.

In response, the project has developed milestones with funders based on a 'pathway to eradication' approach.

The first operational phase is to remove feral cats from Te Paparahi. Then to use growing knowledge and capability to progress down the island in stages, working with landowners, the Auckland Council's responsible pet owner programme and community group effort.

For ship rats and kiore, critical research questions have been defined to help us understand their behavior in the landscapes on Aotea. Smaller offshore islands have potential to help the project discover which combinations of tools and approaches are best at completely removing rodents and detecting and responding to reinvasion.

With proof of concept these methods can then be integrated into operations on the main island.

Tū Mai Taonga is linked with the Predator Free 2050 goal which aims to shift from the never ending cost and effort of suppressing predators to permanently removing them from landscapes. Significant national investment is going into new tools and methods that enable that. Potentially promising developments can be considered for operations on Aotea.

Tū Mai Taonga's operations plan is a practical approach, designed to adapt as capacity and knowledge from field operations grows.

A Pathway to Eradication



Objective: To remove feral cats and rodents from Aotea informed by the tikanga of Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea.

Years 1-3

Offshore northern islands - DISCOVER
(Customary, Crown, private and Māori land)
Rodents - detect, eradicate, defend.

Te Paparahi - PROVE

Rodents - apply learnings and trial tools at scale.
Feral cats - eradicate.
Build workforce capacity.

Māori land blocks - MANAAKI

Apply tikanga across project.

Years 3-5

Okiwi Basin - INTEGRATE
Integrate with landowners and agency expertise and investment.

Central - PARTNER

Partner with the conservation community.
Create confidence in methods.

Years 5-10

South - EXTEND
Build informed landowner relationships.
Enable joined-up eradication operations.

Years 10-20

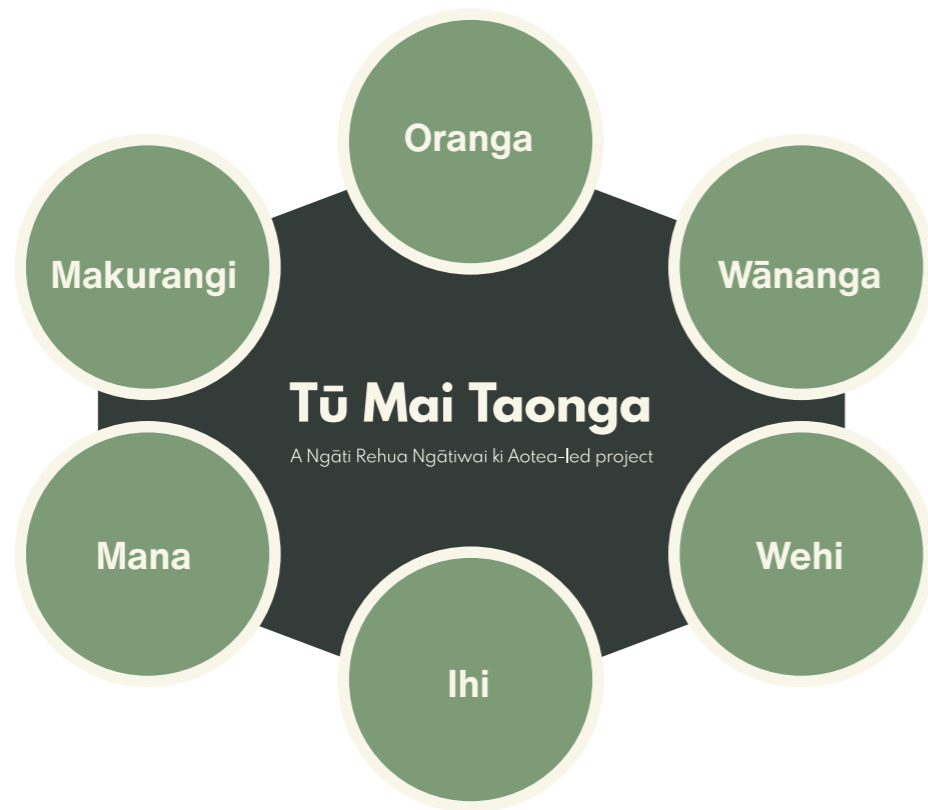
TIAKI
Refine biosecurity to maintain an island ark.

Mokopuna hear the birdsong their tupuna once did and people and wildlife thrive together.

Based on tikanga

Ngāti Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea has established six values that are placed as Pou to guide efforts in protecting our environment and restoring the mauri of Aotea.

These values guide all aspects of Tū Mai Taonga and how it will be led and implemented.



