

AUKAHA

ANNUAL REPORT 2025–2026



Mihi

Ko te auahi tērā e tārewa mai nei
He tohu takata, he ohu, he ihu oneone
Ko te waihotaka tērā mā tātou
Kia rere ai te auora
Kia tautoro te aumoana
Mā wai, mā te huhua mokopuna,
mā tātou anō
Kia aua tonu atu
Me he rauawa o te waka
Kia aukaha e
Kei kā haumī, ka mata e kite ana
Kā kaipupuri o te kupu o Tahu,
o Hotu Māmoe, o Rākaihautū
Koutou e pari ihu ana kia eke tātou
Kā tika

Contents

Introducing Aukaha
Ko wai mātau? Who are we? 4
Ō mātau whāika Our aims 5
Ā mātau mahi What we do 6
Ō mātau tākata Our people 7
Rakatirataka o mana whenua Drawing on mana whenua expertise 9
Kā kaitautoko i a mātau mahi Funder and partners 10
Tō mātau pōari Aukaha Board of Directors 12
He karere nā te Tiamana Message from the Chair 14
He karere nā te Kaihautū Message from the Chief Executive 15

Mana Taiao **16**
Tō mātau tira | Our team 17
Our year in review 18
Advocacy for Kimiākau awa | Shotover Wastewater Treatment Plant 18
Shaping Otago's future | Resource management reform & regional spatial planning 19
Mapping climate risk | The Otago Climate Story: Ki Uta Ki Tai 20
Supporting mana whenua aspirations | Integrated Catchment Management Programme 22
Te Au Roa o Te Rakihouia | Southeast Marine Protection programme 23
Growth, infrastructure and land use pressures | Consent applications 24
Embedding Kāi Tahu values | Fast-track consents 25
Fast-track consents for solar farms in Te Manahuna 26

Mana Takata **28**
Tō mātau tira | Our team 29
Our year in review 30
Healthy Homes, Strong Whānau 31
Employment & Training 32
Conservation Mahi 34
Looking ahead 35

Mana Ahurea **36**
Tō mātau tira | Our team 37
Our year in review 38
Projects types and timeline 40
Aonui 42
Ōtepoti 44
Te Whata o Kaituna 46
Mahika Kai Mahika Toi, Forrester Gallery 48
Level Two, Dunedin Civic Centre 50
Dunedin Airport 51

Mana Aukaha **52**
Tō mātau tira | Our team 53
Our year in review 54
Aukaha insights engagement survey 55

He ripoata pūroko putea Summary Financial Report **56**



Te Rūnanga o Waihao


Te Rūnanga o Moeraki


Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki


Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou


Hokonui Rūnaka

Ko wai mātau?
Who are we?

Aukaha is a charitable consultancy delivering environmental, whānau, and cultural services and outcomes across the takiwā of our five papatipu rūnaka shareholders: Te Rūnanga o Waihao, Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki, Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou and Hokonui Rūnaka. Empowered by their mandate, Aukaha helps to facilitate, advocate and champion our people and places.

Kia kaha, au kaha

Unite and bind together

Our name is derived from a traditional Kāi Tahu chant, recited by our tīpuna as they tightened the lashings of their waka before setting out on a journey. This name, provided by mana whenua, represents our role in strengthening the relationships of mana whenua with local and central government, sector partners and businesses across the takiwā.

Ō mātau whāika
Our aims

The work of Aukaha is guided by the values and vision as set out by the Aukaha Board of Directors.

The Board is taking a careful and considered approach to developing Aukaha's next strategic plan. Meanwhile, the strength of our 2022–2025 Strategy means it continues to guide our work as we navigate changes across leadership, executive and governance, and reset the organisation so it is well positioned to respond to future opportunities and challenges from a strong and stable foundation.

Vision

Papatipu rūnaka ki Aukaha and hapū achieve their aspirations and exercise their rakatirataka through the ability of Aukaha to facilitate, advocate and champion for their people and rohe.

Mission

Aukaha works on behalf of mana whenua across their rohe, providing pathways to a better future for Kāi Tahu, for iwi Māori and for our wider communities. We ensure mana whenua values are appropriately and authentically woven through the cultural, economic, social and environmental fabric of their takiwā.

Values

Rakatirataka

We act with integrity, responsibility and authority reflective of the mana whenua of the takiwā in which we work.

Whanaukataka

We are inclusive of rūnaka, whānau, each other, stakeholders, partners and clients.

Manaakitaka

We work to build the capacity of ourselves and of our rūnaka, whānau and hapū. We support our partners, clients and stakeholders.

Kotahitaka

We work together – our pou and board; and with rūnaka, whānau, partners, stakeholders and clients. Through this we maximise our collective strengths and achieve hapū aspirations.

Mōhiotaka

We are responsive and communicative. We value the knowledge system within which we work and actively seek to expand and enhance it.

Auahataka

We are innovative. We seek to test our thinking, develop new ideas, generate new knowledge and find new ways of working.

Tautiakitaka

We operate with prudence and with high regard to the wider implications of our actions within financial, social, cultural and environmental contexts.

Ā mātau mahi
What we do

Our work is guided by three pou – Mana Taiao, Mana Takata and Mana Ahurea, with the support of a fourth pou, Mana Aukaha, along with our communications team, Mana Whakapā.

Mana Taiao

Environmental & Resource Management
Supporting rūnaka aspirations in natural and urban environments through policy and planning, resource consents and cultural impact assessments.

Mana Takata

Housing & Social Services
Enabling practical and positive choices for individuals, whānau and communities through services and programmes related to healthy homes, and employment and training outcomes across Otago.

Mana Ahurea

Embedding Mana Whenua Stories & Values
Working with mana whenua to ensure Te Ara Tapuae o Kāi Tahu – The Footsteps of Kāi Tahu – are visible across our region through cultural design integration, narratives and translations.

Mana Aukaha

Business Support Services
Supporting the work of Aukaha through internal system management with a focus on quality improvement and business development that embeds Kāi Tahu values, ensures compliance and drives best practice.

Ō mātau tākata
Our people

This overview of our organisation includes our shareholders (kā papatipu rūnaka), board of directors, mana whenua panels nominated by each rūnaka to advise Aukaha on various projects, our chief executive, the four pou of Aukaha, and our external partners.

Organisational overview

Kā Papatipu Rūnaka – Shareholders

Te Rūnanga o Waihao | Te Rūnanga o Moeraki | Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki | Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou | Hokonui Rūnaka

Aukaha Board of Directors

Juliette Stevenson (Waihao) | Trevor McGlinchey (Moeraki) | Shane Ellison (Puketeraki) | Brett Ellison (Ōtākou) | Terry Nicholas (Hokonui) | Mike Collins (Independent) | TBC (Independent)

Aukaha – Chief Executive

Mana Aukaha – Business Support Service

Mana Taiao
Environment & resource management

Mana Takata
Housing & social services

Mana Ahurea
Embedding mana whenua stories & values

Mana Whenua & advisors
Mandated mana whenua representatives, cultural advisors, cultural leads

Funders, partners & clients
Contractors, partners, stakeholders, professional services



Te Rūnanga o Moeraki Chair Justin Tipa, and Tumai Cassidy (Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou) at the whakawātea for Ōtepoti - the new home to ACC.

Rakatirataka o mana whenua

Drawing on mana whenua expertise

The work of Aukaha is not possible without the rakatirataka of mana whenua who provide expertise, guidance and advice across all aspects of our mahi – services to our iwi that are freely given in addition to the regular work those people usually do.

Whether it be providing evidence at hearings on behalf of their hapū, writing and presenting submissions to hearings, or providing Kāi Tahu cultural and historical expertise – their time, knowledge and understanding of Kāi Tahu values and knowledge is immeasurable.

All members of mana whenua panels are mandated by their rūnaka to represent them in this work.

Mana whenua experts and advisors

Wai Māori Panel

Brendan Flack, Edward Ellison, Gail Tipa, Vin Smith

Resource Management & Consents Panel

Te Rūnanga o Waihao – Melissa Slatter

Te Rūnanga o Moeraki – David Higgins, Gail Tipa, Trevor McGlinchey

Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki – Emma Davidson

Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou – Donna Matahaere-Atariki, Edward Ellison, Tūmai Cassidy

Hokonui Rūnaka – Louise Dennison, Mollie Lyders

Specific Mana Taiao projects

Dr Alayna Rā, Brendon Flack, Brett Ellison, David Higgins, Edward Ellison, Hoani Langsbury, Katharina Ruckstuhl, Kitty Brown, Marlene McDonald, Mollie Lyders, Dr Megan Potiki, Paulette Tamati-Elliffe, Rachel Wesley, Shane Ellison

Mana Ahurea Art And Design Panel

Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou – Dr Megan Potiki, Paulette Tamati-Elliffe, Rachel Wesley

Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki – Takiwai Russell-Camp, Tāwini White, Waiariki Taiapa-Parata

Te Rūnanga o Moeraki – Kare Tipa

Dunedin Hospital Panel

Dr Justine Camp, Dr Katharina Ruckstuhl, Matapura Ellison, Dr Megan Potiki, Paulette Tamati-Elliffe

Rūnaka mandated representatives in specific Mana Ahurea projects

David Higgins, Edward Ellison, Justin Tipa, Dr Katharina Ruckstuhl, Matapura Ellison, Dr Megan Potiki, Paulette Tamati-Elliffe

Panel / Rūnaka mandated contractors in specific projects and other services

Aiden Geraghty, Al Bell, Alice Karetai, Ana Faau, Andre Te Hira, Connagh Wesley, Dana Te Kanawa, Ephraim Russell, Fayne Robinson, Claire Kaahu White, Connor Ropata, Huriana Kopeke-Te Aho, James Bellamy, James York, Dr Justine Camp, Kahu Kaan, Kate Stevens West, Keri Whaitiri, Mary McLaughlin, Kirsten Parkinson, Komene Cassidy, Lonnie Hutchison, Madison Kelly, Megan Brady, Miriama Ranui, Moewai Marsh, Michel Tuffery, Morgan Darlison, Mya Morrison-Middleton, Priscilla Cowie, Rachel Wesley, Rauhina Kohuwai-Banks, Riani Iti-Metuatai, Rīpeka Potiki, Ross Hemera, Sarah Bennett, Shelley Darren, Steve Solomon, Te Atarau Cassidy, Tui Johnson, Turumeke Harrington, te Whānau o Roka Hurihia Ngarimu-Cameron MNZM, Xoë Hall, Zhivannah Cole

Kā kaitautoko i a mātau mahi
Our funders and partners

We are proud to work with organisations who share our vision and support our work across the Otago and South Canterbury takiwā. These relationships make it possible for us to undertake our mahi and provide a better future for Kāi Tahu, iwi Māori and for our wider communities.

Iwi
Ngāi Tahu Property
Ngāi Tahu Tourism
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

Regional Environmental Entities
Aoraki Environmental Consultancy
Te Ao Mārama

Local Government
Central Otago District Council
Clutha District Council
Environment Canterbury
Kaunihera-a-rohe o Ōtepoti | Dunedin City Council
Mackenzie District Council
Otago Regional Council
Waimate District Council
Waitaki District Council
Queenstown Lakes District Council

Central Government
Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority (EECA)
Hīkina Whakatutuki | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa | New Zealand Police
Te Aka Whai Ora
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development
Te Papa Atawhai | Department of Conservation
Te Puni Kōkiri
Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | Ministry of Education
Te Whatu Ora
Waka Kotahi

Industry
Art Fetiche
Baker Garden Architects
BECA Group
Boffa Miskell
Brendon Gordon Architects
Business South
CC Design
Calder Stewart
Community Energy Network
Connor Jones Group
Cook Brothers Construction
CPB Contractors
DLB Construction & Signage
Downer Group NZ
Dunedin Airport
Dunedin Curtain Bank
Dwelling Architectural Design
Farra Engineering
Fisher Windows Otago
Flamingo Scooters
Fulton Hogan
Gunn Builders
GHD NZ
Icon Construction
Isaac Construction
Isabella Harrex Photography
Jasmax
Kā Huanui a Tāhuna Alliance
Kerr Ritchie Architects
Laser Electrical Dunedin
Laser Plumbing Dunedin Central
McCoy Wixon Architects
Mike Greer Developments
Naylor Love Dunedin
New Build Otago
New Zealand Automobile Association
Otago Housing Alliance
Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago
Pouhere Taonga | Heritage New Zealand
Queenstown Airport
Reframed Media
Rubix
St Hilda's Collegiate School
Salmond College
Speedy Signs
Stella Recruitment
Te Kura Matatini ki Ōtāgo | Otago Polytechnic
Te Tauraki
Tokona Te Raki
Team Architects
Warren & Mahoney Architects
Zeal Steel



Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou Chair Paulette Tamati-Elliffe guides the whakawātea for the completion of the Dunedin Airport. expansion.


