



**NEW ZEALAND**

**MĀORI RUGBY BOARD**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2025**



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF BEREAVEMENTS



**David Ellison**

Ngāi Tahu, Waitaha,  
Ngāti Māmoe, Te Ati Awa,  
Ngāti Mutunga  
Te Waipounamu Rugby  
15 February 2025, aged 88



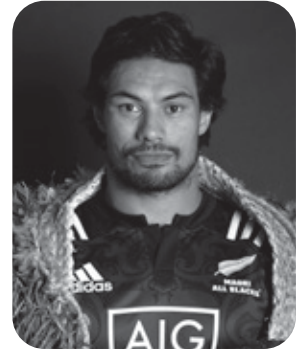
**Fred Graham, CNZM**

Ngāti Korokī Kahukura,  
Tainui  
Māori All Black  
9 May 2025, aged 96



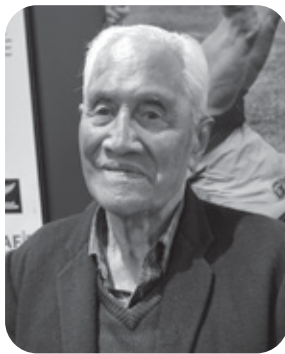
**Alec Wilson**

Te Arawa, Ngāti Whakaue  
Māori All Black  
22 August 2025, aged 92



**Shane Christie**

Māori All Black,  
All Blacks Sevens  
Ngāti Kurawhatia,  
Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi  
26 August 2025, aged 40



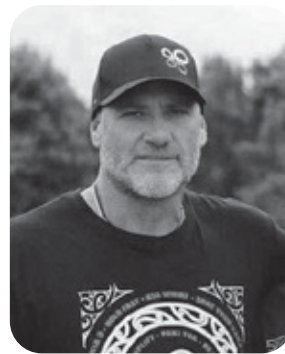
**Theo Kipa**

Ngāti Maru,  
Ngāti Paoa ki Hauraki  
Māori All Black  
20 October 2025, aged 91



**Thomas Eruera  
Whanaupani (Tom)  
Mulligan, MNZM**

Ngāti Porou  
Former NZRU Council  
Member, NZRU Board  
Member, Chair of the  
New Zealand Māori  
Rugby Board.  
17 August 2025, aged 88



**Mike Watts**

Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāpārangi  
Te Waipounamu Rugby  
18 August 2025, aged 45

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**Te ope o te rua Matariki.**

**E tuku ngā mihi aroha ki a rātou kua haere ki tua o te arai.**

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# REMEMBERING MATUA TOM MULLIGAN

**Ka tānuku. Ka tānuku. Ka tānuku koa te tihi o te maunga. Ka tānuku.**

**E kapo ki te whetū. E kapo ki te mārama.**

**E kapo ki te ata o taku kahurangi, kua riro!**

**Kei te Pāpā o Ngāti Porou! Kei te kaumātua o Matahiwi ki roto o Kahungunu.**

**Kei te toa o te whutupōro Māori. E Tame!**

**E moe, e moe, moe mai rā.**

*Written by Atahwai Tibble*

Matua Tom Mulligan MNZM was a rangatira in the truest sense, whose life was a testament to unwavering dedication and service to his people.

Tom was the cherished husband of the late Pikihero Mulligan (née Otene) and loving father of Sonia, Beryl, Take and Andrew. He was Popa to Shaun, Georgia, Kyle, Iverleen, Jonnell, Stacey and the late Clifford and Thomas, and treasured Popa to his great mokopuna.

## **A Legacy Forged in Service**

Born in Te Araroa and educated at Te Aute College, Tom's roots were deeply embedded in his community.

For 42 years, he worked at the Tomoana meat works, a foundation that kept him grounded and connected to the people he served. This connection to working people would inform his leadership philosophy throughout his remarkable life.

Tom's recognition as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) in 2008 for his services to Māori was not a capstone on a finished career, but rather amplification for his voice in the causes he held dear.

For Tom, the honour was less about personal glory and more about advancing the future of Māori rugby and his people.

## **Champion of Māori Rugby**

Tom Mulligan's journey in rugby administration was a masterclass in grassroots commitment.

Beginning at his beloved Clive Rugby Club, he ascended through the ranks to become chairman of the Hawke's Bay Rugby Union, secured a seat on the NZRFU council, and ultimately became the first Māori rugby director on the national union's board.

In 1998, he was honoured as a Life Member of the Hawke's Bay Rugby Union, a distinction reserved for those who have made exceptional contributions to the game.

Even at 72, when many would settle into quiet retirement, Tom was squaring up for another battle with the New Zealand Rugby Union over the national Māori team's place in the Pacific Nations Cup. It's not that he disrespected playing the Pacific brethren, but wanted international fixtures. He understood that the team's existence was crucial not just for developing players, but for forging strong Māori men, leaders, and proud citizens.

## **A Philosophy of Collective Achievement**

Through all his achievements, Tom remained a man of profound humility, always acknowledging the collective effort behind success. He often shared the whakatauki: "Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini." – "I have not achieved on my own, I have achieved with the help of many others."

His mahi always reflected the values of manaakitanga and kotahitanga, ensuring that decisions were guided by the needs of whānau and hapū. Whether serving on the Ngāti Kahungunu Sports Awards judges panel for 10 years or developing Māori tourism initiatives, Tom's work was characterised by integrity, deep understanding, and unwavering advocacy for his people.

## **An Enduring Legacy**

Tom Mulligan was a fighter, a leader, a husband, father, and mentor who left an indelible mark on countless lives. His legacy lives not just in trophies won or positions held, but in the enduring strength of Māori rugby, the empowerment of communities he championed, and the great legacy carried forward by his children and whānau who embody his many values.

Matua Tom has earned his rest, but his fighting spirit will continue to inspire generations to come. We celebrate his 89 years on this earth and the profound impact of a life dedicated to service, leadership, and love for his people.

Rest in peace, Matua Tom Mulligan, MNZM. Your legacy of service, dignity, and love endures.



# MĀORI RUGBY BOARD STRATEGY 2022 – 2025

Our vision is to reimagine rugby to ensure positive outcomes for Māori through rugby.

Our four pou:

## Tātakitanga

Uplift Māori  
leaders

Build imminence within the NZR system, to achieve our cultural, social and commercial objectives.

## Puawaitanga

Enhance Māori  
through rugby

Develop opportunities for Māori in rugby to strive and achieve.

Our five values underpin all that we do:

## Whanaungatanga

Unify and connect

## Rangatiratanga

Leadership

## **Hauoratanga**

Promote holistic wellbeing

Raise awareness of the importance of holistic wellbeing in and through rugby.

## **Angitutanga**

Uplift Māori lives

Create opportunities and build capacity through rugby for our communities and people.

## **Poutamatanga**

Achievement

## **Taumatatanga**

Excellence

## **Kaitiakitanga**

Guardianship

# NEW ZEALAND MĀORI RUGBY BOARD & MANAGEMENT

## Chair (Appointed Member)

**Anne-Marie Jackson**  
(Ngāti Whātua, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Kahu, Te Roroa)

### Te Hiku o te Ika Northern Regions

**Robert Clark**  
(Waikato)  
*Chair*

### Te Tini a Māui Central Regions

**Stewart Whyte**  
(Ngāti Kahungunu,  
Whakatōhea)  
*Chair*

### Te Waipounamu Southern Regions

**Dayveen Stephens**  
(Waikato, Tainui)  
*Chair*

### Appointed Members

**Dr Daryn Bean**  
(Te Arawa - Tuhourangi,  
Tapuika Ngāti Moko,  
Ngāti Whakaue,  
Ngāti Umutahi)

**Arran Pene**  
(Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti  
Apakura, Ngāti Pākehā)  
*Chair, Rugby Subcommittee*

### Independents

**Merewaakana Kingi**  
(Ngāti Awa)  
*Chair, Commercial  
Subcommittee*

**Warren Alcock**  
(Rongomaiwahine)

### New Zealand Rugby Board Representative

Grant Jarrold

### Secretary to Board

Steve Lancaster

**The New Zealand Māori Rugby Board was established as an incorporated society in June 2000, under its own Constitution, and the origins of the Board extend back to the 1870s.**