Pou Oranga: Our people to be spiritually, mentally, and physically healthy

Pou Wānanga: Our people attain and preserve the knowledge of our tupuna

Pou Wehi: Our people revere and uphold our tikanga and principles to its highest standard

Pou Ihi: Our people are focussed, committed, and possess strength and power in the work they perform.

Pou Mana: Our people retain the mana of our tupuna and exercise this for the benefit and well-being of our whanau and hapu

Pou Makurangi: Our people seek improvement through education, training, and experience

These values ensure we are aligned with the pathway set by our tupuna and help others understand and join with us in our journey.



Project lead Makere Jenner at the Taurikura Anamata wānanga. View the highlights here <https://fb.watch/gV45B-a5Y8/>

Networked with other Māori led projects

Tū Mai Taonga is connected with other iwi-led projects and Māori biosecurity networks that are showing how mana whenua values and mātauranga can be applied in predator free work.

It is one of three iwi or hapū-led, large landscape projects out of the 17 funded by Predator Free 2050 Limited.

Project Lead Makere Jenner, Operations Manager Chris Giblin and Project Steering Committee member Paula Williams attended the Ngāti Awa/Korehāhā Whakahau project-led Taurikura Anamata wānanga in September in Whakatāne.

Supporting jobs and training for whānau and islanders

The scale and ambition of the Tū Mai Taonga operation means long-term work opportunities for on-island contracting companies and individuals.

The funding for the first three years will provide for around fourteen full-time jobs, backed up with associated skills development, NZQA-linked training, and health, safety and wellbeing plans.

To be successful work must be coordinated into the operational plan designed to eradicate – not just control – predators.

Tū Mai Taonga is exploring the best way to utilise existing labour capacity on the island within the project so that those willing to be involved can build successful, sustainable businesses and careers.



Tū Mai Taonga Finance Manager Dave Braddock checks a remotely monitored feral cat trap

Timeline

August 2021 Ngati Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea seeks a mandate from community groups to lead the Tū Mai Taonga project.

December 2021 Memorandum of Understanding developed enabling the transfer of funding commitments from Aotea Great Barrier Environmental Trust to Ngati Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea Trust.

December 2021 Orientation workshop for Project Steering Committee hosted at Kawa marae.

January 2022 First meeting of Project Steering Committee.

February 2022 Makere Jenner appointed as acting Project Lead.

March 2022 Contracts with management team confirmed.

March 2022 Call for Expressions of Interest for provision of field work.

April 2022 Feasibility Study completed

April 2022 Minister of Conservation Kiri Allan announces DOC Jobs for Nature funding.

May 2022 Operations Manager Chris Giblin appointed.

May 2022 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan completed.

May 2022 Management team attends national Predator Free 2050 Limited workshop.

May 2022 Information hui at Kawa marae and Motairehe marae.

May 2022 Project Operations Manual drafted by Kaiwhakahaere.

June 2022 Former DOC HQ at Akapoua repurposed for office use.

July 2022 First draft of Operations Plan completed.

August 2022 Predator Free 2050 Limited confirms second stage funding.

August 2022 Attendance at Māori Biosecurity Workshop in Taranaki.

September 2022 First field team recruits start work.

September 2022 Light Utility Vehicle training course.

September 2022 Ngāti Awa/ Korehāhā Whakahau project-led Taurikura Anamata wānanga.

October 2022 Auckland Council proposes partnership agreement to guide long term funding and support.

October 2022 230 feral cat traps delivered to Akapoua, along with trail cameras and other field equipment.

October 2022 Tū Mai Taonga presents operational approach to community groups at Festival.

October 2022 Powhiri at Kawa marae and start of field work in Te Paparahi.

November 2022 Recruitment workshop for whānau held in Auckland.

November 2022 Community agreements signed with DOC.

November 2022 Training courses in chainsaw work and chemical safety held.

November 2022 Call for Expressions of Interest in upgrade of Tataweka Track issued.

Looking ahead



Working with owners of Māori land

Tū Mai Taonga understands the importance of whenua Māori and the right to determine how kaitiaki responsibility is exercised on that land.

The project will seek permissions to undertake work on Māori land from shareholders in accordance with the requirements of the Māori Land Court.

Shareholders will be able to understand what work is proposed and determine when it will occur, who will be carrying it out, under what conditions, how they wish to be involved, and they will be kept informed of progress.



Redefining partnerships

When Ngati Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea sought to lead the Tū Mai Taonga project it was with knowledge that government agencies have not always acted in good faith and with respect for the mana of the hapū .

