

**Aukaha**  
KIA KAHA, AU KAHA

# Aukaha Pānui

November 2023

# From the CEO



Tēnā tātou

It seems fitting that my first pānui as interim Chief Executive coincides with the publication of our annual report as we prepare for our AGM in early November. In my usual role as General Manager of Mana Ahurea I tend to focus on getting our section of the report across the line, but this year I have enjoyed being across the details of all four pou and getting a really clear picture of everything Aukaha achieved in the financial year ended 30 June 2023.



This pānui shares just a few of the highlights from our annual report, and I encourage you to access the full report here to learn more about our activities across the Otago takiwā. As always, we are incredibly grateful to our rūnaka shareholders for entrusting us to undertake this mahi on their behalf, with the support of mana whenua representatives who share their time and expertise.

Of course, we are now several months into the new financial year and the mahi continues across our four pou. We have been delighted to welcome quite a number of new kaimahi to the Aukaha whānau since our last pānui, and they are already helping us to meet the increasing demand for our services. Antonia Richardson (Ngāti Porou) has joined Mana Aukaha as a Kaitautoko, as well as Stevi-Rae Whaitiri-Gustafson (Kāi Tahu – Awarua) as Kaiāwhina, and Justin Millier (Aerana) as IT Manager. Dani McDonald (Kāi Tahu – Ōtākou) has come on in the newly established role as Kaiwhakahaere Whakapā – Communications Manager. Within Mana Taiao, we have welcomed Alex Gorrie (Kāi Tahu – Rāpaki, Puketeraki, Moeraki) as Kaipūkaha – Engineer and Manaia Russell (Kāi Tahu – Ōtākou) as Kaiāwhina. Andrea Shaw (Ngāpuhi) has come on board as a Kaiwhakatere – Facilitator in the trades training space of Mana Tākata, while Tessa Honeyfield (Te Ati Awa ki Taranaki) and Manu Kane (Kāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu) have joined our field team for Toitū Te Hākapupu and Greg Carson (Piritene) has taken over as Project Manager for Whiria Te Waitaki.

This will be our last pānui for 2023, and I am sending all of our whānau and partners best wishes for the holiday period and will look forward to sending our next update in 2024. In the meantime, follow us on Facebook and check out our website to stay up to date with our news.

Nā Caron Solomon-Ward

# From the Chair



I felt a sense of immense pride when looking over this year's annual report and reflecting on the many notable achievements from the past financial year. There continues to be a steady demand for the services of Aukaha, which is an indication of the value that our clients and partners place on our work, and despite the pressure of that demand, our kaimahi have continued to perform at a high standard and deliver quality outcomes across the four pou.



Strengthening relationships with kā papatipu rūnaka continues to be a top priority for Aukaha, and this year's report is full of examples of this, from the two new Jobs for Nature programmes supported by Mana Takata, to the Waiwhakaata Cultural Values Statement developed in partnership by mana whenua representatives and the Mana Taiao team, to the opening of the first block of the George Street development that is embedding Kāi Tahu stories and values into the heart of Ōtepoti.

At the Board level, my fellow directors and I have been refining our processes to ensure that we can operate efficiently and effectively. This has involved reformatting the agenda of our six-weekly hui so that we have the opportunity to take a deeper dive into each pou on a rotating basis, as well as making time for biannual sessions focused on the strategic direction of Aukaha.

We recently welcomed Mike Collins to the Aukaha Board, meaning that we now have two independent directors alongside those appointed by kā papatipu rūnaka. Mike is an excellent addition to the Board, with his skills as a strategic thinker and experience in business, risk management and people and culture enablement.

This is the first quarterly pānui that I have co-authored with Caron Solomon-Ward, who is very ably carrying out the role of Chief Executive while Rachel is on sabbatical. Aukaha is extremely fortunate to have her institutional knowledge and leadership skills to navigate our path until Rachel returns in March 2025.

Nā Edward Ellison

# Mana Takata



## Driving whānau success

The Mana Takata team was proud to share a range of highlights in this year's annual report. Our focus continues to be on providing a range of opportunities and programmes that support whānau across the full spectrum of wellbeing, and this story really encapsulates that. Khobi Pere was initially referred to Mana Takata for support obtaining his full driver licence and getting into employment.



Our team supported Khobi with two mentor drives to help build his confidence and prepare him for the experiences he might encounter during a driving test. He went on to sit his full licence and passed with no issues.

When it came to the employment side of things, Khobi was interested in pursuing a trade but wasn't sure which one. After trying a few different roles through a temp agency, he decided he'd like to become an electrician. We supported his application for the He Toki Electrical Course at Te Pukenga and he commenced his studies in February of this year.