For more information about the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board, head to [nzrugby.co.nz/about-nzr/governance/maori-rugby-board/](https://nzrugby.co.nz/about-nzr/governance/maori-rugby-board/)

There are six life members of the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board:

- Alan Hava (2013)
- Percy Erceg (2016)
- Don Rangī (2017)
- Bill Bush (2021)
- Alma Andrews (2024)
- Duncan "Binny" Andrews (2024)

### **New Zealand Māori Rugby Structure**

In 2025, within New Zealand Rugby's organisation, there were three roles committed to the growth and promotion of Māori rugby and tikanga throughout Aotearoa:

- **Māori Rugby Development Manager**  
Tiki Edwards  
(Ngāti Raukawa, Whakatōhea)
- **Māori Rugby Development Officer**  
Kahu Carey  
(Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Te Ātiawa, Ngāi Tahu/ Kāi Tahu)
- **Acting Kaihautū**  
Atawhai Tibble  
(Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Raukawa)

### **New Zealand Māori Rugby Committees**

The New Zealand Māori Rugby Board has three sub-committees – Rugby, Culture, and Commercial.

### **Regional Māori Rugby Boards**

There are three regional committees made up of representatives from the following rohe:

- **Te Hiku o te Ika (Northern Region)**
  - Te Waiariki (Bay of Plenty)
  - Tainui (Waikato)
  - Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland)
  - Te Tai Tokerau (Northland)
  - Counties Māori (Counties Manukau)
  - Te Raki Paewhenua (North Harbour)
- **Te Tini a Māui (Central Region)**
  - Horouta (Ngāti Porou East Coast)
  - Tūranganui-a-kiwa (Poverty Bay)
  - Te Matau a Māui (Hawke's Bay)
  - King Country
  - Taranaki
  - Wairarapa
  - Manawatū
  - Whanganui
  - Horowhenua Kāpiti
  - Te Upoko o te Ika (Wellington)
- **Te Waipounamu (Southern Region)**
  - Te Tau Ihu (Tasman)
  - Waitaha (Canterbury)
  - Aoraki (South Canterbury)
  - Ōtākou (Otago)
  - Murihiku (Southland)

# BOARD MEMBERS

**Anne-Marie Jackson**  
**(Ngāti Whātua, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Kahu o Whangaroa, Te Roroa)**  
**Chair**

Anne-Marie has held numerous Board and advisory positions in Māori governance, in rugby, and in her professional career as a Māori research leader. Most recently, she is a former Chair and Board member of Otago Māori Rugby. She brings to the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board and New Zealand Rugby a passion for te ao Māori (Māori worldview) as the basis of flourishing wellbeing for all.

She is a Chartered Member of the Institute of Directors. She is the Director of her whānau consultancy Rehutai Consultancy Ltd which includes her co-Directorship of the National Centre of Research Excellence Coastal People: Southern Skies. Anne-Marie took up the Chair position of the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board in February 2025.

**Robert Clark**  
**(Waikato/ Ngaati Pikiao)**  
**Chair – Te Hiku o te Ika**

Robert's waka is Tainui/TeArawa, hapuu is Ngati Tiipa / Ngati Kawiti, marae Te Kumi Paa/ Tapuwaiharuru.

Rob is currently Chair of the Counties Māori Rugby Board and holds multiple governance and trustee roles. He is a member of multiple health committees at local, regional and national level, and is the current chair of Manawheuna I Tāmaki Makaurau Health Board, MOU partner to Counties Manukau Health Te Whatu Ora. Rob is Cultural Advisor to the NZ Police Counties Manukau and a member of many community

groups, including Critical Crisis Centre Papatoetoe, and My Rivers Pukekohe.

**Dayveen Stephens**  
**(Waikato, Tainui)**  
**Chair – Te Waipounamu**

Dayveen has over 20 years' governance experience, mostly in the public sector, in a range of organisations between cultural and education perspectives to social and health governance.

Her rugby experience spans regional to national levels, with governance experience on Te Taihū o Te Waka a Maui Māori Rugby Board, Te Waipounamu Māori Rugby Board and Tasman Rugby Union Board. Dayveen also has governance and executive experience through the Nelson Marlborough District Health Iwi Board, Tasman District Police Advisory Board, Te Matatini National Board, Te Taihū Māori Cultural Council and Whakatū Marae Committee, amongst others. Dayveen currently works as an Environmental Manager containing scope with Councils and Crown Agencies.

**Arran Pene**  
**(Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti Apakura, Ngāti Pākehā)**  
**Chair – Rugby Subcommittee**

Arran has experience in rugby governance as Tainui Waka Chair, a member of Te Hiku o te Ika Māori Rugby Board, and is a member of the Hamilton Boys' High School Board of Trustees. He owns a business (Speights Ale House) in Hamilton. Arran was an All Black, Māori All Black, and professional player and coach in Japan.

**Merewaakana Kingi**  
**(Ngāti Awa, Ngai Tai, Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau)**  
**Chair – Commercial Subcommittee**

Merewaakana is a Chartered Accountant (CAANZ) and member of the Institute of Directors with senior executive experience across complex organisations in health, financial services, commercial operations and Māori entities in Aotearoa and the United Kingdom. She has held Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Chief Executive roles, leading strategy, investment oversight, organisational transformation and sustainable capital stewardship with a strong focus on intergenerational value creation.

Through the Institute of Directors Future Directors Programme, she served a two-year Board Observer term with ASB Bank, gaining direct exposure to listed company governance, capital markets discipline and fiduciary oversight. Her current portfolio of governance roles across Māori trusts, commercial entities and national sporting organisations provides a complementary cross-sector perspective to board decision-making.

A former double international and Black Fern #110, Merewaakana represented New Zealand in both rugby and touch rugby at high-performance level. She brings the discipline and strategic rigour of elite sport to the board table, contributing strongly to long-term strategy, performance oversight and decisions that position Māori rugby for sustained intergenerational success.

## **Warren Alcock (Rongomaiwahine)**

Warren's background in rugby governance includes being a Director of Otago Māori Rugby (1990-1994), Te Waipounamu Committee (1992-1994), and New Zealand Māori Rugby Advisory Board (1994-1995).

Warren has a first class honours degree in law and a degree in economics. He initially lectured law at Otago University from 1988 to 1991 before joining Dunedin law firm now known as Gallaway Cook Allan. From 1995-2006 he was a partner at that firm. He has held several pro bono roles, including Trustee of the Edgar Centre, Dunedin (2009-2015), Trustee of Louise Davie Charitable Trust (2023-2024) and was a Board member of Justitia Mutual Association Inc (which operates a lawyers' mutual professional indemnity insurance scheme in New Zealand).

Warren is Director of Halo Sports (previously The Essentially Group and CSM Sport & Entertainment). He was New Zealand's first accredited agent and has represented many of New Zealand's top rugby and sporting talents over a career which first started in 1995.

## **Stewart Whyte (Ngāti Kahungunu, Whakatōhea) Chair - Te Tini a Māui Central Region**

Stewart is an experienced governance and senior management professional with a strong record of leadership across education, community development, sport, and the nonprofit sector. He brings extensive expertise in strategic planning, organisational management, and stakeholder

engagement, underpinned by a deep commitment to Māori values, tikanga, and the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Stewart is recognised for his ability to foster inclusive governance environments, empower diverse voices, and uphold high standards of ethical and transparent practice.

Stewart currently holds the following positions:

- President, Te Whare Tapere o Tamatea
- Chairman, Hawke's Bay Māori Rugby Board (Te Matau a Māui)
- Chairman, Te Tini a Māui Rugby Board (Central Regions Māori Rugby)

## **Dr Daryn Bean (Te Arawa - Tuhourangi, Tapuika Ngāti Moko, Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāti Umutahi)**

Daryn's background includes over 25 years' experience in public sector leadership roles in education, Māori development, and executive and governance roles in post-settlement governance entities and ahu whenua trusts. As Director of Āumāhaki Ltd, Daryn specialises in Māori development at the intersection of strategy, culture and leadership.