From left: Nadia Wesley-Smith, Edward Ellison and Kitty Brown (Ōtākou) at the whakawātea for the tohu whenua at Te Umu Kurī (Wellers Rock). The Dunedin City Council installed ten tohu whenua, or cultural markers, at locations along Te Aka Ōtākou, the walking and cycling path that follows Otago Harbour's edge from Portobello to Port Chalmers.

To mātau Pōari
Aukaha Board of Directors



Trevor McGlinchey
Te Rūnanga o Moeraki; Chair

Trevor (Kāi Tahu, Te Ātiawa, Scots, Irish) is currently Chief Executive of Te Rūnanga o Moeraki and has a long history of serving his Moeraki whānau. He is passionate about the roles and responsibilities of mana whenua and how their expression creates greater wellbeing for all.

Trevor has been involved in the establishment of large community-based organisations that have made significant contributions to the whānau they have engaged with. He has worked in senior roles in the Office of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, public service, tertiary education, and national advocacy.

An experienced governor, Trevor has served on the boards of social service providers, advocacy sector organisations and commercial entities. He has been a ministerial appointee on several national taskforces including the Welfare Expert Advisory Group.



Juliette Stevenson
Te Rūnanga o Waihao

Juliette is of Kāi Tahu descent, with whakapapa connections to Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe and Kāti Huirapa, and strong ties to Te Rūnanga o Waihao. Raised around the marae and immersed in rūnaka life from an early age, she developed a strong sense of identity, belonging and service to her community.

Since beginning her service to Waihao in her mid-twenties, Juliette has held a range of leadership roles, including positions on the Executive Committee, Waihao Holdings Company, and as Hauora Lead. In November 2016 she was appointed Alternate Waihao Representative to Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, and became the Waihao Representative in February 2026.

A registered nurse with more than 20 years' experience, Juliette has worked across health and social services in frontline and management roles, with a strong commitment to whānau wellbeing and mana-enhancing practice. Juliette brings a strengths-based, people-centred approach to leadership, combining cultural values with practical experience to improve outcomes for whānau and communities.

Juliette lives in Te Tihi o Maru and is actively involved in community governance. She serves on various boards and committees, and is involved with several sporting organisations across the region.



Brett Ellison
Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou

Brett (Kāi Tahu, Te Ātiawa) is an experienced executive across the iwi commercial sector. He has spent more than ten years in senior roles across Ngāi Tahu Holdings Group and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu focusing on the seafood and property sectors as well as Crown relationships and Settlement rights. Brett is an investment manager with Koau Capital Partners which supports the investment activity of various iwi and hapū across Aotearoa.

Born and bred at Ōtākou, and a graduate (BA, MA) of the University of Otago, Brett is Te Rūnanga o Ngai Tahu representative for Ōtākou, as well as chairing Te Rūnaka Ōtākou Ltd. He is also a director on Ka Taki Te Umere Ltd and Harbour Fish Ltd



Terry Nicholas
Hokonui Rūnaka

Terry (Hokonui-Kāi Tahu) is the manager of Hokonui Rūnaka and programme director of Murihiku Regeneration. Hokonui representative for Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu since January 1999, he is also currently chair of Reimagining Mataura, a programme committed to achieving rūnaka aspirations for the Mataura awa, its catchment and surrounding communities.

Terry is also a member of the Southland Just Transition oversight group, which represents the rights and interests of Kāi Tahu whānau and hapū.

Driven to build succession out of settlement, Terry works tirelessly to protect and enhance the spiritual, cultural, organisational, educational, health and economic aspirations of Hokonui Rūnanga and Murihiku.

Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei.



Shane Ellison
Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki

Shane (Kāi Tahu, Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Mutunga) has more than 25 years global experience in senior leadership roles across transport and infrastructure. He is currently Infrastructure and Resources Director at Koau Capital Partners, which delivers investment services to Māori commercial entities.

Shane's other directorship roles include Northway Hold LP (Independent Chair), Waipā Networks and Dunedin City Holdings. Prior to joining Koau, Shane was chief executive officer at Auckland Transport (2017–2022).



Mike Collins
Independent

Mike is the inaugural chief executive of Business South following the merger of the Otago Chamber of Commerce and the Otago Southland Employers' Association. He is also a director of Mercy Hospital Dunedin and Business New Zealand, as well as community advisor to Otago Polytechnic. A strategic thinker with expertise in transformational change and risk management, Mike is passionate about creating dynamic working environments, enabling both people and culture, and building business connections across Otago and Murihiku.

Mike is an independent director of Aukaha. His previous roles include executive director of People, Culture and Technology at the Southern District Health Board, and director of the Learning Environment and Service Excellence divisions at Otago Polytechnic.

The independent director position remained vacant at the time of publication.

He karere nā te Tiamana
Message from the Chair



The 2025/26 financial year was pivotal for Aukaha, marked by significant change across the environmental, regulatory and funding sectors.

Proposed reforms to the Resource Management Act, the introduction of fast-track consenting processes, and wider structural changes meant our operating environment was constantly shifting. At times it felt as though we were navigating through thick fog, making it difficult to fully understand the scale and implications of the changes ahead. While the full impact of these developments was not always clear, they also presented an opportunity for us to reflect on how we position ourselves in order to deliver on the aspirations for shareholder papatipu rūnaka and communities into the future.

Throughout the year, the Board remained focused on ensuring Aukaha was well placed to respond. Our priority has been to strengthen the organisation's resilience, agility and sustainability, providing a solid foundation from which to move ahead and secure future opportunities.

An important step in that journey was the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive. In the seven months prior, Mana Takata General Manager Chris Rosenbrock accepted the role of Interim Chief Executive, stepping up to provide a steady hand while the Board progressed a permanent appointment. The Board is appreciative of Chris's commitment to Aukaha and his ongoing contribution to the organisation's success.

In November 2025, we were pleased to appoint Cory Neale as Chief Executive. Cory brings extensive leadership experience within iwi and complex organisational environments, and critical skills to guide Aukaha through a period of transformation.

The uncertainty facing Aukaha was also reflected in our shareholder community, who turned out in force at our shareholders' hui in Moeraki in January, and demonstrated a keen interest in how Aukaha will navigate these changing times. This hui also presented an invaluable opportunity for Cory to meet directly with most shareholder rūnaka to better understand their aspirations and priorities, in turn helping inform our future direction and mandate.

We continue to see significant change across Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu as it responds to its Mo Kā Uri strategy. As a result, there is an expectation that regional entities such as Aukaha will become more self-reliant and sustainable.

The year also brought changes around the Board table. In May 2026, Phil Broughton resigned after seven years of dedicated service including significant contributions across finance and governance. I thank him for his valued service. We welcome Shane Ellison, former independent Board director, as the new representative for Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki. The independent director role has yet to be filled.

Over the past seven months, Cory and the leadership team have undertaken a comprehensive review of the organisation – identifying strengths, challenges and opportunities for improvement. This work lays the foundation for an organisational reset and the development of a longer-term strategy that will better position Aukaha to deliver on the aspirations of shareholder rūnaka.

While the year was marked by uncertainty, it has also created an opportunity for renewal – renewal that we can achieve with strong leadership and an agile team. I would like to mihi to the kaimahi of Aukaha, shareholding rūnaka and our wider whānau for their continued support and commitment.

Nāku nei, nā

Trevor McGlinchey
Aukaha Chair

He karere nā te Kaihautū
Message from the Chief Executive



Tēnā koutou,

It is my pleasure to present to you my first chief executive report for the Aukaha Annual Report 2025-2026.

Since stepping into the role in November 2025, I have been heartened by the breadth and impact of Aukaha's mahi in service of our papatipu Rūnaka shareholders. This report demonstrates the excellence of this work, and the significant contribution our kaimahi make on behalf of our shareholders.

My first priority coming into this role was to understand Aukaha: our purpose, our people, the environment in which we operate, and the opportunities and challenges ahead. As the 2022–2025 Strategy makes way for a new one, it is clear that setting a direction for the next four years requires us to strengthen our foundations, reaffirm our mandate, and ensure Aukaha is ready for the future.

Over the past seven months we have undertaken a comprehensive review of the organisation – its operation, purpose, and the value it delivers for papatipu rūnaka. Central to this has been listening carefully to our shareholders, Board, kaimahi, clients and partners, and asking what Aukaha can do to best support the aspirations of our shareholder rūnaka.

An engagement survey we conducted in December reinforced the enduring importance of our work, with 83 per cent of rūnaka respondents describing Aukaha as 'very important'. The survey results also affirmed the strength of Aukaha's relationships with long-standing clients, and with staff – 100 per cent of kaimahi responded that they were proud to work for Aukaha. Other feedback clearly highlighted areas for improvement, including stakeholder communication and engagement, transparency and clarity of purpose, accountability, earlier involvement in decision-making, and greater consistency in delivery.

This feedback provides clear direction for the way forward. Our initial areas of focus have been reviewing our operating model, financial sustainability, accountability, and the internal systems that support delivery. This work is helping foster a culture that brings together our values, kaupapa and commercial awareness.

A critical priority has been reaffirming our mandate with shareholder rūnaka. By achieving greater clarity between shareholders, governance and management, we can strengthen alignment, secure trust, and ensure Aukaha is delivering the utmost value.

This work extends to our relationships with councils and other key partners, in order for Aukaha to be a trusted delivery entity supporting – rather than substituting – mana-to-mana relationships. This is about more than strengthening existing partnerships: it offers opportunities for innovation, collaboration and sustainable growth.

Our organisational reset is underway and gaining momentum. In the year ahead we will further strengthen our foundations, improve financial performance, develop our people and capability, and ensure Aukaha is relevant, reliable and responsive to the needs of papatipu rūnaka.

My thanks to the Aukaha Board of Directors for their leadership, challenge and commitment throughout this period. I would also like to acknowledge Phil Broughton for his guidance and contribution during his tenure on the Aukaha Board, and mihi to Shane Ellison on his appointment as representative for Puketeraki.

I would also like to acknowledge Chris Rosenbrock for serving as Interim Chief Executive. His leadership and support have proven invaluable through this transitional period, as has the contribution of Dr Alayna Rā whose mahi across Mana Taiao and Mana Ahurea has helped us maintain momentum. I also warmly welcome Joao Machado, who has joined Aukaha from WSP to lead Mana Taiao and Mana Ahurea and is already making a positive contribution.

To all Aukaha kaimahi: you have navigated a period of significant change and uncertainty with resilience, professionalism and continued commitment to the aspirations of our shareholder rūnaka. The mahi reflected throughout this annual report is because of your dedication, expertise and passion for the Aukaha kaupapa. We face the year ahead with greater clarity about Aukaha's purpose, foundations and value for papatipu rūnaka. There is still work to do, but we can now be more confident in the direction we are heading, and our collective strength – Kia kaha, au kaha.