Khobi was finding it difficult to cover his living costs while studying, so we sat down with him to create a plan. He is now attending his course three days a week and working with an electrical company two days a week. This arrangement means he can continue his study, make some money and gain valuable experience in his chosen field. Even better, he'll move straight into an apprenticeship with the same company when he completes He Toki.

# Mana Ahurea



## Tāhuna Streetscapes

Mana Ahurea saw a number of projects reach completion during the past financial year, including Tāhuna Streetscapes. We were brought on board in 2020 when Queenstown Lakes District Council received funding for shovel ready projects as part of the Government's COVID-19 response, and embarked on a project to upgrade the town centre of Tāhuna Queenstown. The upgraded streets celebrate a combination of values identified as relevant for Tāhuna including ahi hā (ancestral connection and ongoing identity) and pukumahi (industry, resilience and perseverance).

In particular, the design features share the story of Tāhuna as a place to gather and mine precious stones, notably pounamu and gold. The pounamu narrative is woven through design elements along Rees Street, combining pounamu inlays with green granite paving and green light poles. Meanwhile, the whero (gold) narrative features on Beach Street with golden granite paving, gold light poles and bronze inlays. At the crossroads of these streets, paving stones in green and gold are laid out in a tāniko pattern that represents the intersection of these two industries. Kōwhaiwhai patterns on the light poles represent mōkihi, the mode of transport used to traverse lakes and rivers. Stone stools and benches are dotted throughout the streets, referencing the site as a place of rest and recuperation, while retaining walls on Brecon Street reference ahi kā and the narrative of Hākitekura, the original name for Ben Lomond.

The design and artwork for Tāhuna Streetscapes was a collaboration between Kāi Tahu artists James York (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Waitaha, Rapuwai), Neil Pardington (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Kāti Waewae) and Simon Kaan (Kāi Tahu), who is also the creative lead for Mana Ahurea.

It is significant to see Kāi Tahu narratives visible in an area that is frequented by international visitors, ensuring that Kāi Tahu identity is recognised and acknowledged in a way that has been lacking for many years. However, the true motivator for our team is the opportunity for current and future generations of Kāi Tahu whānau to see their stories and history embedded into the places that were so important to their tipuna.





## James York (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Waitaha, Rapuwai) Feature Artist

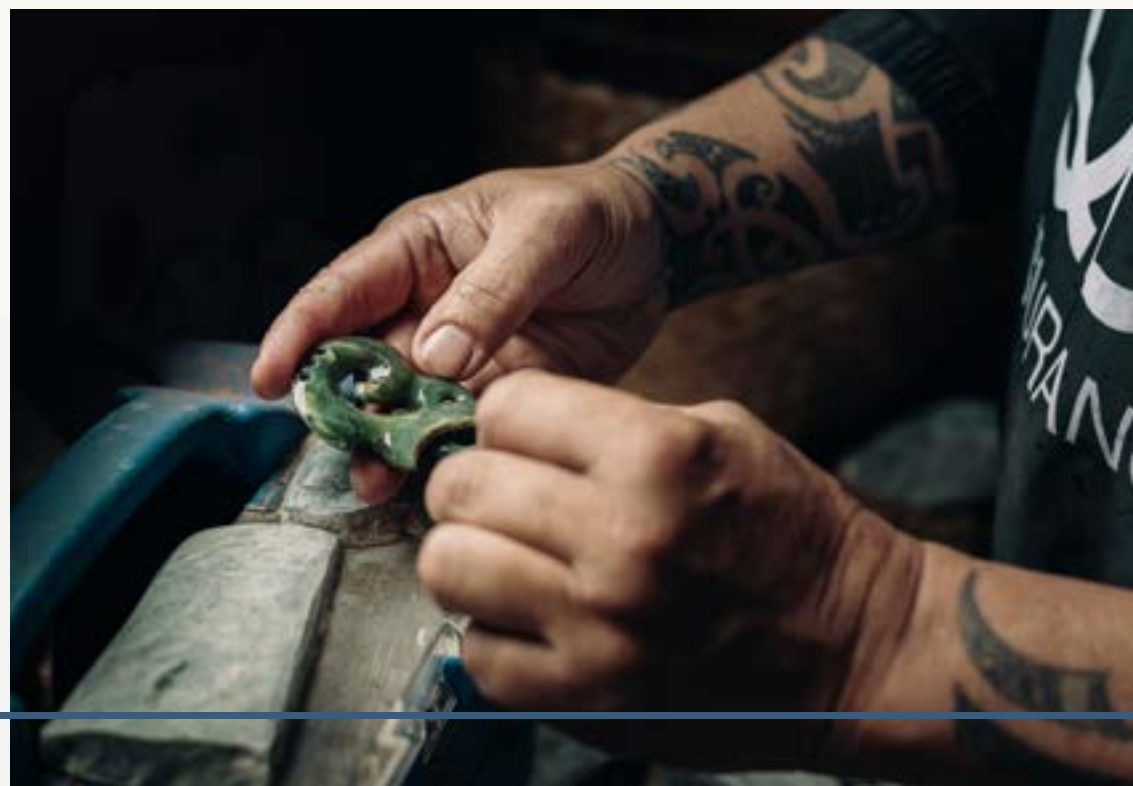
Over the past few years, we have been fortunate to draw on the expertise of artist James York for a number of our projects in the Tāhuna Queenstown area. With more than 30 years' experience in toi Māori, as well as strong whakapapa links to the region, James has made an invaluable contribution to increasing the visibility of Kāi Tahu culture and identity.