Daryn is new to the Māori Rugby Board and brings rugby experience from the grassroots. A former Bay of Plenty rugby representative, he played club and Māori rugby in the Bay of Plenty and North Harbour and coached club, age-group and junior teams.

Daryn holds a Doctor of Government (DGov) from Victoria University, an Executive Master of Public Administration from Victoria University and the Australia New Zealand School

of Government and post-graduate business degree in international business from Massey University. Daryn is a member of the Institute of Directors.

## **Grant Jarrold New Zealand Rugby representative**

Grant has had over 30 years of combined governance experience in New Zealand in our great game at all levels from the Chair of the Crusaders, Canterbury Rugby Union and the Belfast Rugby Club during this time. Grant is currently a Director of New Zealand Rugby, Chair of NZR's Risk, Audit and Investment Committee and NZR's representative on the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board.. In other sports governance the Chair of Harness Racing New Zealand and a member of the Racing New Zealand Board. Grant is a Special Life Member of the Belfast Rugby Club.

Grant is a Fellow of the Chartered Accountants of Australia and a member of the Institute of Directors in New Zealand and holds a number of chair and director positions of private companies in New Zealand.

A 35-year professional career included being a Partner at Deloitte in Christchurch for 25 years specialising in Business Advisory Services, retiring from the firm in 2023 to continue with an already established governance career.



# FROM THE CHAIR

## Tēnā koutou,

Ko te mihi tuatahi ki a rātou kua haere ki tua o te ārai. Kua ngū ngā manu ā Tāne. E rere ana ngā mihi ki ō koutou whānau e noho mokemoke ana.

Ka huri ki a tātou te hunga ora.

I hikitia e mātou te poari te mānuka kua takotohia i mua a mātou. Te maha o ngā take, kua whakarite, kua para anō i te huarahi, ā, kia karanga anō mātou ki te whānau whānui, me anga whakamua tahi tātou katoa. Mate atu he tētēkura, ara mai he tētēkura. Ko tēnei te whakatauki e mau tonu ana tātou mō te painga o tātou katoa.

Nō reira, ka huri taku reo.

Tēnā koutou e ngā karanga maha,

He kōrero tahi, he mahi tahi, he painga mō te iwi. Koinei te arotahitanga o te Whutupōro Māori i te 2025 ki te mahi hei painga mō ā tātou mema.

Ko te 2025 te tau whakamutunga o te rautaki Whutupōro Māori i raro i te matawhānui o "pohewatia anō te whutupōro e puta ai ngā hua angitu mō te Māori mā roto i te whutupōro". I a tātou e huritao ana ki te hurihanga rautaki, me te whakamana i te matawhānui o ngā Poari Whutupōro Māori o mua, nā rātou i hanga te mahere rautaki, kua ea te kaupapa. I te Hakihea 2025, i whakakapiria e mātou te rautaki hukihuki a te Poari Whutupōro Māori 2026-2030, otirā i whakatau te poari ki te whakaū i te rautaki ā-motu.

He huhua ngā kēmu, ngā tākaro me ngā hui whutupōro Māori i te tau kua pahemo, puta noa i te motu, ā, tae rawa ki tāwāhi. E tipu tonu ana, e pakari tonu ana te whakaurunga o te Māori ki te whutupōro. Hei tauira, ko ētahi miramiratanga i te 2025 ko te:

- Te haerenga a te Kapa Ōpango Māori ki Hāpana me Te Tai Tokerau;
- Ngā kapa Whutupōro Māori U18 o ngā Māreikura me ngā Whatukura;
- Ngā Kapa Global 7 o Aotearoa Whutupōro Māori me te Whutupōro Māori o Waitaha;
- Ngā Ahurei a te Whutupōro Māori o Te Waipounamu me Te Hiku o Te ika;
- Ngā kaitākaro, ngā kaitūao, ngā pouako me ngā kaitautoko Māori e angitu ana i ngā taumata katoa me ngā momo katoa o te kēmu.
- Ngā kaiwhiwhi angitu ā-motu, ā-ao hoki otirā ko ētahi



## Tēnā koutou,

Ko te mihi tuatahi ki a rātou kua haere ki tua o te ārai. Kua ngū ngā manu ā Tāne. E rere ana ngā mihi ki ō koutou whānau e noho mokemoke ana.

Ka huri ki a tātou te hunga ora.

I hikitia e mātou te poari te mānuka kua takotohia i mua a mātou. Te maha o ngā take, kua whakarite, kua para anō i te huarahi, ā, kia karanga anō mātou ki te whānau whānui, me anga whakamua tahi tātou katoa. Mate atu he tētēkura, ara mai he tētēkura. Ko tēnei te whakatauki e mau tonu ana tātou mō te painga o tātou katoa.

Nō reira, ka huri taku reo.

Tēnā koutou e ngā karanga maha,

He kōrero tahi, he mahi tahi, he painga mō te iwi.

A united voice, working together, for the benefit of everyone was the collective focus of Māori rugby in 2025 to serve our members.

2025 was the final year of the Māori rugby strategy under the vision "to re-imagine rugby to ensure positive outcomes for Māori through rugby". As we reflect on the strategy cycle, and to whakamana the vision of the previous New Zealand Māori Rugby Boards who created the strategic plan, kua ea te kaupapa (the aspirations have been met). In December 2026, we finalised the draft New Zealand Māori Rugby Board strategy 2026-2030 choosing to adopt the national group strategy.

There were numerous Māori rugby games, fixtures, and hui over the year across the country and overseas. Māori participation in rugby continues to strengthen and grow. For example, highlights in 2025 were the:

- Māori All Blacks campaign in Japan and Te Taitokerau;
- New Zealand Māori Rugby U18 Māreikura and Whatukura teams;
- Aotearoa Māori Rugby and Waitaha Māori Rugby Global 7s teams;
- Te Waipounamu Māori Rugby and Te Hiku o Te Ika ahurei (festivals) and;
- Māori players, volunteers, coaches and support staff succeeding in all levels and forms of the game
- Successful national and international award winners with special mentions to: 2025 Tom French Memorial Māori Player of the Year Portia Woodman-Wickliffe (Ngāpuhi,

ko: te toa 2025 o te Tom French Memorial Kaitākaro Māori o te Tau Portia Woodman-Wickliffe (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu ki Whaingaroa, Ngāti Porou); 2025 Kaiwhiwhi o te Kaitākaro Wahine Whanake Hou Toa o te Kēmu 15 o te Ao a Braxton Sorensen-McGee (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai) me; World Rugby Women's 15s Dream Team of the Year te Kapa Moemoeā 15 ā-Ao o te Tau, a Kaipo Olsen-Baker (Ngāti Porou) rāua ko Braxton Sorensen-McGee (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai).

### Angitutanga: Hāpai i te orang Māori

I roto i tēnei Pūrongo ā-Tau ka tūramatia e mātou ngā Poari ā-Rohe Whutupōro Māori e toru o Te Hiku o te Ika, Te Tini a Māui me Te Waipounamu, otirā me ē rātou ūniana-ririki.

I tū te ahurei ā-tau a Te Waipounamu otirā he kaupapa hirahira mō te whutupōro Māori. He hirahira hoki te tipuranga o te rāngai rangatahi i Te Waipounamu, otirā i kakari nui ngā kapa mō ngā taonga puta noa i ngā reanga (U13, U15, U17). Nō muri i te Kowheori, i kitea te uaua o te whakaara anō i ē mātou tuinga matua, otirā he tohu taunaki ki te mana hautūtanga i Te Waipounamu ki te whakahaere anō i tētahi ahurei rangatahi, ahurei wāhine hoki, me ngā tuinga ki ētahi atu rohe! Ngā mihi nui hoki ki a Matua Wiremu Kingita Te Pohe (Bill) Bush MNZM rāua ko Matua William Matthews i whakawhiwhia whakamuriā rāua ki tētahi taonga hei mema pūmau o Te Whutupōro Māori o Te Waipounamu. Ka whakanui hoki mātou i a Matua Richie Milner i tāoki hei Tiamana o Waitaha, otirā mō tō tautoko kiriūka, tō arahitanga me āu mahi mō te whutupōro Māori.