Tū Mai Taonga is helping to reset relationships with partners based on Te Tiriti principles and Ngati Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea's mana whenua status.

Strong relationships with senior managers within agencies are forming. Second stage funding with Predator Free 2050 Limited has been agreed, community agreements have been put in place with the Department of Conservation and a long-term partnership agreement with Auckland Council has been proposed.



Leading the kōrero

The leadership and tikanga of Ngāti Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea are the anchor points for the Tū Mai Taonga project, providing legitimacy to carry out operations in the north, on Māori-owned land and in the rohe of the hapū.

This makes Tū Mai Taonga different from previous predator control programmes on the island and aligns with the expectations of partners and funders who are committed to Te Tiriti based relationships.

With proof of concept and mana whenua support, the project hopes to generate new kōrero that unites aspirations, effort and investment and open pathways to a predator free Aotea.



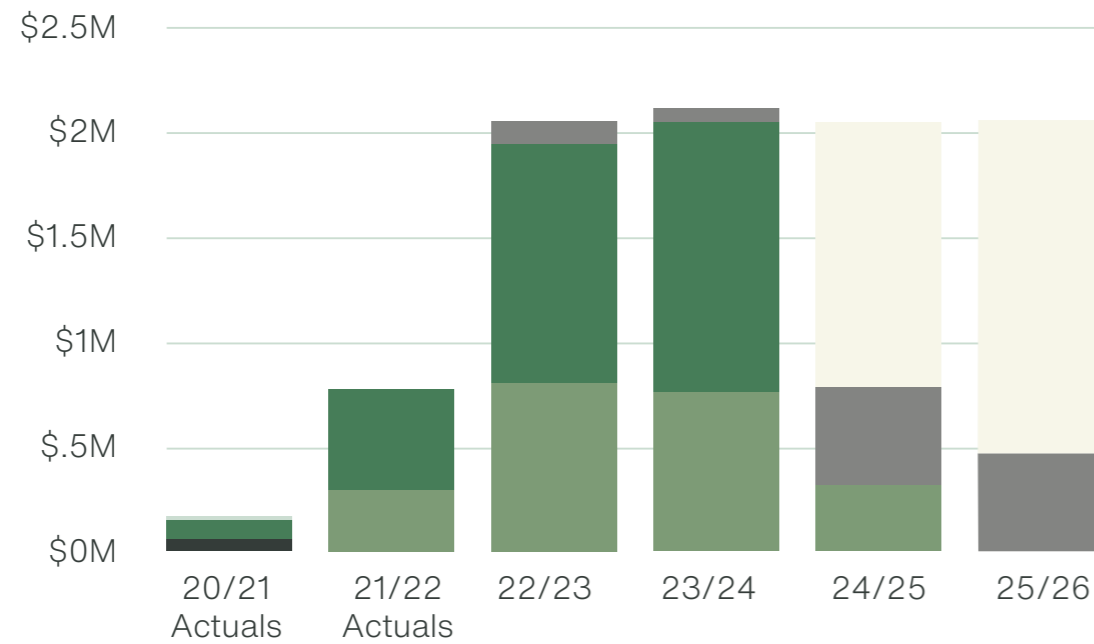
Operating with financial integrity

Tū Mai Taonga manages funding commitments of \$5.1m from Predator Free 2050 Limited and Department of Conservation through the Jobs for Nature – Mahi mō te Taiao programme.

It is also building long-term relationships with Auckland Council and philanthropic funders, and integrating delivery of work with other entities with shared goals, within a budget of more than \$13m over six years.