Nāku iti noa, nā

Cory Neale
Chief Executive

Mana Taiao

Tō mātau tira
Our team



From left: Mereana Goodman, Sarah Copeland, Emma Ahlezon, Makareta Wesley-Evans, Korako Edwards, Sandra McIntyre, Manaia Russell, Michael Bathgate, Tim Vial.

Manaia Russell
Kaiāwhina Mana Taiao

Sandra McIntyre
Kaiwhakamahere Tumu/Principal Planner

Michael Bathgate
Kaiwhakamahere Matua/Senior Planner

Tim Vial
Kaiwhakamahere Matua/Senior Planner

Sarah Copeland
Kaiwhakamahere/Planner

Korako Edwards
Kaiārahi Taiao/Environmental Advisor

Makareta Wesley-Evans
Kaimahi Whakaaetaka Taiao/Consents Officer

Mereana Goodman
Kaimahi Whakaaetaka Taiao/
Consents Officer

Emma Ahlezon
Kairuruku/Project Co-ordinator,
Te Mana o Taiari

Jason Arnold
Kaiwhakahaere Kaupapa/
Project Manager, Te Au Roa
o Rakihouia



Jason Arnold

Our year in review

Mana Taiao is instrumental in protecting and advancing Kāi Tahu environmental interests across the takiwā, ensuring mana whenua values, rights and aspirations are reflected in the decisions that shape te taiao for current and future generations.

The year has been marked by the challenges of significant policy reform and reduced consent activity. Despite this, the team has continued its work across a diverse programme of activities – from fast-track resource consents and catchment planning, to climate adaptation, marine protection and resource management reform. In doing so, Mana Taiao has supported the participation of mana whenua and helped ensure Kāi Tahu perspectives remain central to environmental decision-making.

Alongside this work, Mana Taiao began implementing a more sustainable and efficient operating model to strengthen resilience while maintaining high-quality support for rūnaka and partner councils.

Mana Taiao remains committed to delivering measurable improvements in the health and wellbeing of te taiao under the rakatirataka of mana whenua.

Advocacy for Kimiākau awa
Shotover Wastewater Treatment Plant

Around half of the municipal wastewater treatment plants within the area that Aukaha operates discharge treated wastewater to rivers or the sea. Mana Taiao continues to advocate for mana whenua aspirations in its engagement with local councils on solutions that improve the health of te taiao.

One of the significant wastewater issues in the takiwā is the discharge from Queenstown Lakes District Council's Shotover Wastewater Treatment Plant. Since the 1970s, Queenstown's wastewater has been directed to the treatment plant located in the delta of the Kimiākau awa (Shotover River), immediately upstream of its confluence with the Kawarau River.

For much of that time, treated wastewater was discharged directly to the awa. Mana whenua have raised concerns about this discharge for decades, citing the impacts on the mauri of the awa and associated wāhi tapu sites and mahika kai. In 2019, the Council replaced the direct river discharge with a land-based disposal system. However, the system proved unsuccessful, and in March 2025 direct discharge to the Kimiākau resumed while a longer-term solution was pursued. During the last year, Mana Taiao has worked alongside Te Ao Mārama Incorporated and papatipu rūnaka to advocate for a solution that advances a shared, long-term vision for the Queenstown basin – one that protects the mauri of the Kimiākau, the Kawarau and the wider catchment for future generations. Discussions with Queenstown Lakes District Council are ongoing.



Aerial view of the Shotover delta and Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Shaping Otago's future
Resource management reform & regional spatial planning

At a time of significant change in New Zealand's resource management system, Mana Taiao has worked to ensure mana whenua are at the decision-making table, advocating for Kāi Tahu interests and helping shape the planning frameworks that will guide Otago's future.

Mana Taiao played a key role in developing Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu's response to the Environment Select Committee on the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill by advocating for stronger recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, meaningful partnership with iwi, and the protection of arrangements secured through Treaty settlement processes. This submission highlighted concerns that the proposed changes could reduce opportunities for mana whenua to influence environmental decision-making, undermine existing arrangements, and weaken safeguards for te taiao.

Alongside national policy advocacy, Mana Taiao has worked to ensure Kāi Tahu perspectives were embedded in the development of future planning frameworks in Otago. As preparations began for Regional Spatial Plans, staff worked closely with councils across the region to establish governance and work programmes that recognised Treaty settlement mechanisms, cultural values and mana whenua priorities from the outset.

A mana whenua workstream was established to compile existing evidence, policy positions and strategic priorities to assess how they align with, or differ from, the approach to Māori interests signalled in the proposed legislation. Meanwhile, an interim governance group, which includes mandated mana whenua representatives Edward Ellison and Dr Alayna Rā, has been established to help guide this important work and ensure Kāi Tahu perspectives remain integral to the planning process. Mana Taiao will support both workstream and governance activity to ensure outcomes align with mana whenua aspirations.

While similar Regional Spatial Planning processes emerge in Canterbury, progress there remains at an earlier stage. Otago's programme is regarded as the forerunner of collaborative planning between councils and mana whenua, creating opportunities for Kāi Tahu values and aspirations to influence the region's future well before the new resource management system is implemented.

Kaiwhakamahere Tumu Sandra McIntyre and Kaimahi Whakaaetaka Taiao Makareta Wesley-Evans discuss the legislative changes.

Mapping climate risk

The Otago Climate Story: Ki Uta Ki Tai

Kāi Tahu knowledge and perspectives are now embedded in one of Otago's key climate planning resources, helping communities better understand climate risks, their impacts on te taiao, and pathways to resilience.

During the year, Aukaha worked alongside the Otago Regional Council and Boffa Miskell to develop the Otago Climate Story: Ki Uta Ki Tai, a GIS-based StoryMap and series of reports designed to make climate risk and resilience information more accessible to communities across the region.

The project translated findings from the Otago Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment 2021 into locally relevant narratives for Otago's districts while addressing the absence of a Kāi Tahu perspective in the original assessment. Guided by the mana whenua perspective of ki uta ki tai, the StoryMap shows how climate change impacts move through interconnected landscapes, waterways, ecosystems and communities across Otago.

Throughout the StoryMap, water provides a unifying narrative supported by the visual thread of the upturned waka pūrākau – a tohu serving as a metaphor for climate disruption, designed by Alex Gorrie (Kāi Tahu).

Kāi Tahu experts from Otago and Murihiku provided invaluable insights into how seasonality and climate relate to mana whenua cultural practices and whakapapa associations to te taiao, with observations of how changing conditions are affecting waterways, coastal environments, whenua, cultural sites and indigenous species.

The input from these pūkeka (cultural experts) embeds local insight to the regional climate story, adding richness and depth to a narrative about the impacts of climate change.

> *Climate change is having a huge impact on whānau at Moeraki. Of seven urupā in Moeraki, four are right on the high-water mark. Some are being inundated on king tides more often than they used to be, and others are eroding faster than they ever have. This means that kōiwi and caskets are being periodically exposed and falling into the sea.*
>
> *From a tikanga perspective, that area below where they fall becomes a wāhi tapu and we cannot access kai there. A lot of the time it is the most accessible and easiest places to gather kai that become wāhi tapu, which then impinges on our ability to engage in our mahinga kai practices, and by extension, whānau wellbeing."*
>
> *- Justin Tipa, Chair, Te Rūnanga o Moeraki (from The Otago Climate Story: Ki Uta Ki Tai website)*

The tohu (left) was designed by Alex Gorrie (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Waitaha) for the Otago Climate Story. The upturned waka motif is a link to the calamitous storms and ill-fated voyages that led to Te Waipounamu being shaped the way it is.

'Ki uta ki tai' can be translated as 'from the mountains to the sea' and is a concept that recognises the interconnectedness of the natural world – mountains, land, rivers, springs, lakes, lagoons, estuaries and the ocean. Because of this connectivity, each part of the environment should be cared for and managed as a single, integrated system, rather than in isolation.



Dune erosion next to Kettle Park, Dunedin

Supporting mana whenua aspirations

Integrated Catchment Management Programme

A major milestone this year was the completion of the Upper Lakes Catchment Action Plan, an important step in ensuring Kāi Tahu values and mātauraka help shape the future management of Otago's water and land resources.

Mana Taiao continued to support mana whenua participation in the Otago Regional Council's Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) Programme for the Upper Lakes, Taiari and Dunedin Coastal catchments.

In the Taiari catchment, Emma Ahlezon provided leadership as kairuruku (co-ordinator), aligning the efforts of Aukaha, the Department of Conservation and Otago Regional Council. This collaborative approach has strengthened relationships while supporting a more integrated approach to catchment management.

In addition, mana whenua representatives and advisors contributed significant expertise and guidance to the development of catchment plans to ensure they reflected mātauraka Kāi Tahu, community aspirations and values, and prioritised the health of te taiao. Paulette Tamati-Elliffe and Tumai Cassidy have provided input to the Taiari process to improve awareness of the mana whenua relationship with the catchment. Korako Edwards, Brendan Flack, Kitty Brown and Hoani Langsbury are representing Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki and Te Rūnanga o Otākou in the Dunedin Coastal process, which began in May.



Tūmai Cassidy, Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou, provides historical and cultural insights on the Taiari for the Taiari catchment action plan workshop.

Te Au Roa o Te Rakihouia

Southeast Marine Protection programme

A new model of marine protection is now taking shape along the southeast coast of Te Waipounamu, with Kāi Tahu playing a central role in the care, management and future direction of some of the region's most significant marine environments. Te Au Roa o Te Rakihouia came into effect on 1 July 2026 as the first co-managed marine protection programme in Te Waipounamu, establishing mana whenua as partners in the governance and management of five protected marine areas. The programme recognises the rakatirataka and kaitiakitaka of Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki and Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou, helping shape decision-making, conservation priorities and on-the-ground management while supporting the long-term health of the moana.

A team of ten Te Au Roa rangers is leading delivery of the programme made up of eight Kāi Tahu and two Te Papa Atawhai rangers, with a mix of full and part-time roles. Since coming together mid-year, the team has focused on environmental monitoring, undaria removal, compliance activities, and building connections with whānau and local communities.

A key achievement has been the establishment of rūnaka-led Kaitiakitaka Groups, creating the oversight for place-based co-management. Te Tai Ohu has been mandated by Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki; Te Rūnaka o Moeraki has established Hai Pipi; and Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou is close to forming its own rōpū. These groups have developed, or are finalising, outcomes plans that will guide the future work of Te Au Roa rangers and ensure local priorities and aspirations are reflected in marine protection activities.

The programme received its new name, Te Au Roa o Te Rakihouia, earlier in the year and was approved by kā rūnaka across the coastal takiwā. The name refers to the long wake or enduring ocean pathway of Te Rakihouia, son of the great explorer Rākaihautū and the first known person to journey around the South Island coast conveying the inter-generational relationship between Kāi Tahu and the moana.

The five marine reserves along the southeast coast of Te Waipounamu recognise the ecological significance of this marine environment, protecting habitats that support rare seabirds, marine mammals, freshwater fish, migratory waders and unique coastal ecosystems.

Mana whenua narratives have been embedded within Te Au Roa o Te Rakihouia, ensuring the programme reflects both the historical and contemporary relationship between Kāi Tahu and the moana. Written by Rachel Wesley, Claire Kaahu White and Zhivannah Cole, the narratives express the exercise of mana moana, rakatirataka, kaitiakitaka and practices such as rāhui, taiāpure and mātaitai, providing a framework that has shaped the programme's identity.

This work culminated in the development of a visual identity, or tohu, created by Kāi Tahu artist Tui Johnson. The tohu represents the six protected marine areas, with each element incorporating unique identifiers that reflect the distinct values of the individual reserves.

As Kaitiakitaka Groups continue to refine priorities and work programmes, Te Au Roa o Te Rakihouia is creating a lasting framework for co-governance enabling kaitiakitaka and rakatirataka of kā rūnaka, and ensuring the protection of marine ecosystems is guided by both conservation outcomes and Kāi Tahu aspirations for generations to come.