Ko te aronga mō Te Tini a Māui i te 2025 ko te whakaū anō i ē rātou whāinga mana hautū, ā-rautaki hoki puta noa i ngā ūniana-ririki. Ka mihi hoki mātou ki te Tiamana e wehe ake ana, ki a André Baker, otirā he reo whaitake ā-iwi mō Te Tini, nō roto o Horowhenua-Kāpiti. Ahakoa kāore i whakahaeretia e Te Tini ētahi whakataetae i te 2025, i tukua e rātou ētahi kapa ki ngā tākaro maha puta noa i te motu, e whai arawātea ai te 300 kaitākaro me ngā kaitāoa. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou.

Kotahi te ahurei i whakahaeretia e Te Hiku o te Ika, ā, i kuhu ki tētahi atu ahurei (Iwi of Origin).

Ka mihi ki te Heamana o Te Hiku, arā ko Rob Clark, i tōna tautokohia me tōna arahina ki te Kapa Ōpango Māori ki 2025.

Ka rere ā mātou mihi ki te hunga katoa i tukutahi te hūkere i tō tātou waka o te whutupōro Māori. Ko koutou te manawapou o te whutupōro Māori nō ngā hau e whā.

Ngāti Kahu ki Whaingaroa, Ngāti Porou); 2025 World Rugby award winners World Rugby Women's 15s Breakthrough Player of the Year Braxton Sorensen-McGee (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai) and; World Rugby Women's 15s Dream Team of the Year Kaipo Olsen-Baker (Ngāti Porou) and Braxton Sorensen-McGee (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai).

### Angitutanga: Uplift Māori lives

In this Annual Report we spotlight our three Regional Māori Rugby Boards of Te Hiku o te Ika, Te Tini a Māui and Te Waipounamu and their respective sub-unions.

Te Waipounamu held their annual ahurei (Māori rugby festivals) which are a real feature in Māori rugby. The growth in the rangatahi space for Te Waipounamu has been excellent as the teams battle it out for the respective taonga across the age grades (U13, U15, U17). Post-Covid, it has been a challenge to re-introduce our senior fixtures, and it is a testament to the leadership in Te Waipounamu to hold again a colts and wāhine āhurei, and multiple fixtures against other rohe! Congratulations to Matua Wiremu Kingita Te Pohe (Bill) Bush MNZM and Matua William Matthews who were retrospectively awarded taonga as life members to Te Waipounamu Māori Rugby. We also acknowledge Matua Richie Milner who stood down as Chair of Waitaha, and we thank you for your unwavering tautoko, guidance and mahi for Māori rugby.

The focus for Te Tini a Māui in 2025 was to re-set their governance and strategy goals across their sub-unions. We acknowledge outgoing Chair André Baker who had been an important iwi voice for Te Tini from Horowhenua-Kāpiti. While Te Tini hosted no tournaments in 2025, they sent teams to multiple fixtures across the motu, providing opportunities for approximately 300 players and volunteers. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou.

Te Hiku o Te Ika hosted one āhurei and participated in another āhurei (Iwi of Origin).

We acknowledge Chair of Te Hiku Rob Clark for his tautoko and guidance for the Māori All Blacks in 2025.

We wish to thank everyone who is committed to our waka of Māori rugby. You are the lifeblood of Māori rugby from ngā hau e whā (the four winds).

### **Tātakitanga: Te amo ake i ngā kaitātaki Māori**

Ko te 2025 te tau tuatahi o ngā whakahaere i muri i te whakahoutanga mana hautū o te whutupōro o Aotearoa. I whakatautia anō e te Poari Whutupōro Māori o Aotearoa te mana o te whutupōro Māori hei rōpū māngai o te whutupōro tangata whenua. E rua ngā huarahi i tutuki ai tēnei: tuatahi, i tō mātou Hui Taumata tuatahi i te marama o Haratua, i tae mai ai ngā kaumātua, ngā mema pūmau me ngā māngai o ngā poari whutupōro Māori ā-rohe, me ngā ūniana-ririki; ā, tuarua, mā te taenga o te Tiamana ki ngā Hui ā-Tau o ngā rohe Māori katoa. I noho ēnei hui hei tūāpapa mō ngā whakataunga rautaki, ki te whakamōhio i ngā panoni ā-turepapa moroki, ā, kia kanohi kitea hoki mō ngā mema pūmau.

I whakaritea anō hoki te hononga ki te Poari Whutupōro o Aotearoa me te Whutupōro Aotearoa mā roto i tētahi hononga mana ki te mana. Ko te mana motuhake me te tino rangatiratanga tō mātou kaupapa o te ia rā, ā, ka whakatīnana tēnei mā roto i te whutupōro hei painga mō te katoa, otirā he mea aunoa o te ao Māori. Kua tāmaua hoki te ao Māori ki te papanga o Whutupōro Aotearoa otirā e whakamana ana rātou i "te tūnga o te Māori hei tangata whenua i Aotearoa, ā, ko Te Tiriti o Waitangi te tuhinga taketake o Aotearoa".

Mai i te Poari Whutupōro Māori, i poroakitia e mātou a Te Kahurangi Farah Palmer, rātou ko Doug Jones ko André Baker (Tiamana o Te Tini a Māui). I pōhiritia ētahi mema Poari hou a Stewart Whyte (Tiamana o Te Tini a Māui) rāua ko Dr Daryn Bean, ā, i tohua anō ahau hei Upoko.

I whakamātauria te hōtaka Mana Hautū Whutupōro Māori tuatahi i te taha o te NZR me te Institute of Directors. Neke atu i te 30 ngā kaitohu puta noa i te whutupōro Māori. Ka kuhu mātou ki te tau tuarua o te hōtaka nei ā te 2026. I ara ake tēnei kaupapa i ngā ūniana-ririki me ngā poari whutupōro Māori ā-rohe, otirā i puta te hiahia o ngā mema kia whakangungua okawatia rātou ki ngā mahi mana hautū. Ka whakatīte tēnei i te horanuku o te whutuporo, te whakatipu i ngā kaitohu Māori whaikiko puta noa i ngā wāhanga katoa o te whutupōro. Ka tūramatia tēnei take ki te Pūrongo ā-Tau.

I tutuki i a mātou te whiriwhiri i tētahi tūranga Manahautū ki te tīra whakahaere o Whutupōro Aotearoa, otirā he kaupapa angitu tēnei puta noa i tō mātou Poari, i a mātou e whakatīnana ana i tētahi hononga mana ki te mana. I mua o te hinganga o Matua Luke Crawford, koinei tētahi o ōna wawata, otirā ka kawea tonu tēnei manako ōna. Ka whakanuia ngā mahi a Atawhai Tibble hei Kaihautū Taupua i te 2025.

### **Tātakitanga: Uplift Māori leaders**

2025 was the first year of operating post the rugby governance reform. The New Zealand Māori Rugby Board re-set our mandate of Māori rugby as the representative entity of tangata whenua in rugby. This was done in two ways: firstly, through our inaugural Hui Taumata in May where we were joined by kaumātua (elders), life members and representatives of the regional Māori rugby boards, and sub-unions; and secondly, through Chair attendance at all regional Māori rugby AGMs. These hui provided the foundation for strategic decisions, to inform the ongoing constitutional changes and to be he kanohi kitea (a seen face) for our members.

We also re-set the relationship with the New Zealand Rugby Board and New Zealand Rugby through a mana to mana relationship. Mana motuhake and tino rangatiratanga is our norm, and enacting that through rugby for the benefits of the collective is a normal and natural part of te ao Māori. Te ao Māori is embedded into the fabric of New Zealand Rugby where New Zealand Rugby recognises "the status of Māori as tangata whenua in New Zealand and Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand".