"In the past, we haven't had much of a visual impact on the landscape, and it's been an aspiration of mine to see that change and to carve out a space for our stories," James says. "Working with Aukaha has been a great opportunity to get more exposure and tell our stories."

For James, highlights have included working on designs for the Ballarat Street and gondola retaining walls as well as the brickwork for the Tāhuna Streetscapes

project. Collaborating with other artists and designers has provided an opportunity to explore different skills and mediums. "It was an adjustment, coming from working by myself for so many years, and there were some moments where we had to compromise," he says. "But mostly it's been a learning experience, and it's been quite enjoyable to see the projects come to fruition, sometimes months or years after the design work was completed."

When Aukaha first approached James about working with us, he was incredibly busy with his own work and wasn't sure how he would fit it all in. "At the end of the day though, this mahi is bigger than just one person and I felt a responsibility to be part of it," he says. "We're leaving marks for our next generations and we want the kōrero to be on point."



# Mana Taiao

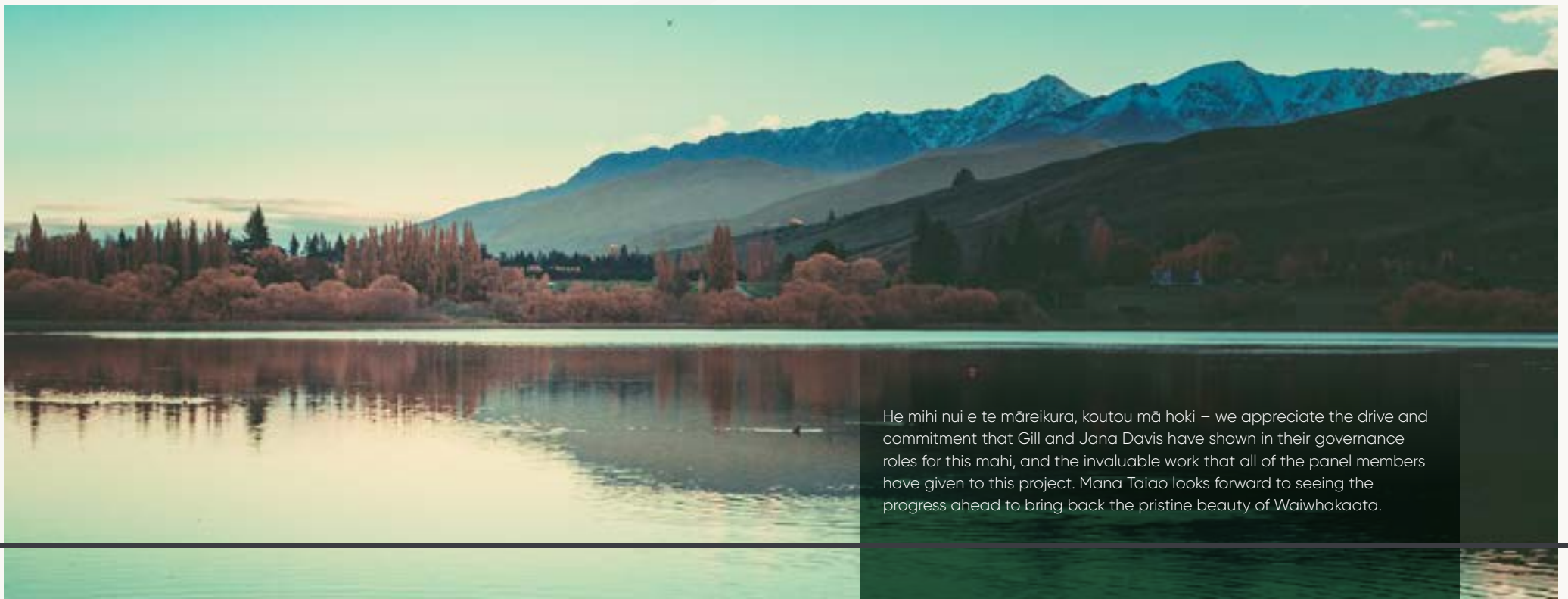


In June 2023, we completed work on a Cultural Values Statement for Waiwhakaata (Lake Hayes) in Central Otago. Waiwhakaata, or the mirror lake, was once known for its reflective qualities, its waters so clear that they reflected the surrounding landscape. Unfortunately, human activities and inadequate consenting processes have left the once pristine waters polluted and degraded. The Cultural Values Statement was presented to Otago Regional Council (ORC) on behalf of Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki, Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou and Hokonui Rūnanga, and acts as a wero for the restoration of the mana and mauri of the lake. Below we share the thoughts of Gill Hopkins, one of the mana whenua representatives we have been proud to support.

*Although Waiwhakaata is only a small lake, it is incredibly important to my whānau and I'm passionate about making a difference. I live at the lake, and I want my kids to be able to enjoy their surroundings. At the moment they can't even swim in the lake at times due to its degraded condition, which is just wrong. As kaitiaki it is our responsibility to leave our surroundings in a better state than we received them – we do not own the land or its resources. We are simply caretakers who need to pass it on to our future generations to enjoy – for us and our children after us. I would be embarrassed to have my tipuna see the lake in its current state. They called it the mirrored lake, which it certainly isn't now. It would break their hearts.*

*I couldn't sit back and do nothing – I felt I needed to be part of the solution. Others are working hard to turn things around and it only feels right that I do my part. I have had a lot to learn around Otago Regional Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council and consent conditions, as well as our own Kāi Tahu history and the significance of this region for our iwi. Working with Aukaha has been amazing, supporting me every step of the way and sharing their knowledge and expertise. It was great to feel part of a team, working together to achieve a shared outcome.*