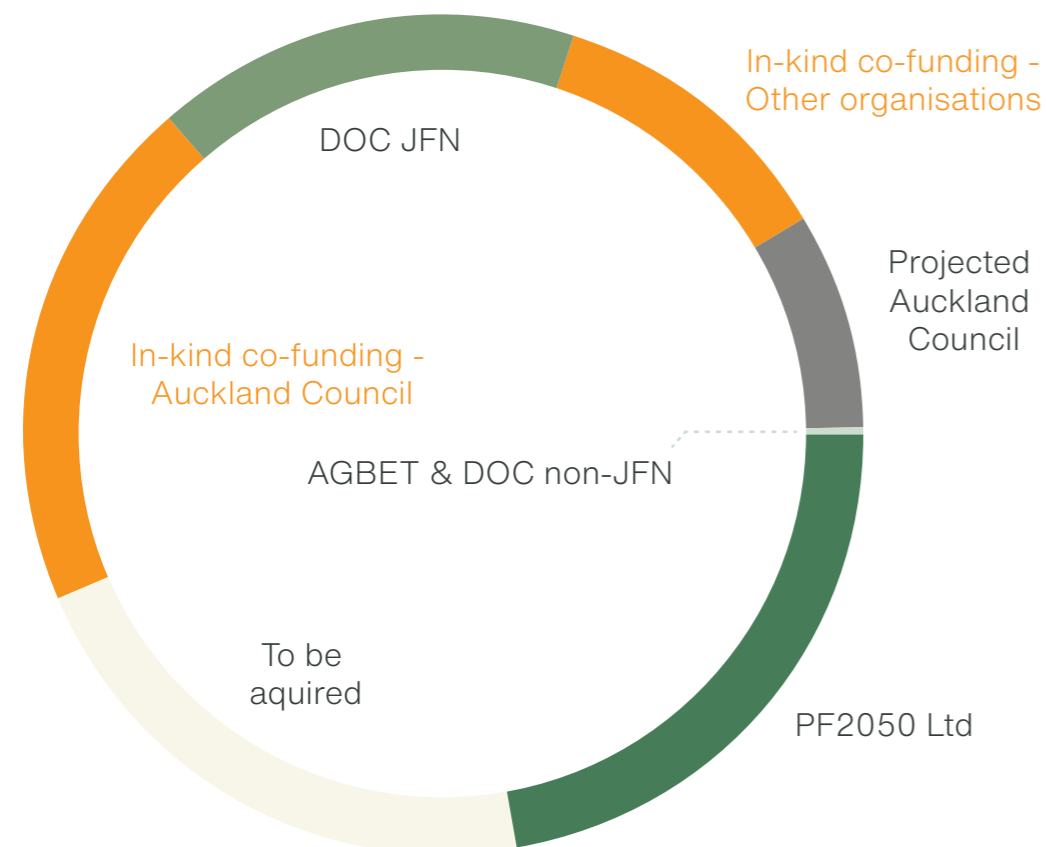
The project has rigorous policies and processes in place to ensure financial integrity, overseen by the Project Steering Committee.

Tū Mai Taonga Funding Sources to June 2026



- Auckland Council
- Projected Auckland Council
- DOC J4N
- GBIET & DOC non-J4N
- To be acquired

Tū Mai Taonga Funding Sources to June 2026 including in kind co-funding



Cash Position – Tu Mai Taonga Project

Ngati Rehua-Ngati Wai ki Aotea Trust
For 12 months to 19th November 2022

Account	Nov 2021-Nov 2022
Income	
TMT - DoC JFN Funding	487,000.00
TMT - Other Revenue	2,786.51
TMT - PF2050 Funding	376,764.00
<i>TMT - In kind Co-funding Income (Book entry only)</i>	<i>926,278.00</i>
Total Income	1,792,828.51
Operational Costs	
TMT - Management & Governance Work - Contractors	380,610.75
TMT - Field Operations - Vehicle and Travel Costs	939.34
TMT - Field Operations - Other Misc Field Costs	881.17
TMT - Field Operations - Supplies & Materials	69,486.73
TMT - Field Work - Contractors	58,333.25
TMT - Other Personnel costs incl Employer Kiwisaver etc	52.17
TMT - Personnel protective equipment & uniforms	20,079.40
TMT - Training	7,276.21
<i>TMT - In kind Co-funding Expense (Book entry only)</i>	<i>926,278.00</i>
Total Operational Costs	1,463,937.02
Gross Surplus	328,891.49
Other Income	
TMT - Interest Income	272.11
Total Other Income	272.11
Overheads	
TMT - Accounting	404.56
TMT - Administration and Board Expenses	1,027.73
TMT - Communications & Engagement Expenses	3,956.21
TMT - Freight & Courier	5,803.55
TMT - Insurance	5,180.66
TMT - Office Expenses	486.01
TMT - Telephone, Internet & IT Services (Non Field)	2,877.64
TMT - Travel - National	11,938.24
Total Overheads	31,674.60
Net Surplus	297,489.00
Capital Expenditure	
TMT - Field Equipment	11,260.70
TMT - Office Equipment	2,764.35
TMT - Vehicles	20,063.65
Total Fixed Assets	34,088.70
Cash Position	
Bank Account	291,670.07
Less Current Liabilities	(28,269.77)
Funds available	263,400.30



Tū Mai Taonga field workers William West, Jordan Turanga and Scott Gibling (pictured left to right) at a Light Utility Vehicle course



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