From the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board, we farewelled Dame Te Kahurangi Farah Palmer, Doug Jones and André Baker (Te Tini a Māui Regional Māori Rugby Chair). We welcomed two new Board members Stewart Whyte (Te Tini a Māui Regional Māori Rugby Chair) and Dr Daryn Bean, and I was reappointed whilst also being nominated as Chair.

We piloted the inaugural Māori Rugby Governance programme in partnership with NZR and the Institute of Directors. There were 30 plus directors from across Māori rugby. We enter into Year 2 of the programme in 2026. This was a kaupapa that emerged from the sub-unions and regional Māori rugby boards, with members wishing to have formalised governance training. This will enhance the rugby landscape growing effective Māori directors across all aspects of rugby. We spotlight this initiative in the Annual Report.

We successfully negotiated a Manahautū role into the executive in New Zealand Rugby and this is a shared success story across our Boards as we give effect to a mana to mana relationship. Prior to Matua Luke Crawford's passing, this was one of his aspirations, and his legacy will continue in rugby. We acknowledge the mahi of Atawhai Tibble as the Acting Kaihautū for 2025.

### **Puāwaitanga: Te whakatītike i te Māori mā roto i te whutupōro**

Ka mihi ki a Te Wehi Wright me Brad Te Haara i ō rāua tau tuarua ki te Kapa Ōpango Māori, ā, he Pou Tikanga tētahi, me te Kaiwhakahaere Tīma tētahi atu. Ka mihi hoki ki a Ben Fisher rātou ko Mātua Ra Durie me te tīma katoa i mahitahi mō te tautmatanga o te Kapa Ōpango Māori. Ngā mihi nunui ki a koutou.

Ko te mihi whakamutunga ki ngā kaiwhutupōro o te Kapa Ōpango Māori, ka mihi ki a koutou, ki ō koutou whānau hoki.

Ka tūramatia e mātou te Kapa Ōpango Māori me tō rātou haerenga i te 2025. Ka rere ō mātou mihi manahau ki te hunga katoa i whai wāhi ake. I huraina tētahi poraka Ōpango Māori hou ko Te Tauihu Matua te ingoa. Nā Kahurangi Matangitoko Falaoa (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Pūkeko) te poraka i hoahoa. Ngā mihi ki a koe Kahurangi. Me te mihi maioha anō ki te Whutupōro Māori o Te Taitokerau, te whānau o te marae o Terenga Paraoa, ngā hapū maha o Whangārei o te Taitokerau anō hoki. E kōrero tonu ana mātou i ō koutou reka!

Ka whakanui mātou i ngā mahi angitu a ō mātou kapa Māori U18 o ngā Māreikura me ngā Whatukura. Ngā mihi ki ngā māreikura i whakawhiwhia ki te tohu o te kapa hākinakina Māori toa o te tau i Te Tohu Tākaro o Aotearoa i te 2025. Ka miramiratia te rangatira nei a Tara Buckley-Fangatua ko ia te wahine tāpua ki te angitutanga o te kapa māreikura i ngā tau tata nei.

E tāmīramiratia ana ngā kapa Māori me ngā rekoata i tēnei Pūrongo ā-Tau.

E manamanahau ana ki ō tātou kaitākaro Māori katoa, ngā kaiako me ngā kaiwhakahaere kei ngā kapa matua, mai i ngā kapa tamariki, tae rawa ki te Ipu o Farah Palme, te NPC me Heartland, te Super Rugby Aupiki me te Super Rugby, tae atu hoki ki Ngā Mamaku me Ngā Ōpango.

Koia tēnei ka mihi ki ō tātou kaiwhiwhi ā-ao, ā-motu, ā-rohe katoa hoki.

E poho kererū ana mātou ko tō whānau i ā koutou mahi.

### **Hauoratanga: Te whakatairanga i te oranga torowhānui**

He 39,946 ngā kaitākaro Māori i Aotearoa. He 1,808 ngā pouako, ā, he 161 ngā kaiwawao. E āpiti ana ngā tatauranga o ngā reanga me ngā ira, ā, me te horanga ki te pūnaha tākaro. He huhua, he tini noa atu te whānau me ngā kaitūao ka noho hei manawapou o te whutupōro Māori, otirā te whutupōro o Aotearoa.

### **Puawaitanga: Enhance Māori through rugby**

We mihi to Te Wehi Wright and Brad Te Haara for their second years with the Māori All Blacks as Pou Tikanga and manager respectively. We acknowledge Ben Fisher, Matua Ra Durie and the wider team involved in the success of the Māori All Blacks. Ngā mihi nunui ki a koutou.

Finally, congratulations to all of the Māori All Blacks, we mihi to you and your whānau!

We spotlight the Māori All Blacks and their 2025 campaign. Our sincere gratitude to all involved. A new Māori All Blacks jersey was unveiled in 2025 named Te Tauihu Matua (the Chiefly Bow). Kahurangi Matangitoko Falaoa (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Pūkeko) designed the jersey. Ngā mihi nui ki a koe Kahurangi. We wish to pay a particular thank you to Taitokerau Māori Rugby, the whānau of Terenga Paraoa Marae, ngā hapū maha o Whangārei o te Taitokerau anō hoki. E kōrero tonu ana mātou i ō koutou reka!

We celebrate the successes of our national Māori U18 Māreikura and Whatukura teams. Congratulations to our māreikura who were awarded the Māori sports team of the year at the Māori Sports Awards in 2025. We spotlight rangatira Tara Buckley-Fangatua who has been integral to the success of the māreikura team in recent years.

The Māori team lists and records are highlighted in this Annual Report.

Congratulations to all of our Māori players, coaching and management staff who are in representative teams from age grade, through to Farah Palmer Cup, NPC and Heartland, Super Rugby Aupiki and Super Rugby, and the Black Ferns and All Blacks.

Congratulations to all of the international, national and local awardees.

We, alongside your whānau, are incredibly proud of all of your achievements.

### **Hauoratanga: Promote holistic wellbeing**

There are 36,946 Māori players in Aotearoa. There are 1,808 coaches and 161 referees. We have provided a breakdown of ages, and gender, as well as across the playing system. There are many, many more whānau, and volunteers who are the lifeblood of Māori rugby, and of rugby in Aotearoa.

We pay a special thank you to Tiki Edwards, Kahu Carey and the Kūmara Patch. There were over 350 rangatahi

He mihi maioha ki a koe, Tiki Edwards, koutou ko Kahu Carey me te Māra Kūmara. Neke atu i te 350 ngā rangatahi i wahi wāhi ki ō rātou whakangungu ā-rohe i whakahaeretia puta noa i te motu, me te aro anō ki te opeope i ngā rangatahi kia tū hei rangatira, i te taha o ngā rangatira (ngā pouako, ngā kaiwhakahaere me ngā kaitūao). He kaupapa whakahirahira te hōtaka o E Tū Toa o te whutupōro Māori.

### **Te Pae Tawhiti**

Nō te katinga o te whārangi o te tau 2025, tēnei te whakamiha ki ngā mahi a Steve Lancaster, rātou ko Toni Grimshaw, ko Stu Doig ko Jane Miller, ko Heather Dawson hoki, i mahitahi me te Poari inakoa rā i a mātou e urungi haere ana i te tau 2025 i te ngaronga o Matua Luke Crawford. Ehara i te mea tē kitea ā koutou hautūtanga me te tautoko, otiirā he pono te aroha. Tēnei anō ngā mihi ki a koutou katoa.

I ā mātou e anga whakamua ana, me te kawē anō i tō tātou hītori hei hoa haere mō mātou, kua whakatakotoria e te Poari Whutupōro Māori he ara whakamua ngātahi mō te whutupōro Māori, tae noa ki te 2030, i raro i te whakatauki nei "Ara mai he tētēkura". Ka tohu tēnei ki te tipuranga hou, me te oranga hou o ngā tipu rau pītau, i tana whanake hou ki te ao hou.

Ināianei kua huri te aro ki te pitomata mutunga-kore kei roto i te ao whutupōro Māori, me tā mātou koha nui ki te whutupōro i Aotearoa, ā, puta noa ki te ao.