From left: Dr Gaya Gnanalingam (University of Otago Marine Sciences), Daniel Te Raki (Kāi Tahu) and Dr Rory Clifford (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe).

TE AU ROA
O TE RAKIHOUIA

New logo for Te Au Roa o Te Rakihouia, designed by Tui Johnson, (Kāi Tahu).

Growth, infrastructure and land use pressures

Consent applications

Aukaha plays a vital role in ensuring Kāi Tahu values, interests and aspirations are considered early in environmental decision-making processes through engagement with mana whenua representatives, consent applicants, councils and decision-makers. The Mana Taiao team works to identify potential impacts on cultural values across te taiao before projects progress.

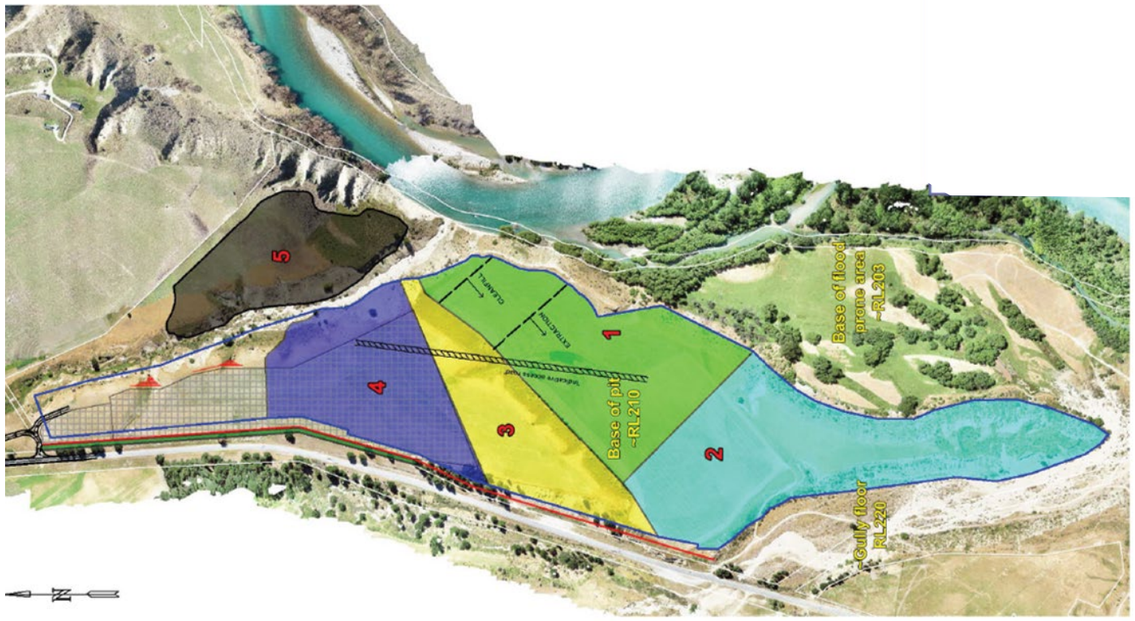
Consenting activity remained strong throughout 2025–2026, with Mana Taiao involved in 208 consent applications across Otago and South Canterbury. The volume and nature of applications reflected ongoing growth and development pressures alongside increasing investment in infrastructure related to climate resilience. This included projects associated with energy supply, transport networks and climate adaptation.

Residential development and new subdivision activity continued to dominate consents, particularly within the Central Otago and Queenstown Lakes districts where ongoing population growth and housing demand are driving the expansion of urban areas. This growth is also generating increased demand for supporting infrastructure including wastewater treatment facilities, electricity networks, transport corridors and other essential services.

Farming activities in South Canterbury also remained an important area of work, particularly land-use consents administered by Environment Canterbury. These applications often involve balancing productive land use with the protection of freshwater, indigenous biodiversity and other values of significance to mana whenua.

Land-use applications associated with quarrying and gold mining were another notable trend. Growing demand for aggregate materials to support infrastructure, roading and residential construction projects has prompted expansion of existing quarries, along with proposals for new quarry developments along the Mata-au.

These proposals require careful consideration, particularly given the fast-paced and continually evolving regulatory environment. Mana Taiao remains focused on ensuring Kāi Tahu values are strongly reflected in any resource management decisions – guided by mana whenua, for mana whenua.



Proposed Fulton Hogan quarry site at Locharburn, next to the Mata-au.

Embedding Kāi Tahu values

Fast-track consents

Mana Taiao has continued to support kā rūnaka to participate effectively in fast-track consent processes for major developments across the takiwā.

A focus of this work is providing planning and technical advice to ensure that mana whenua values are appropriately recognised and addressed through robust consent conditions. This includes advocating for measures that mitigate adverse effects on cultural, environmental and community values, while supporting mana whenua to exercise rakatirataka and kaitiakitaka.

During the year, the team provided advice and support on five significant development proposals, including:

- renewable energy projects including Stage 2 of the Mahinerangi Wind Farm and proposed solar farm developments in Te Manahuna
- mining proposals – OceanaGold's operations at Macraes in East Otago, and the Matakanui Gold (Bendigo–Ophir) Project in Central Otago
- the proposed Southern Link inland port development near Mosgiel.



Proposed solar farm location on Haldon Station, Te Manahuna.

Fast-track consents for solar farms in Te Manahuna

High sunshine hours, flat terrain and proximity to transmission lines make Te Manahuna ideally suited for the development of solar farms. Three are proposed for development under the fast-track consent process: Haldon Solar Farm (Lodestone Energy), Point Solar Farm (Far North Solar) and Twizel Solar Farm (Nova Energy). If built, these solar farms collectively would cover approximately 1,500 hectares with 1.5 million photovoltaic panels and generate renewable energy that could power 220,000 households.

Aukaha has worked with Aoraki Environmental Consultancy and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu to support the engagement of Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Te Rūnanga o Waihao and Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua (the Waitaki Rūnaka) in the fast-track process. This engagement has included site visits, hui, and the sharing of information and cultural perspectives. In the case of Nova Energy and Lodestone Energy, transparent and early engagement has provided opportunities to meaningfully shape projects and manage cultural impacts.

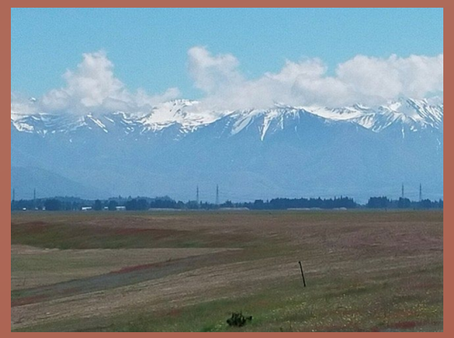
The Waitaki Catchment holds immense significance for the Waitaki Rūnaka and wider Kāi Tahu, acting as a unifying awa for all iwi members. As kaitiaki of the Waitaki awa, the Waitaki Rūnaka supported the reconsenting of the Waitaki Hydro Scheme and the recent Lake Pūkaki fast-track consent application as a gesture of manaakitaka – enabling security of electricity supply for the benefit of New Zealand.

Further development of renewable energy within Te Manahuna raises concerns regarding the cumulative cultural impacts of solar farms, and the impacts on the integrity of the cultural redress returned through the Kāi Tahu settlement. This includes the impacts on Te Ao Mārama (Lake Benmore), the Haldon Arm nohoaka site, and the impacts on taoka species including Kakī (Black Stilt).

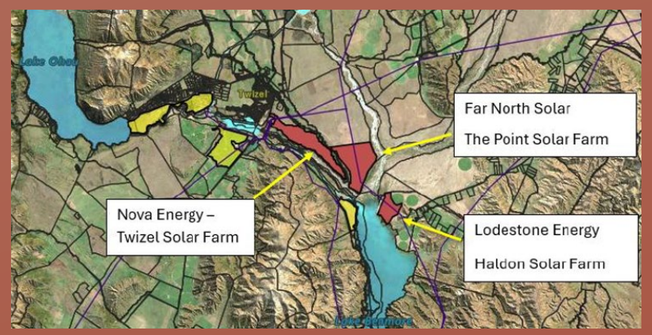
The independent fast-track expert panel's decision to grant approval for the Haldon Solar Farm, the first solar energy project to receive approval under the new Act, provides an ongoing role for mana whenua as kaitiaki and enables the development of a strategic cultural programme throughout the life of the project. Mana Taiao continues to be actively engaged in the fast-track process for the Point and Twizel solar farms.

'Applications to establish solar farms in the Te Manahuna area are increasing. It is extremely important that the three rūnanga – Moeraki, Waihao and Arowhenua – are involved in the consenting process for the establishment of these farms in our shared takiwā as kaitiaki of this whenua. It is our responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of our whenua.'
– Tewera King, Upoko, Te Rūnanga o Waihao and Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua





Views from the Nova Energy Twizel Solar Farm towards the Ōhau B power station (left) and Te Tiritiri-o-te-moana/Southern Alps



Mana Taiao by the numbers

208
resource consents completed

1 Westland

Mackenzie
+ 1 fast-track consent

32 Queenstown Lakes

16 Central Otago
+ 1 fast-track consent

9 Clutha
+1 fast-track consent

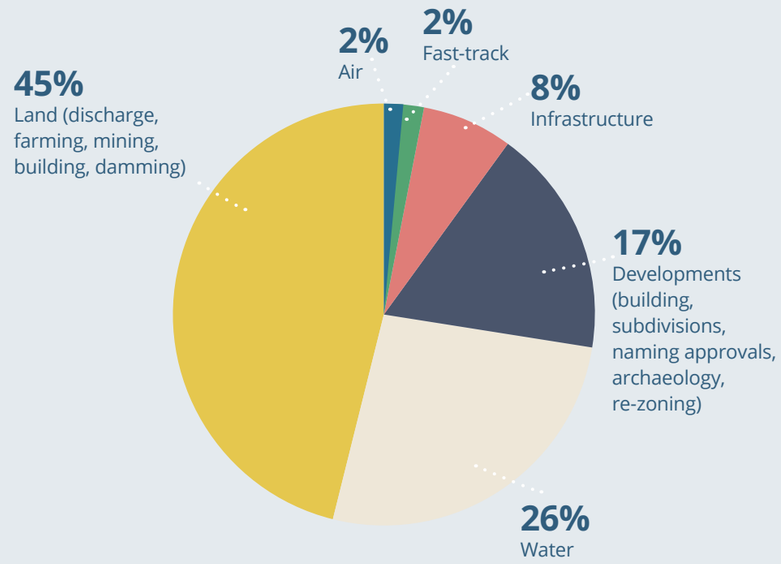
76 South Canterbury

21 Waitaki

26 Dunedin
+1 fast-track consent

23 Otago

Consent types 2025–2026



1 hearing

9 cultural services, including policies, plans & workshops

4 fast-track consents input

1 cultural report for resource management

Mana Takata

Tō mātau tira
Our team



From left: Susie Townshend, Tamati Martin, Stu Guthrie, Daniel van den Kerkhof, Rebecca Hamilton, Taikawa Tamati-Elliffe, Jade Saville, Te Aroha McCallum.

Jade Saville
Interim General Manager
Mana Takata

Sue Barrett
Kaiāwhina Mana Takata

Andrea Shaw
Kaiārahi Pūtere Rautaki
(Employment, Trades & Training)

Te Aroha McCallum
Employment Navigator
– Community Job Coaching

Stu Guthrie
Employment Navigator
– Community Job Coaching

Taikawa Tamati-Elliffe
Employment Navigator
– He Poutama Rangatahi

Danielle Linwood
Kaiārahi Driver Licensing Lead

Awhina Akurangi
Kaiārahi
(Employment Navigator)

Sarah Marshall
Kaitoro Mana Takata

Rebecca Hamilton
Kairuruku Mana Takata

Susie Townshend
Home Performance Assessor

Daniel van den Kerkhof
Kaiārahi

Tamati Martin
Kaiaka Tāiao



Awhina Akurangi



Andrea Shaw



Danielle Linwood



Sue Barrett



Sarah Marshall

Our year in review

Mā te huruhuru, ka rere te manu

Adorned with feathers, the bird can fly

Mana Takata creates pathways that strengthen the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of whānau across the takiwā of rūnaka shareholders through housing, employment, training, and environmental initiatives.