*I am really proud of the Cultural Values Statement. It is a document that will be so valuable to this mahi – it has weight, it holds others to account, and it weaves through our story. It is a valuable resource, not something that will be put in a drawer and forgotten. Although Waiwhakaata is a small lake, I can see this being part of something bigger for Whakatipu and all its lakes.*



He mihi nui e te māreikura, koutou mā hoki – we appreciate the drive and commitment that Gill and Jana Davis have shown in their governance roles for this mahi, and the invaluable work that all of the panel members have given to this project. Mana Taiao looks forward to seeing the progress ahead to bring back the pristine beauty of Waiwhakaata.

# Mana Aukaha



Working across the organisation means that our team has to be agile and responsive, juggling multiple projects and maintaining strong relationships with kaimahi, directors and mana whenua. Our Kaiāwhina Tāhūhū/Executive Administrator Kaitlyn Mulholland (front centre) has proven herself an expert juggler since she joined the team in August 2021, and we are proud to profile her in this year's annual report.

*I made the decision to join the Aukaha team because I was seeking more meaningful work that would allow me to use my skills to contribute to a bigger purpose. I love the underlying values of Aukaha and fact it has given me the opportunity to be part of creating positive outcomes and growing the cultural footprint of our shareholding takiwā.*

*In my role I provide high-level administrative services within Mana Aukaha, to the Chief Executive and the Board of Directors. My duties include board secretary, executive assistant, recruitment and HR, payroll, event management and health & safety, as well as supporting the Kaiwhakahaere of Mana Aukaha as her 2IC. As Aukaha continues to grow at a fast pace, our systems and processes are constantly changing, and we have to adapt our way of working to keep up with this. This can be a challenge, but it is satisfying to grow my skills and meet the demand of the organisation.*



*I had never worked at a kaupapa Māori organisation before and I was nervous that I wouldn't have the cultural capabilities. However, I was eager to learn. Working at Aukaha has built my confidence and courage and I am constantly learning little bits and pieces of te reo Māori and tikanga. Being exposed to the work of Aukaha has sparked an interest in the history and culture of Kāi Tahu, and a determination to see their aspirations achieved. I am incredibly grateful for the safe and welcoming environment that has allowed me to learn and grow in this space.*

*I love working alongside our kaimahi, leadership team, directors and mana whenua. Everyone is so passionate about the work that they do and it is rewarding to see the positive impact that Aukaha has, through the support and services offered to whānau, to the projects that enhance the cultural footprint of Kāi Tahu. It is especially rewarding to see the shift in the community, as people want to embrace te ao Māori. I am looking forward to continuing to grow in my role and be part of the journey that Aukaha is on.*



# **Aukaha Pānui**

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