**Nō reira,**

**Kua kati au i konei i raro i ngā āhuatanga o te wā.**

Nā,



**Anne-Marie Jackson**

(Ngāti Whātua, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai,  
Ngāti Kahu o Whangaroa)

Chair

New Zealand Māori Rugby Board

(youth) participants in their regional camps which were held across the country with a focus on rangatahi becoming rangatira, alongside the rangatira (coaches, managers and volunteers). The E Tū Toa programme is a celebrated aspect of Māori rugby and we spotlight the programme as well as Tiki Edwards.

We acknowledge the 20-year service of Tiki Edwards to Māori rugby which was celebrated in 2025. We estimate over 5,000 rangatahi and rangatira have been involved in Tiki's 20 years of mahi. Thank you for your never-ending service and contributions to Māori rugby.

### **Te Pae Tawhiti**

As we close the chapter on 2025, we wish to acknowledge the work of Steve Lancaster, Toni Grimshaw, Stu Doig, Jane Miller and Heather Dawson who have worked closely with the Board particularly as we navigated 2025 without Matua Luke Crawford. Your leadership and support have not gone unnoticed, and Māori rugby are sincerely grateful. Tēnei anō ngā mihi ki a koutou katoa.

As we look to the future, and to always bring forward our history with us, the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board have charted our collective future for Māori rugby to 2030 under the whakatauki of "Ara mai he tētēkura". Ara mai he tētēkura refers to the new growth, and new life of the fern fronds as it regenerates into te ao hou (a new future).

We turn our attention to the infinite potential that exists in Māori rugby and our contribution to rugby in Aotearoa and across the globe.

**Nō reira,**

**Kua kati au i konei i raro i ngā āhuatanga o te wā**

Nā,



**Anne-Marie Jackson**

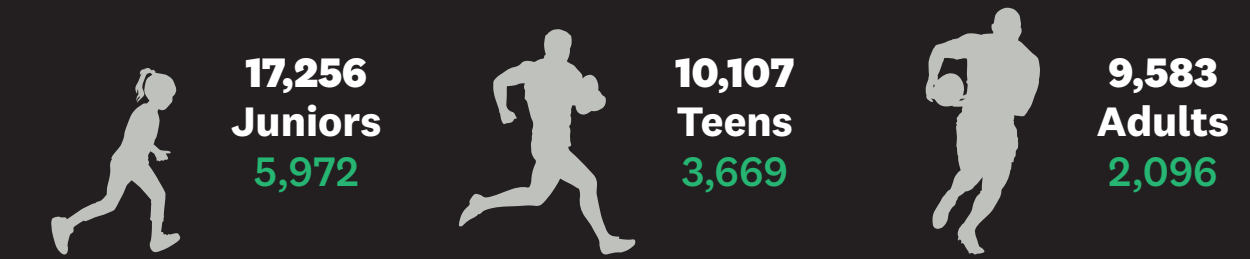
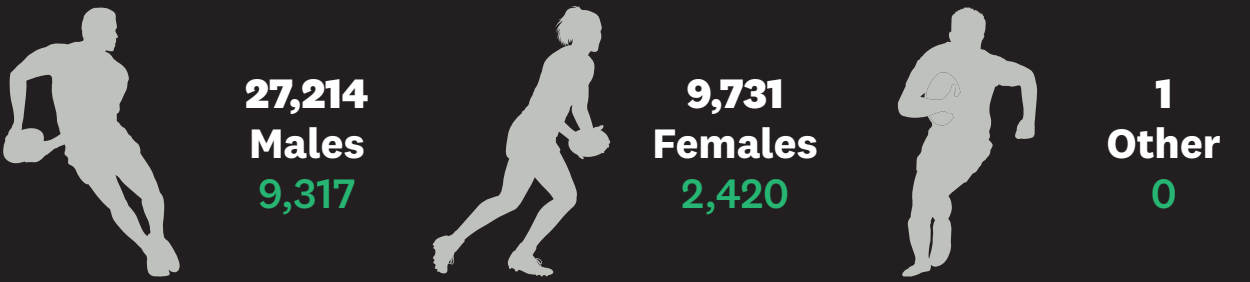
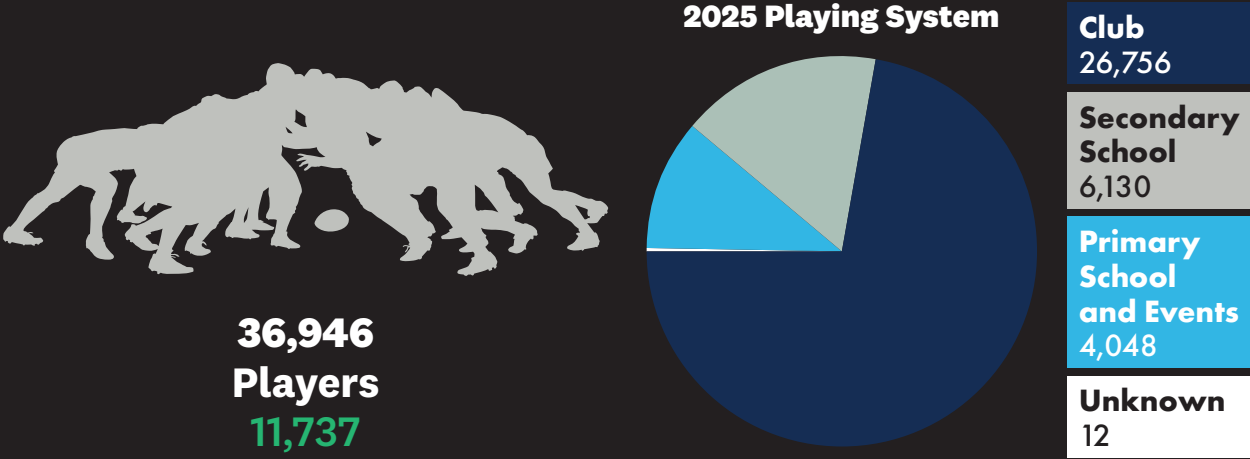
(Ngāti Whātua, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai,  
Ngāti Kahu o Whangaroa)

Chair

New Zealand Māori Rugby Board

**HIGHLIGHTS**

# KEY STATS FOR 2025



## HIGHLIGHTS

# INSIDE NEW ZEALAND RUGBY

A report from Atawhai Tibble, NZR's Māori Advisor

## "Mate atu he Tētēkura! Ara mai he Tētēkura!" (The old frond wilts, the new frond rises)

### Executive Summary

2025 was defined by three things: the quiet resolve of a Board finding its strategic footing; performances on the field that reminded the world why Māori rugby is unique; and the early but meaningful work of embedding cultural stewardship into how the organisation operates. Together, they reflect an organisation that has absorbed its losses and is building deliberately toward what comes next. As New Zealand Rugby evolves, Māori rugby is ready - to align, to contribute, and to lead where it is needed.

### Introduction

Like the natural cycle of the tētēkura, 2025 was a year of both loss and renewal. The passing of our Kaihautū, Luke Crawford, in late 2024 left a significant void. His footprint within the organisation was large, his influence quietly felt across every layer of how rugby and culture intersected. Yet true to the proverb, as one frond fell, others rose swiftly in its place.

The New Zealand Māori Rugby Board (NZMRB) stepped forward with a renewed sense of purpose and clarity, leaning into the responsibility of governance with fresh energy and intent. Their emergence in this moment was not simply a matter of continuity, it was a statement of collective resolve.

Internally too, the focus sharpened. With Māori language and culture sitting at the very heart of the New Zealand Rugby brand - a genuine point of difference on the world stage - the importance of cultural stability was not lost. A cultural stewardship approach was developed and trialled, providing the guidance and grounding the business needed to move forward with confidence. The step up has been real and visible: from rekindling the relationship with Ngāti Toa, to the Māori All Blacks' game in Northland for the Scotland fixture, the launch of the Te Taihu Matua jersey, and the way poi was utilised as the heartbeat for the Black Ferns' World Cup campaign. Each of these moments spoke to something more than performance, they reflected a deepening commitment to a model of collective stewardship and a more relational than transactional approach to engaging with Te Ao Māori.