To do this we work closely with whānau, community groups and government agencies to unlock opportunities and address barriers to success. As evoked in the whakataukī above – just as feathers enable the manu to soar, the right support and resources help whānau overcome challenges, realise their potential, and thrive.

During the 2025/26 financial year, Mana Takata supported whānau and environmental outcomes across Ōtākou, South Canterbury and Murihiku through a holistic approach to three key focus areas: Better Homes, Training & Employment, and Conservation.

Our successes extend beyond the practical results of healthier homes and better employment opportunities. They serve to elevate our people through increased wellbeing, access to knowledge, and a stronger connection to identity.



Better Homes team – Susie Townshend (left) and Rebecca Hamilton (right).

Healthy homes, strong whānau

A warm, dry and safe home provides the foundation for health and wellbeing. Yet for many whānau, housing challenges can affect everything from physical health and educational outcomes to financial security and overall quality of life.

During the 2025/2026 financial year, Mana Takata's Better Homes team helped 242 whānau across Otago, Murihiku and South Canterbury address these challenges and create warmer, healthier living environments.

Through Te Whatu Ora's Healthy Homes Initiative (HHI), 215 whānau with tamariki across Otago were supported through a range of housing-related initiatives with referral targets exceeded for the first time. Support included in-home assessments, energy wellbeing education and practical measures such as insulation referrals and the provision of heaters, curtains and moisture-reducing ventilation systems. A key component of this initiative is empowering whānau with the knowledge and skills to maintain warm, dry and healthy whare. This includes support to better understand power bills, manage energy use, and maximise the benefits of adjustments they can make to their heating and ventilation systems.

Aukaha also works in partnership with Arowhenua Whānau Services and Awarua Synergy to deliver the Healthy Homes Initiative from Temuka right through to Bluff.

More whānau across Otago and Murihiku were supported through Te Puni Kōkiri Critical and Essential Repairs programme which attended to a further 27 Māori-owned properties requiring urgent repairs. Of these properties, 52% were owned by Kāi Tahu whānau.

Repairs under this programme addressed issues including unsafe electrical wiring, black mould, leaking roofs, failing plumbing and structural deterioration. Priority was given to homes with the greatest health and safety risks, particularly those occupied by tamariki, kaumātua and vulnerable whānau members.

Wherever possible, the repairs were carried out by Māori-owned building, plumbing and electrical businesses, keeping the economic value of this mahi within the Māori economy. Alongside these building improvements, 40 whānau received support through Meridian and Powershop's Energy Wellbeing programme, helping them better understand household energy use and maintain healthy living environments.

Over the last financial year, the Mana Takata team has also helped renters and those looking to rent through Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora Ministry of Social Development's Ready To Rent programme. This took the form of three two-day workshops designed to equip whānau with the knowledge, confidence and practical tools needed to secure and maintain stable rental accommodation.

The programme was enriched by contributions from local guest speakers including Rachael Courtney from Nidd Property Management alongside representatives from Tenancy Services and the Ministry of Social Development, delivering real-world expertise and invaluable community connections.

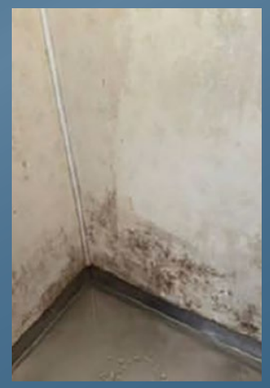
CASE STUDY

Restoring wellbeing

Through Te Puni Kōkiri Critical and Essential Repairs Programme, support was provided to a taua (elderly wahine) living alone whose whare had inadequate heating, deteriorating windows and electrical issues. A home that was cold, unsafe and difficult to maintain further compromised her wellbeing already challenged by existing health conditions and financial hardship.

The repairs focused on restoring warmth, safety and functionality to her home. Double-glazed windows were installed in the bedroom and living areas, a heat pump was fitted, a full rewire was completed with a new switch board installed, and the bathroom upgraded with a new shower and an extractor fan to improve ventilation.

These improvements significantly enhanced the comfort and liveability of the whare, enabling the taua to continue living independently in a warmer, healthier and safer home.





Employment & Training

Pathways to opportunity

The journey towards sustainable employment involves building confidence, gaining skills, removing barriers and creating opportunities that support long-term wellbeing. Mana Takata works alongside whānau at every stage of that journey, whether it be building confidence and strengthening cultural connection, or helping people to find education, training, trades and sustainable employment pathways. This support is delivered through three key services: Community Job Coaching, He Poutama Rangatahi and Driver Licensing. While each service has its own funding, outcomes and reporting requirements, together they form an integrated pathway, ensuring whānau can access the right support at the right time to achieve their goals.

Job coaching

There are many, often complex barriers to gaining employment, more likely to be overcome when people's aspirations, strengths and unique circumstances are truly understood. Mana Takata provides practical pathways to sustainable employment through 26 weeks of intensive one-on-one coaching followed by 12 months of ongoing support.

Community Job Coaching, funded via MSD, has expanded to replace the previous service model that provided coaching for jobseekers for up to 20 weeks (successfully placing all 20 participants into suitable employment or full-time study).

The new Community Job Coaching programme, launched in September 2025, provides wraparound support and addresses obstacles such as transport, childcare, housing pressures and the costs associated with starting work – all of which can be a barrier to securing sustainable employment.

We've enrolled 146 people in the programme, with a total of 420 participants expected to be supported over the next two years – a realistic aspiration reflecting continued growth and confidence in a model built on manaakitaka and wraparound support.

He Poutama Rangatahi

MSD's He Poutama Rangatahi programme, for rakatahi aged 15–24, is focussed on building confidence, strengthening cultural identity and creating meaningful pathways into work and further training.

During the 2025/2026 financial year, He Poutama Rangatahi has built a strong momentum of its own, supporting 67 clients in the 20-week programme which featured education, pre-trade and industry training opportunities, and health and wellbeing activities.

The programme netted employment for 23 participants within organisations ranging from Fulton Hogan and City Care Dunedin to Habitat Restoration Aotearoa and the Royal Albatross Centre. Training pathways included health and wellbeing, infrastructure, carpentry and vocational education. The programme also helped establish cultural connections through activities such as mahika kai, and waka ama and waka unua through Hauteruruku ki Puketeraki.

Later in the year, the programme takes on a revised name – Nāia He Poutama Rakatahi. Approved by Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou, Nāia is derived from the whakataukī 'Nāia te toa o Tarewai, kei a ia anō tōna patu', which speaks to the self-determination portrayed by Tarewai, an Ōtākou tīpuna, and the understanding that the strengths and qualities often sought elsewhere can already be found within ourselves.

Driver Licensing

Access to transport remains a critical enabler for many whānau in building capability and accessing employment. This year, 486 clients were supported to progress their driver licensing, resulting in 227 Learner Licences, 69 Restricted Licences and 64 Full Licences. An additional 64 participants, referred from rūnaka and wider employment and training programmes, are still undergoing driver training. Seven Learner License courses were also delivered across four Dunedin high schools, resulting in a further 62 students obtaining their Learner Licence.

A significant milestone this year was securing a driving instructor for evening and weekend sessions, addressing a longstanding shortage that had limited opportunities for clients to gain driving experience.

Aukaha also became a Waka Kotahi NZTA Community Driving Testing Agent, with Sarah Marshall qualifying as a Community Driving Testing Officer, improving accessibility and reducing barriers for whānau. Sarah is the only female Community Driving Testing Agent in Otago, and brings testing capability in house for the first time.

Beyond improving employment opportunities, a driver licence supports greater independence and connectedness, enabling fuller participation in whānau and community life, while reducing the risk of avoidable fines, or involvement with the justice system resulting from unlicensed driving.



Anita Murdoch of Mosgiel celebrates getting her full driver licence through VTNZ. She is pictured with NZTA Community Driving Testing Agent Sarah Marshall (left) and Aukaha Kaiārahi Driver Licensing Lead Danielle Linwood (right).

CASE STUDY

Mere's story

Mere* (22, Kāi Tahu) joined He Poutama Rangatahi after being introduced to Aukaha through a whānau connection. Living with autism and significant social anxiety, she found it difficult to connect with others and navigate unfamiliar situations. Mere needed support that respected her pace and created a safe space for growth.

Through regular hauora support, Mere gradually built confidence, strengthened her wellbeing, and began creating goals for herself. Over time, she completed a Health and Wellbeing course, made positive lifestyle changes, and demonstrated a strong commitment to improving her future.

Today, Mere is maintaining employment, strengthening relationships with whānau, and expanding her support networks. Everyday activities that once felt challenging, such as using public transport, meeting new people, and speaking in group settings, have become part of her routine. Her growing confidence is evident during weekly hauora sessions, where she actively engages with others and embraces new opportunities.

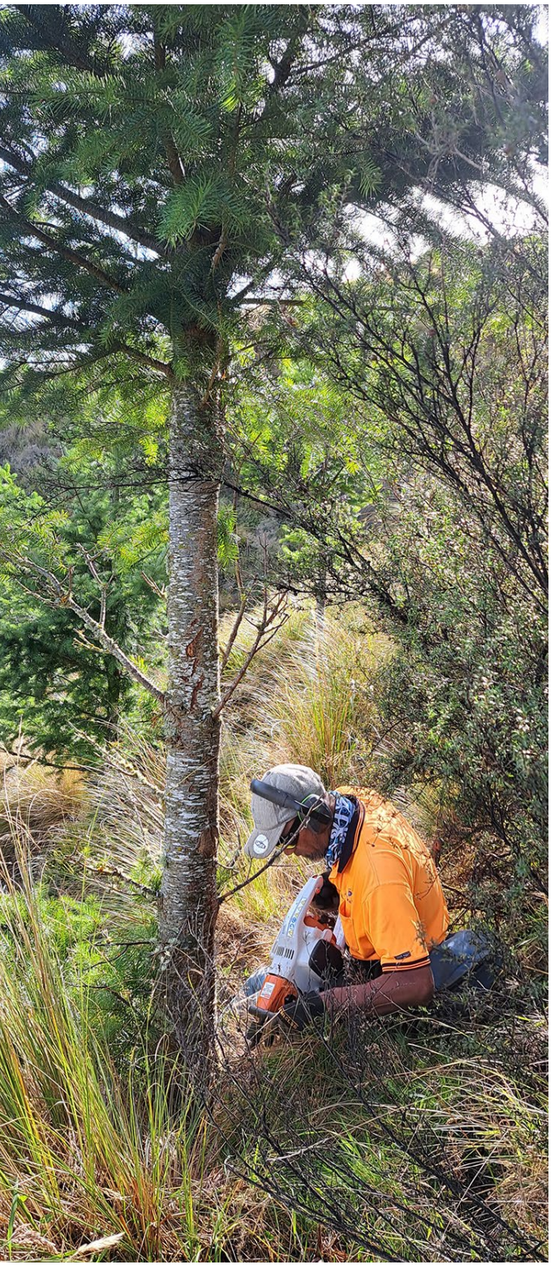
Mere's progress has been so significant that she has been invited to share her story with her peers, offering encouragement to others beginning their own journey.

Watching Mere rediscover confidence, independence and hope for the future has been inspiring. Her journey is a reminder that with the right support, patience and belief, young people can overcome significant barriers and create meaningful pathways for themselves.