The wider evolution of New Zealand Rugby presents both a moment of challenge and one of opportunity. The NZMRB is positioned to meet it with strategic clarity, cultural credibility, and a Board that knows what it brings to the table.

The karakia and rituals Matua Luke cultivated are now part of the fabric of how this organisation moves - absorbed, practiced, and carried forward by those around him. His legacy is not something held behind; it is the ground beneath what is being built ahead. As the proverb reminds us, the falling of one frond does not diminish the future, it drives it.

### He Tētēkura Ka Taka Noa

In 2025, the Māori rugby community bid farewell to several pillars of the game. Their contributions are the bedrock upon which the sport stands, and their service is acknowledged here with the deepest respect. In their own way, each of them fed the plant, and what they gave continues to grow. You can find those we are paying respect to on page 2.

### Leadership and Vision

Under the leadership of Chair Anne-Marie Jackson, the NZMRB has undergone a quiet but meaningful transformation. The Board has moved with intention, shifting from a reactive posture to a proactive one, and in doing so, has sharpened its identity as a strategic entity within New Zealand Rugby. The focus has been deliberate: to ensure that Māori rugby has a clear, credible, and well-prepared voice at the tables where decisions about the game's future are made.

This has required the Board to look inward as much as outward; investing in its own capability, its own processes, and its own clarity of purpose. The result is a Board that is better equipped, more strategically focused, and increasingly confident in the weight it carries as a partner within the wider governance of the game. What has been built in 2025 is not an ending point, it is a platform.

At a moment when New Zealand Rugby is navigating significant change, Māori rugby enters the conversation well-prepared with a clear sense of its own value, and a genuine readiness to align and contribute.

Two initiatives speak clearly to this direction:

- **Māori in Governance Initiative:** Māori administrators are being supported through Institute of Directors foundation courses, a deliberate investment in the next generation of rugby leadership. The intent is straightforward: that the boardrooms of the future are led by people who carry both world-class expertise and genuine cultural grounding. See more on page 24.
- **The Māori Rugby Rohe Survey:** The Board has moved toward a more grounded approach to advocacy, rooted in the voices of the rohe itself. By gathering insights directly from Māori rugby communities, the NZMRB is building the kind of authority that comes not just from position, but from listening.

You can read more about Māori rugby activity in our Regional Board reports on page 28.

## Māori Rugby Performance

On the field, 2025 offered moments that reminded the world why Māori rugby holds a unique place in the game. In a year that carried its share of difficulty, the performances, and the culture behind them, pointed consistently forward.

- **Codie Taylor 100 Tests:** Codie's 100th Test appearance for the All Blacks was more than a personal milestone. It was a marker of what sustained excellence looks like, a leader who has carried his whakapapa onto the world stage without losing sight of where he comes from.
- **Māori All Blacks in Japan:** Under Head Coach Ross Filipo, the Māori All Blacks defeated the Japan XV with a performance of genuine quality (53-20). It was a great way to awaken the new jersey's mauri - a reminder that preparation begins long before kick-off, and that cultural grounding and on-field performance are not separate things. They grow from the same root.
- **Māori All Blacks v Scotland in Whangārei:** Taking the game north to Whangārei was an act of intent. Hosting an international fixture in the rohe of Northland iwi with clear leadership from Te Taitokerau Māori Rugby demonstrated what regional Māori rugby can hold and what it can offer. A narrow 29-26 loss does not diminish what was achieved: a 28-phase attacking sequence stretching into the 86th minute showed a team that refused to yield, and a crowd that understood exactly what was at stake. The loss fed the hunger. The future is watching.

## He Tētēkura Ka Ara Mai

The excellence of the Māori community across 2025 reflects a future that is genuinely bright on the field - in the stands, and behind the scenes. You can find these achievements on page 20, where every name represents not just achievement, but the rising of the next frond.

## Internal Stability: Being Good Kaitiaki

For New Zealand Rugby to remain credible on the world stage and respectful within Aotearoa, its relationship with Te Ao Māori must be more than a brand asset. It must be a living commitment. That means relationships with iwi, Māori communities, and Māori artists that are built on trust and reciprocity, not convenience. The work of 2025 has been to lay that foundation with care.

To support this, the Kaitiaki Approach was developed and trialed across 2025. This is a cultural stewardship framework designed to guide the appropriate and respectful use of Māori culture within the NZR brand and its services. It is an approach that looks both inward and forward, ensuring that what is inherited is honoured, and what is built next is worthy of that inheritance.

- **Rekindling the relationship with Ngāti Toa:** A meeting between Ngāti Toa and All Blacks leadership marked a significant step in reestablishing the stewardship of Ka Mate. The All Blacks do not own this taonga, they are its custodians, and that relationship requires ongoing tending. Rekindling it was not a conclusion, it was a beginning.
- **Cultural Integrity in the Black Ferns' storytelling:** The kaitiaki lens has helped shape how poi, waiata, and kapa haka are woven into the Black Ferns' campaign, not as performance but as expression rooted in whakapapa and carried with authenticity. The difference is felt as much as it is seen.
- **Te Tauihu Matua - a jersey with a story:** Designed by Kahurangi Falaoa, the new Māori All Blacks jersey draws on the image of the prow of the waka - Te Tauihu - the place where the leader stands, facing what lies ahead. The market response has been strong, and rightly so. Authentic storytelling resonates because it is true.

**Conclusion: A Steady Prow, A Strengthened Foundation**

2025 was a year of genuine progress, not without its challenges, but marked by a growing clarity of purpose within the NZMRB. The Board enters the next chapter with a sharpened vision and a strengthened sense of its own mandate - well-positioned to be a credible and constructive partner within the wider NZR whānau. The strategic frameworks are in place, the relationships are being tended, and the direction is clear. The conditions for a strong future are being built, steadily and with intent.

What this year has demonstrated, above all, is that Māori rugby does not stand still in the face of loss, it grows through it. The fronds that fell in 2025 fed the ground. The fronds now rising do so with clarity, with purpose, and with the full weight of everything that came before them.

As the tētēkura reminds us, the falling of one frond does not diminish the future. It enables it.



## RECOGNITION

# AWARDS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## 2025 NEW ZEALAND RUGBY AWARDS

### Sky Super Rugby Aupiki Player of the Year

Winner: Portia Woodman-Wickliffe (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu ki Whaingaroa, Ngāti Porou)

### New Zealand Rugby Age Grade Player of the Year

Winner: Braxton Sorensen-McGee (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai)

### ASB National Women's Coach of the Year

Winner: Willie Walker (Whakatohea, Ngāti Porou, Te Whanau-a-Apanui, Ngāpuhi)

### ASB New Zealand Coach of the Year

Winner: Cory Sweeney (Ngāti Whātua ki Kaipara)

### Tom French Memorial Māori Player of the Year

Winner: Portia Woodman-Wickliffe (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu ki Whaingaroa, Ngāti Porou)

### Black Ferns Player of the Year

Winner: Braxton Sorensen-McGee (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai)

## 2025 WORLD RUGBY AWARDS

### World Rugby Women's 15s Breakthrough Player of the Year

Braxton Sorensen-McGee (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai)

### World Rugby Women's 15s Dream Team of the Year

Kaipo Olsen-Baker (Ngāti Porou)  
Braxton Sorensen-McGee (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai)

## 2025 MĀORI SPORTS AWARDS

### Ngā Ika ā Whiro

#### Māori Sports Team of the Year

Mareikura U18 Wāhine Māori Team

### Te Tama-ā-Ranginui

#### Junior Māori Sportsman of the Year

Dylan Pledger (Ngāti Tūwharetoa)

### Te Tamāhine-ā-Papatūānuku

#### Junior Māori Sportswoman of the Year

Braxton Sorensen-McGee (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai)

### Te Maru ō Tūmataurangi

#### Māori Sports Coach of the Year

Marty Bourke (Waikato Tainui)

### Te Aratiatia

#### Māori Sports Umpire/Referee of the Year

Ben O'Keeffe (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Whātua)

### Te Kunenga Ki Pūrehuroa

#### Massey University Scholarship

Te Maia Sweetman (Rangitāne ki Tāmaki Nui a Rua)

## 2025 KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

### Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit

Mrs Portia Louise Woodman-Wickliffe (Ngāpuhi/Ngāti Kahu ki Whaingaroa/Ngāti Porou), of Mount Maunganui. For services to rugby.