*Name changed for privacy purposes



He Poutama Rangatahi navigator Taikawa Tamati-Elliffe works one-on-one with rakatahi aged 15 to 24.



Conservation mahi

It has been a significant year for the Conservation team, despite mostly operating with only two full-time equivalent staff.

Throughout the year, the team delivered pest plant control across ten additional QEII covenant properties throughout Otago, helping to protect and restore important ecological areas. One of those QEII Covenants is Ben Rudd's 44 hectares of regenerating kānuka, kāpuka and harakeke forest, a valuable ecological and recreational asset for Dunedin. The team removed invasive species including giant Douglas fir, pine, rowan and European beech, supporting the restoration and long-term health of the site.

At Pukehiki on the Otago Peninsula, the team planted 7,750 native plants – predominantly kānuka – across three hectares. Two maintenance visits resulted in survival rates exceeding 95% and strong growth evident throughout the restoration area. A further round of maintenance is planned for spring.

A significant milestone was reached at Te Hakapupu this year with 2,500 native plants established throughout the catchment, bringing the total to 90,000 plants across the entire project. Working with Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki and Otago Regional Council, the focus now shifts to maintenance in order to support native forest regeneration across the catchment.

The team also worked with the Puketeraki Restoration Crew to establish a 46-hectare native forest at Ōwhata (Mt Trotter), planting 100,000 kānuka seedlings over 12 days on behalf of Ngāi Tahu Forestry.

Our environmental programmes continue to create meaningful employment pathways. Rivah Ferguson and Kāhu Kaan joined the team on short-term contracts to help deliver the QEII programme. Despite having no prior experience in environmental restoration, both quickly developed valuable field skills and have since secured full-time employment within the conservation sector.

We are particularly proud of Rivah's journey. Joining the team through Aukaha's He Poutama Rangatahi programme, Rivah became a valued member of the crew and has since embarked on a career in conservation, demonstrating the wider social impact of our environmental programmes.

Looking ahead

Mana Takata remains committed to creating pathways that strengthen the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of whānau across the takiwā of rūnaka shareholders through responsive, integrated and evidence-informed service delivery.

A key priority for the Mana Takata pou over the coming year will be the consistent collection of data across all services. As well as strengthening our reporting, this will also help us better understand our impact on Kāi Tahu whānau, and in turn inform our decision-making and future investments.

We will also continue to expand employment and development pathways, strengthen relationships with rūnaka, and work collaboratively across the takiwā.

Through these efforts, Mana Takata will continue to provide the wrap-around support required for whānau to meet the demands of everyday challenges, improve their wellbeing, and support their aspirations.

Mana Takata by the numbers

422 whānau obtained a Learner, Restricted or Full Driver Licence

27 Māori-owned properties upgraded to a healthy living standard

60,560 native seedlings planted across 54 hectares in Otago

23 rakatahi gained employment through He Poutama Rangatahi programme

67 rakatahi supported to build their wellbeing, cultural identity, practical skills and readiness for employment or further training

10 introduced flora removed from land covenants across Otago

7 Learner Licence Courses delivered across 4 Dunedin high schools

146 tākata received one-on-one coaching support, training and upskilling.

290 whānau now living in warmer, drier homes

284 items provided to whānau, including curtains, heaters, firewood, beds and bedding

Mana Ahurea

Tō mātau tira
Our team



From left: Inge Andrew, Aroha Novak, Simon Kaan and Ashleigh Tipene Arthur. Inset below right: Kitty Brown, Keri Whaitiri.

Inge Andrew
Kairuruku/Project Co-ordinator

Simon Kaan
Creative Director/Contractor

Aroha Novak
Senior Design Lead

Ashleigh Tipene Arthur
Design Lead

Kitty Brown
Project Lead/Contractor

Keri Whaitiri
Project Lead/Contractor



Kitty Brown



Keri Whaitiri

Our year in review

The 2025/2026 financial year was another significant one for Mana Ahurea, marked by national industry recognition, strong commercial performance, and increased visibility of mana whenua narratives across the built environment. The team achieved this through a period of leadership transition, demonstrating resilience, professionalism, and an enduring commitment to excellence.

A defining feature of this year has been the recognition received through a number of prestigious industry awards that reflect Mana Ahurea's leadership in cultural design.

The new Ōtepoti ACC building received two awards: Gold for Commercial Architecture at the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) Southern Regional Architecture Awards, and the BIM Award at the Master Builders New Zealand Commercial Project Awards.

The project was delivered in partnership with Warren and Mahoney and Ngāi Tahu Property, alongside Mana Ahurea's Simon Kaan, Kitty Brown and Kirsten Parkinson who led the stunning cultural design inspired by the Ōtepoti site narrative authored by Dr Megan Potiki from Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou. This project continues to attract recognition, receiving further award nominations through 2026.

Te Whata o Kaituna, home to the new South Dunedin Library, was also recognised with a Gold at the New Zealand Commercial Project Awards. This design drew on the narrative of Kaituna – the original name for the South Dunedin area – authored again by Dr Potiki. The project was led by Aroha Novak and Simon Kaan alongside Kāi Tahu artists Ephraim Russell, Megan Brady and Keri Whaitiri, and Michel Tuffery (Sāmoa, Rarotonga, Ma'ohi Tahiti).

Dunedin City Council's civic floor was also awarded Gold for Interior Architecture at the 2026 NZIA Southern Regional Architecture Awards. Drawing on the values and narratives of Te Taki Haruru (DCC's Māori Strategic Framework), this design project was led by Simon Kaan, with artwork by Morgan Darlison (Kāi Tahu), and in partnership with TEAM Architects.

For the first time ever, Mana Ahurea turned its gaze toward the North Otago takiwā, completing two projects with Te Rūnanga o Moeraki to portray Kāi Tahu narratives throughout the Waitaki District Council's Forrester Gallery, and Moeraki's Kaihinaki Café and Giftshop with local Kāi Tahu artist Ross Hemera. Inland, Otago Regional Council's Tāhuna office was completed within the past year, while another 15 projects remain underway.

> *These accolades affirm Mana Ahurea as a leader in cultural design integration, and demonstrate the value of projects guided by mana whenua and enriched by the talent of Kāi Tahu artists.*

Mana Ahurea's commercial performance has also been notable over the financial year, with the team achieving a 15 percent increase in revenue compared to the previous year, in turn delivering a profit for the fourth year in a row.

The year also saw the engagement of 45 Kāi Tahu artists and writers across 23 Mana Ahurea projects, an investment of nearly $1.2 million into the Kāi Tahu economy. In addition, Mana Ahurea delivered or supported 44 cultural services comprising seven cultural narratives, 14 naming projects, 15 whakawātea facilitation, and one workshop.

The mātauraka, guidance and support of the Mana Ahurea Art and Design Panel is essential in making this work possible. We wish to take this opportunity to thank them for their dedicated support and direction over the past year.

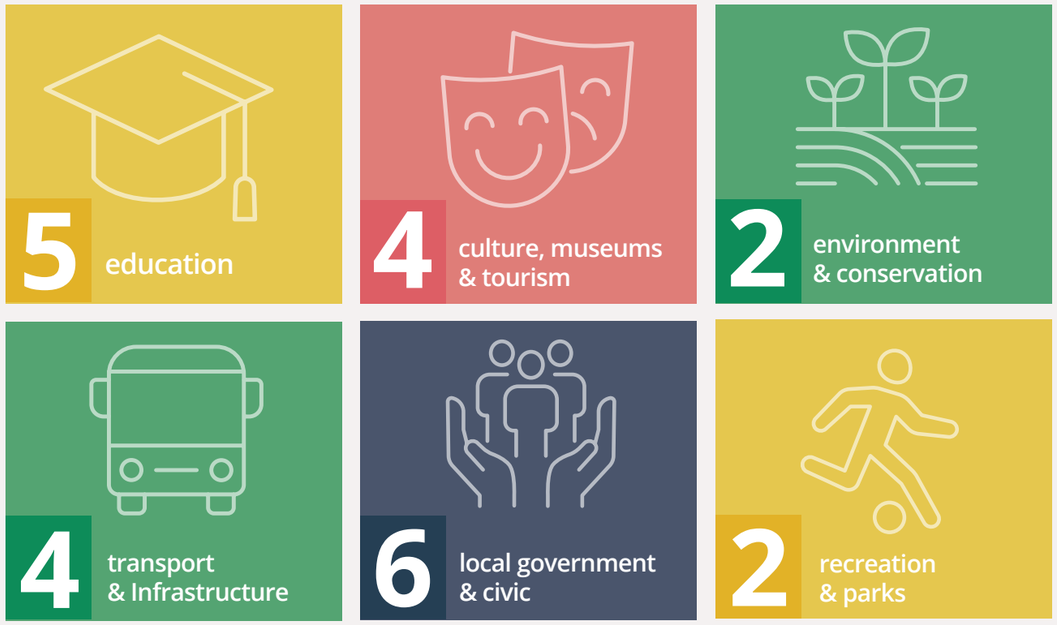
As the built environment across Otago continues to evolve, it remains a privilege to work alongside mana whenua, project partners and communities to embed Kāi Tahu values, narratives and identity in the places we share. Through this work, communities can better understand the history of the whenua, and Kāi Tahu can increasingly see their identity reflected in the region's public spaces.



Above: Warren and Mahoney and Aukaha receiving Gold for Ōtepoti in Commercial Architecture category at the Southern 2026 Regional Architecture Awards.
Below from left: Aroha Novak, Edward Ellison, Kate Stevens-West, Ephraim Russell, James York, Mya Middleton Morrison and Madison Kelly outside the wind lobby of Aonui, the new home to the Otago Regional Council.



Projects by industry/sector during the 2025–2026 year



Our 23 completed projects by takiwā

19 Ōtepoti

2 Oāmaru

1 Tāhuna

1 Region-wide

$1.19 million+
invested into Kāi Tahu economy

15%
increase in fee revenue on the previous year

4
awards received across three projects

44 cultural services delivered

23 projects completed in the 2025/26 financial year

19
cultural designs embedded into the built environment

45
mandated Kāi Tahu artists and writers as at 2026

Project timeline 2025–2026

July

Dunedin City Council – Whakahekerau (St Clair Park)

August

Ngāi Tahu Property – Ōtepoti ACC building

September

Dunedin City Council – Te Whata o Kaituna

Dunedin City Council – Te Aka Ōtākou tohu whenua

Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka – Te Pou Whirinaki / Student Services

October

Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka – Consumer and Applied Science

November

Dunedin City Council – Level 2 fitout

Dunedin City Council (Enterprise Dunedin) – Port Chalmers Cruise Terminal

December

Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka – Signage and Wayfinding Workshop with Dot Dash

Dunedin City Council – Navy Park

January

Ministry of Justice – Youth Court

Otago Regional Council – Tāhuna office

February

Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka – Burns 1 Lecture Theatre

Otago Boys' High School – Shand building

March

Otago Regional Council – Aonui

Dunedin City Council & Whirika Consulting – Broadway Recycle Hub

Port Otago – Tug Ōtepoti naming and artwork

April

Waitaki District Council – Forrester Gallery

Dunedin Airport – Terminal expansion

Central Otago District Council – Te Puna Mahara naming workshop

May

Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka – Kaupapa Māori Hub

Moeraki Limited – Kaihīnaki Moeraki Boulders Café, Bar & Gift Shop

June

Te Au Roa o Te Rakihouia – Cultural narratives and brand design

AONUI

Location	Partner	Completion	Artist	Design Lead
Corner of High Street & MacLaggan Street, Dunedin	Otago Regional Council	2026	Madison Kelly James York Ephraim Russell Kate Stevens West Mya Morrison-Middleton Steve Solomon	Aroha Novak

Based on narratives provided by Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou Upoko Edward Ellison and the late Tahu Potiki, the design of Aonui encapsulates themes of mana o te wai, rakatirataka, kaitiakitaka and manaakitaka, reflecting the importance of water quality and the historical significance of the site on which the building stands.

Kāi Tahu artists developed works throughout the interior and exterior that embed mana whenua values into cultural designs which were architecturally designed by GHD NZ.

On the exterior façade, artworks wrap around the building like a korowai binding together the materials, stories and whakapapa that inform the overall design.

Exterior glass feature panels depict the awa that run through Ōtepoti Dunedin, expressed through pūhoro (vertical patterning) that reference the flow of waterbodies across the landscape, particularly the Toitū.

The wind lobby at the entrance of High Street features traditional takarangi and pītau kōwhaiwhai motifs that symbolise the natural cycle of water as it transitions from clouds to rainfall, then to awa and moana in a continuous flow.

In the entrance foyer stands He Toka Tū Moana, a contemporary mauri stone installation. The stone was sourced from Aonui itself, located on the Āraiteuru coastline south of the Tokomairaro awa, appearing as a miniature representation of the landmark.

Attached to the rear of the metal plinth are taura (ropes) woven from whītau (harakeke fibre) gathered from locations throughout Ōtepoti including Ōtākou Marae and Orokonui. Extending from the base to the ceiling, these taura symbolise the connection between the terrestrial realm of Papatūānuku and the celestial realm of Rakinui, while also acknowledging the relationship to the constellation of Aonui (Antares).

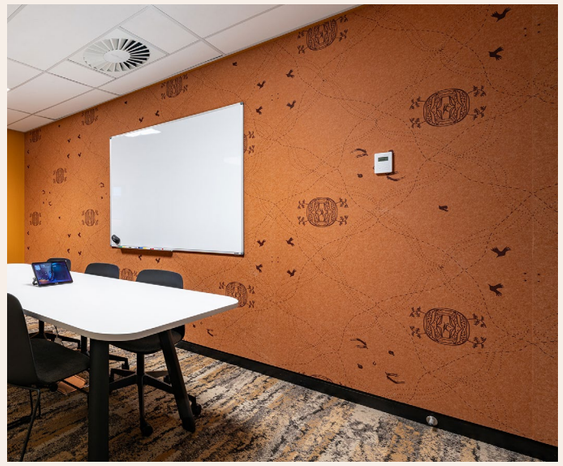
Interior acoustic wall panelling uses a distinct colour palette reflecting elements of te taiao and the realms of kā atua.

Etched into the welcome desk and surrounding wall are elements of mahika kai that draw on the cultural narrative shared by Edward Ellison. These designs incorporate elements of ika, manu, and the plants and habitats that sustain them.











ŌTEPOTI

Location	Partner	Completion	Artists	Creative Lead	Project lead
Queens Gardens Dunedin	Ngāi Tahu Properties	2025	Al Bell Alice Karetai Connagh Wesley Dana Te Kanawa Ephraim Russell Kahu Kaan Kirsten Parkinson Moewai Marsh Aidan Taira Geraghty Steve Solomon Xoë Hall	Simon Kaan	Kitty Brown

The Mana Ahurea team co-designed the Ōtepoti project alongside architects Warren and Mahoney for Ngāi Tahu Properties.

This process was initiated by Kāi Tahu scholar Dr Megan Potiki through the development of a rich cultural narrative on the significance of the site to mana whenua.

The original foreshore here had a distinctive corner shape and was a significant mahika kai. For these reasons the area was referred to as Ōtepoti, referring to the four cornered poti, and this became the beacon for this design project.

The upper façade reflects the form of the poti, achieved through a steel fin structure encased in glass featuring a weaving-inspired frit pattern. The colour, texture and finish of the exterior façade evoke the dried harakeke used to fashion traditional poti.

Mana Ahurea was also engaged to warm the whare through the theming of floors and naming of rooms, and co-ordinate a series of artworks for interior display. Simon Kaan and Kitty Brown worked with mana whenua, ACC representatives and a cast of Kāi Tahu artists on the interiors.

Further references to weaving, rope and handles are expressed through sculptural works at the Queens Gardens entrance. These sculptures bring together and reinforce the overarching narrative of the building.









TE WHATA O KAITUNA

Location	Partner	Completion	Artists	Design leads
King Edwards Street South Dunedin	Dunedin City Council	2025	Ephraim Russell Megan Brady Keri Whaitiri Michel Tuffery	Aroha Novak Simon Kaan

The mana whenua design response to Te Whata o Kaituna (South Dunedin Community Library build) draws on the rich traditions of mahika kai informed by Dr Megan Potiki's research into the South Dunedin area before colonial settlement.

Once an estuarine landscape known as Kaituna, the South Dunedin area was a kōhaka (nursery) for manu (birds) and ika (fish) and was renowned for its abundance of tuna harvested by Kāi Tahu tīpuna.

The library's cultural design reflects both this traditional place name and the mātauraka associated with mahika kai.

The name Te Whata o Kaituna references the elevated structures used to store tuna and other kai, and connects the intergenerational knowledge systems of mahika kai with the library's role as a place where knowledge is gathered, preserved and shared.

The exterior glazing panels depict tuna swimming between awa and moana, linking Te Aka Ōtākou (Otago Harbour) with Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean).

The masonry maro, or belt, that wraps around the base of the exterior uses recycled bricks from the original Wolfenden & Russell building, symbolising the weaving of communities. Basalt columns and aggregate that flank the King Edward Street entrance are sourced from across Te Waipounamu and reference a pou hereka that anchors many waka, acknowledging the rich communities that call South Dunedin home today.

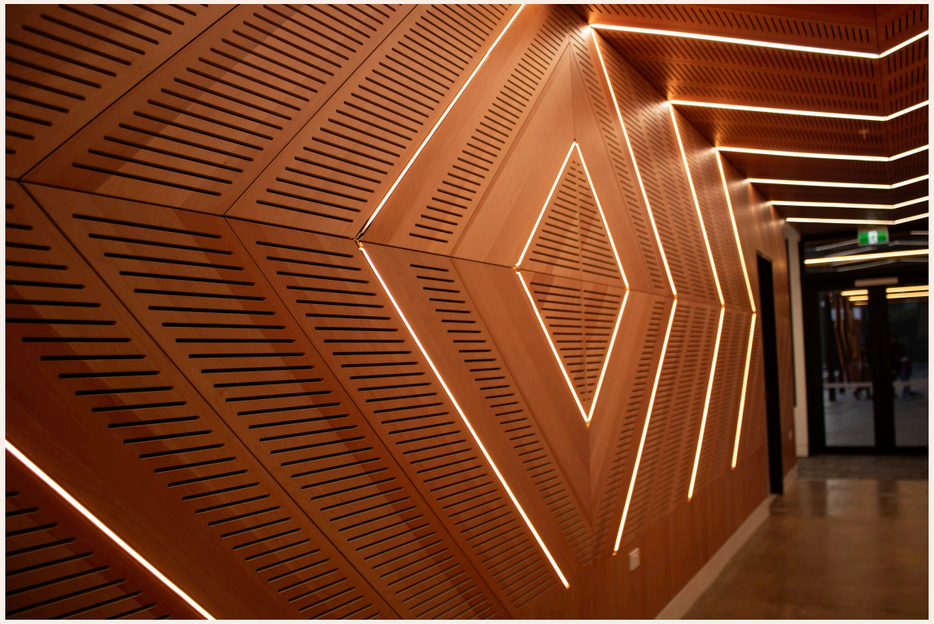
Inside, the colour palette follows kā hua o te tau, subtly transitioning through the seasons from winter to summer. The walls of the community meeting room are lined with acoustic panels with woven pātiki designs connecting to taoka from Ōtākou museum.

An ara moana motif evokes ocean pathways, flowing under the entrance canopy and connecting to large-scale pātiki wood and light patterns that line the entrance foyer from south to north.

Suspended from the foyer ceiling, a pulled linen artwork interprets the celestial journey of tuna from the heavens to earth. This work references tuna whakapapa and pūrākau, and the rising of the constellation Tunanui which signals the tuna heke (migration) and harvesting times in Aotearoa.

Landscaping on the north side of the library reflects the historic wetlands, the movement of water, and the relationship between people and te taiao. Bespoke, coloured paving traces the paths of former waterways, weaving around whakataukī-etched basalt pavers and inviting tamariki to engage with mātauraka Kāi Tahu through everyday play.







MAHIKA KAI MAHIKA TOI, FORRESTER GALLERY

Location	Partner	Completion	Artist	Design lead
Thames Street Oamaru	Waitaki District Council	2026	Ross Hemera	Ashleigh Tipene Arthur

The Forrester Gallery cultural design was developed through a partnership between Te Rūnanga o Moeraki and Waitaki District Council.

The design responds to the enduring relationship between mana whenua and the natural environment. This is expressed through visual and audiovisual elements referencing longstanding Kāi Tahu knowledge systems including the ancient rock art traditions of the Waitaki that record movement, occupation and connection across the landscape.

The artworks reference significant ancestral narratives, atua, waka traditions and celestial knowledge. These are expressed through the use of whakarare pattern interpretations and paemanu forms.

Tiki imagery depicts Aoraki and his brothers Rakirua, Rakiroa and Rārakiroa, alongside the renowned tipuna Rākaihautū whose journeys and histories helped shape the southern landscape. The crew and cargo of the waka tipua *Āraiteuru* are represented through clustered compositions, while celestial groupings associated with atua – including Te Pae Mahutonga and Matariki – acknowledge the importance of astronomy, navigation and seasonal knowledge within Kāi Tahu traditions.

Paemanu forms are used to represent the ancestral waka of Moeraki, including *Uruao, Takitimu, Āraiteuru* and *Mānuka*, reflecting the layered histories of migration, settlement and sustenance. Above the main gallery entrance, a whakarare-based pattern forms a tohorā, acknowledging Takaroa and the realm of the sea, while also symbolising migration and navigation across land and ocean.

Complementing the visual narrative, the accompanying audio component features the voices of tamariki, rangatahi, pakeke and kaumātua from Moeraki whānui.





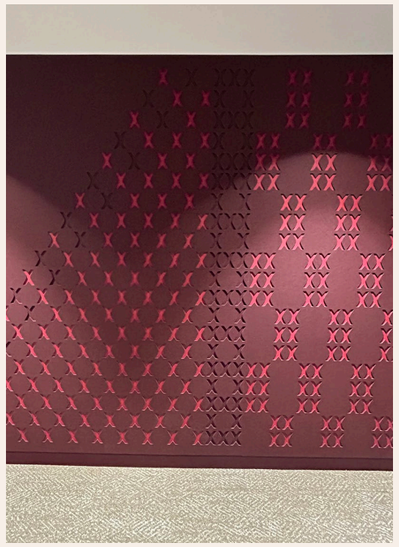


LEVEL TWO, DUNEDIN CIVIC CENTRE

Location	Partner	Completion	Artist	Design lead
The Octagon Dunedin	Dunedin City Council	2026	Morgan Darlison	Simon Kaan

Aukaha led the cultural design integration for Level Two of the Dunedin City Council Civic Centre, embedding the values of Te Taki Haruru, the Council's Māori Strategic Framework, throughout the floor's finishes, materials and bespoke design features. The design acknowledges existing taoka, including tukutuku panels, paying homage to the three rūnaka on the Āraiteuru coastline – Ōtākou, Puketeraki and Moeraki – while striking panels by Morgan Darlison reflect the history and significance of Te Taki Haruru, a significant wāhi tapu near Ōtākou where the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi took place.

Throughout the floor, pūhoro-inspired forms express the movement and flow of water through sweeping curvilinear patterns integrated into glazing and decorative elements. The carpet palette draws on the principle of ki uta ki tai, transitioning from inland to coastal tones, while a woven whāriki-inspired carpet welcomes manuhiri into the reception area. Its texture reflects te taura takata – the threads that bind people together through partnership.





DUNEDIN AIRPORT

Location	Partner	Completion	Artists	Creative leads	Project lead
Momona Dunedin	Dunedin Airport	2026	Xōe Hall Steve Solomon	Simon Kaan Ashleigh Tipene Arthur	Kitty Brown

Inspired by a cultural narrative developed by Dr Megan Potiki, Dunedin Airport's cultural designs draw on whakapapa, local histories, cultural values and mana whenua perspectives. Guided by mana whenua, Kāi Tahu artists created major works that reflect the identity and significance of the Taiari landscape.

The large-scale mural depicts Mauka Atua as a watchful presence over travellers arriving and departing. Rich colours reflect the whenua, waterways, skies, and sunsets, drawing on stories and characters from the cultural narrative, including manaia (mythical creature), atua tīpuna (deities), and Pukemakamaka/ Saddle Hill.

A carved kūwaha (gateway) also marks a place of arrival and departure. The design references Kāi Tahu tīpuna Tukitaharaki and Hinetūtūnawai, the wetlands and mahika kai of the Taiari, and features Matamata, the taniwha kaitiaki who carved out the Otago topography.





Mana Aukaha

Tō mātau tira
Our team



From left: Maria Ellison, Justin Millier, Stevi-Rae Whaitiri-Gustafson, Cory Neale, Dani McDonald (Mana Whakapā), Chris Rosenbrock, Jacqui Koni-Galliven (front left) and Kaitlyn Mulholland (front right).

Cory Neale
Kaihautū/Chief Executive

Kaitlyn Mulholland
Kaiwhakahaere Tāhūhū/Operations Manager & Board Secretary

Jacqui Koni-Galliven
Kaiwhakahaere Pūtea/Finance Manager

Stevi-Rae Whaitiri-Gustafson
Kaiāwhina

Justin Millier
IT Manager

Maria Ellison
Administration Assistant

Dani McDonald
Kaiwhakahaere Whakapā/Communications Manager – Mana Whakapā

Chris Rosenbrock
Partnerships & Special Projects Manager (until 30 June 2026)

Our year in review

The mahi of Mana Taiao, Mana Takata and Mana Ahurea is enabled by strong organisational foundations. Across the year, Mana Aukaha has continued to strengthen those foundations while supporting the people, systems and capability that underpin Aukaha's work.

There have been many changes at Aukaha over the last year – changes that have drawn on the experience and commitment of the Mana Aukaha team to ensure the organisation and our papatipu rūnaka are well served.

An important focus this year has been supporting the leadership transition from Interim Chief Executive Chris Rosenbrock to Chief Executive Cory Neale. A process of reflection and assessment alongside the Board had already begun, with the leadership transition providing an opportunity to build on that work and take a broader look at Aukaha as a whole. A review of our performance against the 2022–2025 Strategy, together with an engagement survey, provided further insight into our strengths, the areas where we need to improve, and what Aukaha needs for its next phase. Together, this work is helping shape an organisational reset focused on strengthening the foundations that enable Aukaha to deliver for papatipu rūnaka.

The year also brought a number of staff changes, with Mana Aukaha and Mana Whakapā providing support and pastoral care through these transitions. This year we farewelled Pam Walker, Alex Gorrie, Larissa Hinds, Chalsea (Alohi) Maunakea -Forth, Kāhu Kaan and Rivah Ferguson. We also acknowledge the departure of Kaiwhakahaere Mana Taiao Kate Timms-Dean, Kaiwhakahaere Mana Ahurea Sio Tulia, and Dr Alayna Rā whose leadership has made a lasting contribution to Aukaha and Kāi Tahu. We thank them all for their service and wish them well in their future endeavours.

This year has also brought the return of Korako Edwards (Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki) as Kaiārahi Taiao, and the departure of Phil Broughton as Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki Board representative, with Shane Ellison appointed as his successor.

Throughout these changes, we continue to prioritise building and retaining Kāi Tahu capability and expertise. As of 30 June 2026, Aukaha employed 33 kaimahi. Just over half of these people identify as Māori, with one quarter whakapapa Kāi Tahu. Just under two-thirds were women, and around one-third men.

Our work also extends to strengthening our contractor relationships. During the year, we introduced master service agreements for contractors, providing greater consistency and clarity across these arrangements. This work forms part of the wider review of our systems and processes to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

A rapidly evolving IT environment also requires our vigilance, especially the emergence of artificial intelligence. We continue to explore this technology while maintaining appropriate safeguards to protect mātauraka Māori and intellectual property, and ensure our organisational information is secure.

Our digital capability was also enhanced this year through the contribution of Otago Polytechnic student Samuel Waitoa (Kāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu). During his placement, Samuel supported Mana Whakapā by developing GIS mapping content and researching social media strategies, reciprocated by what we trust was valuable experience being part of the Aukaha whānau.

Supporting Aukaha to grow Kāi Tahu and Māori enterprises is foundational work for our pou. Over the last year, Mana Aukaha has supported the organisation to invest $4.09 million into the Māori economy, a figure reflecting our dedication to help achieve mana whenua aspirations through actions that really make a difference.

The Mana Aukaha team plays a critical role in supporting and enabling Aukaha's other three pou to do their important mahi, in turn advancing the wellbeing and aspirations of our papatipu rūnaka. Our focus in the coming year is to help strengthen those foundations, while ensuring Kāi Tahu values remain constant and uncompromised.





Aukaha insights

Engagement survey

The 2026 engagement survey sought insights from Board directors, kaimahi and papatipu rūnaka leaders, along with Aukaha's partners and key clients. The 71 responses received reinforced the importance and value of Aukaha's role, with respondents highlighting environmental management, cultural advice and relationship facilitation as important contributions.

Partners and clients acknowledged Aukaha's strength in bringing together mātauraka Māori, mana whenua perspectives and specialist expertise. Kaimahi expressed strong commitment to Aukaha's kaupapa, expressing pride in the contribution to mana whenua, communities and the environment.

The survey also provided a clear picture of where improvements were needed, including strengthening relationships and trust with shareholder rūnaka, clarifying Aukaha's role and mandate within the wider iwi system, improving communication and consistency of delivery, and sharpening the focus on where the greatest value can be created.

We thank everyone who took the time to participate in the survey and share their whakaaro with us. The feedback was thoughtful, constructive and, at times, challenging. We value the honesty and will continue to draw on these insights as we strengthen Aukaha and shape our future direction.

83%
of mana whenua respondents said Aukaha's purpose and value are very important to them

67%
of mana whenua respondents prioritise environmental and cultural advocacy

60%
of partner organisations have worked with Aukaha for more than 6 years

43%
of rūnaka want greater advocacy for mana whenua

$4.09 million
invested in the Māori economy

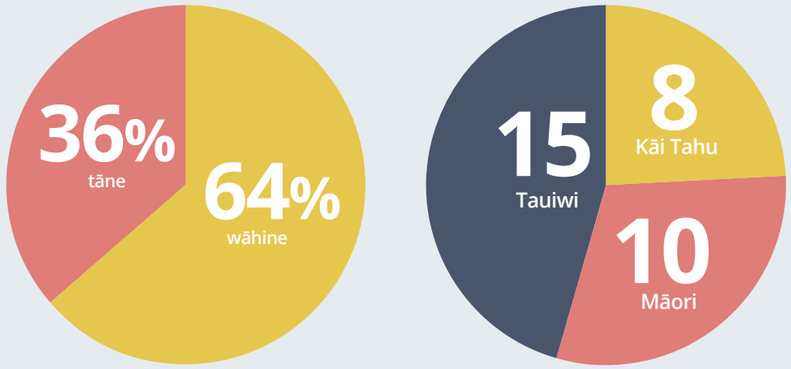
33 kaimahi employed
as of 30 June 2026

8 kaimahi
who whakapapa Kāi Tahu

18 kaimahi
who whakapapa Māori

100%
of kaimahi are proud to work at Aukaha

Kaimahi at Aukaha



He ripoata pūroko putea
Summary Financial Report

Summary Statement of Service Performance

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Description and Quantification of the Entity's Outputs	2026	2025
Apprenticeships	0	29
Community Connector - Kai Packs	0	33
Community Connector - Whānau supported to access power, firewood & other support	0	20
Cultural Design Integration - Urban Design	23	19
Cultural Reports for Resource Management	1	5
Cultural Services - Translations, Naming, whakawatea & Workshops (Mana Ahurea)	36	12
Cultural Services - Policies, Plans & Workshops (Mana Taiao)	9	5
Relationship Project and Enquiries	5	0
Cultural Narratives	7	1
Employment - Work Ready and In-Employment Support	146	210
Energy Wellbeing (Meridian/Powershop) Interventions Completed	40	176
Financial Literacy Support	0	18
Graduated Driver Licensing Process - successful attainment of Class 1 License	486	321
Healthy Homes Initiative - Interventions Completed	215	280
Hearings (Resource Management)	1	0
Jobs for Nature - Covenants Completed	10	7
Māori Trade Training Fund - Pastoral Support for Employment (contract completed)	0	174
He Poutama Rangatahi	67	0
Navigational Clients - # whānau supported	0	160
Resource Consents	208	219
Fast Track Consents	4	0
Te Puni Kōkiri - Home Repairs	27	33
Te Puni Kōkiri - Home Repair Assessments	29	20
Training and Further Education - # of whānau supported (contract completed)	0	158

About Aukaha

Aukaha (1997) Limited is a non-profit company owned by the papatipu rūnaka of Otago, and tasked with realising their aspirations across three areas:

- Environment and resource management
- Health and social services
- Cultural development

We do this by serving as a bridge between mana whenua and mainstream partners, providing a range of services and opportunities that enhance the wellbeing of people and place. This includes developing initiatives directed at individuals and whānau, as well as broader kaupapa that weave together communities and organisations. It is our privilege and responsibility to carry out our mahi under the mandate of our shareholders:

- Te Rūnanga o Waihao
- Te Rūnanga o Moeraki
- Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki
- Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou
- Hokonui Rūnaka

Directors

- Trevor McGlinchey (Te Rūnanga o Moeraki)
- Juliette Stevenson (Te Rūnanga o Waihao)
- Shane Ellison (Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki)
- Brett Ellison (Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou)
- Terry Nicholas (Hokonui Rūnaka)
- Mike Collins (Independent Director)

Registered office

Level 2, 266 Hanover Street
Dunedin Central
Dunedin 9016
New Zealand

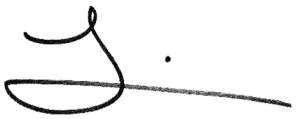
Accountants

Team Direction
Christchurch

Auditor

Vision Chartered
Accountants Limited
Dunedin

Approval by the Directors



Trevor McGlinchey Aukaha Chairperson
23 October 2026



Juliette Stevenson Aukaha Director
23 October 2026

Aukaha Annual Report 2025-2026

Production kaimahi: Dani McDonald and Sarah Bennett
Design and layout: Shelley Darren

We would like to acknowledge all photographers, artists and businesses who have contributed to the production of this report. This includes: Ashleigh Tipene Arthur, Clive Copeman Photography, Digart and Design, Emma Ahlezon, Inge Andrew, Isabella Harrex Photography, Kitty Brown, Te Papa Atawhai, Reframed Media, Samuel White (DCC), STW Studio, Vision Chartered Accountants Limited, Warren & Mahoney.

Ka rere kā mihi ki a koutou.

The cover photo features a tī kōuka (cabbage tree) on the Otago Peninsula. Tī kōuka is a native New Zealand plant with a range of traditional uses in te ao Māori, including mahika kai, rokoā and raraka.

Aukaha (1997) Ltd
PO Box 446
Ōtepoti Dunedin 9054
New Zealand
aukaha.co.nz
facebook.com/aukaha
linkedin.com/company/aukaha

Kia kaha, aukaha
unite and bind together