## 2026 NEW YEAR HONOURS

### Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit

Mr Roger Bruce Douglas Drummond, of Wellington. For services to rugby and Māori.



**Judges' citation for  
the Tom French  
Memorial Player  
of the Year Award**

Portia Woodman-Wickcliffe's playing career speaks for itself, and this season was no different on the field, coming out of retirement to pursue another Rugby World Cup victory. Over the past 18 months, she's also stepped up in her public representation of her Māori culture. From speaking on a marae in Northland, to speaking te reo Māori in the media, her pride in her culture and desire to inspire young Māori to chase their dreams has been even more evident in 2025.

# CELEBRATING TIKI EDWARDS

## 2025 marked 20 years of service by Tiki Edwards, New Zealand Rugby's Māori Rugby Development Manager.

Tiki joined NZR in August 2005 to develop and lead a programme to uplift young Māori rugby players by connecting them to their identity. Over that time, he has provided opportunities for both young tāne and wāhine to deepen their understanding of themselves, their whakapapa and te ao Māori using rugby as the vehicle.

Over 5,000 rangatahi have passed through the E Tū Toa programme, enhancing their rugby abilities and also emerging with important life skills developed from daily chores in camp kitchens and on marae. Known for his signature smile and infectious laugh, Tiki brings this positivity to his mahi, ensuring that young people know they are loved and respected for who they are off the field, and that aroha travels with them when the camps conclude. This is a non-negotiable in Tiki's vision – inspiring rangatahi to believe in their own value and potential as people, and to be proud to be Māori.

Hundreds of adults have supported Tiki as coaches, managers and cultural kaitiaki, affectionately named the 'kūmara patch'.

These rangatira are encouraged to continue supporting the kaupapa with youth and in rugby governance in their regions, building Māori capability within the rugby system and ensuring Tiki's mahi lasts beyond their time in camp.

The programme has served as a wonderful pathway for players. Many have progressed into the Māori All Blacks, and over recent years, several have debuted for Teams in Black across both XV's and sevens. Other highlights include the Whatukura historic first win over the New Zealand Schools team, and the Māreikura winning last year's Māori Sports Team of the Year.

20 years is a significant length of time to dedicate to a kaupapa with the depth of passion and commitment Tiki has for these programmes. With that, we acknowledge and thank his whānau, Trudy, Janita and Johnny, for sharing Tiki with the game.

Tiki is immensely respected around the country, including by elders of Māori rugby. His long service was celebrated by New Zealand Rugby throughout 2025, and the Māori Rugby Board are gifting a taonga in appreciation for his mahi within the game.

**“What Tiki sees in this kaupapa is unbelievable. When he arrives, the whole aura shifts, the wairua of the camp lifts. His commitment to the development of our rangatahi and to the growth of Māori rugby is something you can feel instantly.”**

Tara Buckley-Fangatua, Māori Rugby Development Programme Rangatira

**“Tiki would always say ‘We know you can play rugby, but what kind of person are you?’ He wanted us to focus just as much on connection, hard work and being a good person. He always has a smile on his face and is willing to connect with you at any time.”**

Stanley Solomon, Māori Rugby Development Programme alumni, NZ U20s, Wellington Lions and Highlanders squad member.



## SPOTLIGHT

# MĀORI RUGBY GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

**An off-field highlight of 2025 was the pilot of a Māori Rugby Governance Development Programme, an initiative designed by Māori to uplift and prepare Māori governors for future rugby leadership.**

Delivered in partnership with New Zealand Rugby and the Institute of Directors, this kaupapa was dedicated to strengthening Māori leadership and representation across all levels of rugby governance. The inaugural cohort brought together emerging and experienced Māori directors from across the motu. Over a full day of wānanga, participants built deep connections, engaged in whakawhanaungatanga, explored governance practices grounded in te ao Māori values and shared aspirations for Māori in rugby. Core governance learning was interwoven with cultural safety, lived experience, and real rugby case studies, creating a meaningful environment for reflection, growth, and shared aspiration.

The session highlighted the importance of creating spaces that empower Māori leadership. This kaupapa resonated strongly with participants, including former Black Ferns captain Les Elder (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Hauā), who had been recently appointed as an emerging director to our Board.

Ngā mihi nui to the following people:

- Kiriwaitangi Rei for her expert facilitation
- Merewakaana Kingi and Daryn Bean as NZMRB champions for this mahi
- Ewan Heron for his support from IoD
- Judy O'Brien and Atawhai Tibble for steering from within NZR for this mahi
- NZR's Steve Lancaster and Toni Grimshaw who have been champions for this mahi

Our Board and New Zealand Rugby share a vision to grow Māori leadership and representation across our game, and we look forward to future iterations of this programme.



## SPOTLIGHT

# GLOBAL YOUTH SEVENS

Over many decades the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board has made a strong commitment to developing Māori Rugby across the many age groups, and in 2025, the Board supported the Aotearoa-Māori Rugby Sevens and Waitaha Māori Rugby programmes in attending the Global Youth Sevens event held in December.

In 2025, the Aotearoa-Māori boys finished third, improving on last year's result, and the girls won Division 2.

Waitaha Māori Rugby also sent a team to the tournament, including a cultural exchange with an Australian Aboriginal side, showcasing the special connection between Indigenous groups in sport.

The tournament provides opportunities for Māori within Sevens, both at playing and coaching level. The tournament provides a chance for the rugby world to get eyes on our people and their skills, creating a range of possible pathways for them within the game.

The values of the programmes include:

- Be highly competitive at the world tournament
- Select the best Māori players available
- Incorporate high performance and tikanga (into a unique and global proposition)
- Embed team into our Sevens Team tikanga / kawa
- Manage and monitor stakeholder expectations
- Provide a conducive Māori rugby environment
- Develop young Māori men and women on and off the field

Having a unique Māori world view enables the programme to play a brand of rugby that is exciting, has flare and is highly entertaining, which sets them apart from the rest of the world.

On behalf of the Board, we'd like to thank all the coaches and volunteers who support the athletes in the lead up and during the tournament, as well as the players for their dedication and commitment to representing Māori Rugby at this level.



## SPOTLIGHT

# MĀORI ALL BLACKS JERSEY – TE TAUIHU MATUA

The meaning behind the new Māori All Blacks jersey, designed by Kahurangi Falaoa (Ngāti Tūwharetoa).

The jersey is a powerful symbol of whakapapa, connection, and identity, designed by Ngāti Tūwharetoa artist Kahurangi Falaoa. It replaces the previous design by Dave Burke (Ngāi Tahu) and Māori All Blacks Kaumātua, Luke Crawford (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Porou and Ngāti Toa). The previous jersey was farewelled with the help of Ngāti Toa and Te Āti Awa tohunga.

**Two manaia** – *“Kei a Tū te tapuwae, Kei a Rongo te tapuwae”* Stand in the sacred footprints of Tū-mata-uenga (God of war), and Rongo (God of peace).

A manaia is seen as a kaitiaki, a guardian who can cross between the two realms of the living and the dead. They watch over us. The two manaia represent Tū, god of war and Rongo, god of peace. The player has to be balanced, both aggressive but controlled. Like Yin and Yang, they must coexist. The kōwhaiwhai pattern, puhoro, which are seen inside the manaia represents speed and agility. These patterns are often seen on the front of waka, which can also be seen on the waka below, and are attributed to speed – the traits of a warrior, or modern-day rugby player.

**The waka taua** – *“Ehara te toa takitahi, engari, he toa takiini”* My strength is not that of one, but of many.

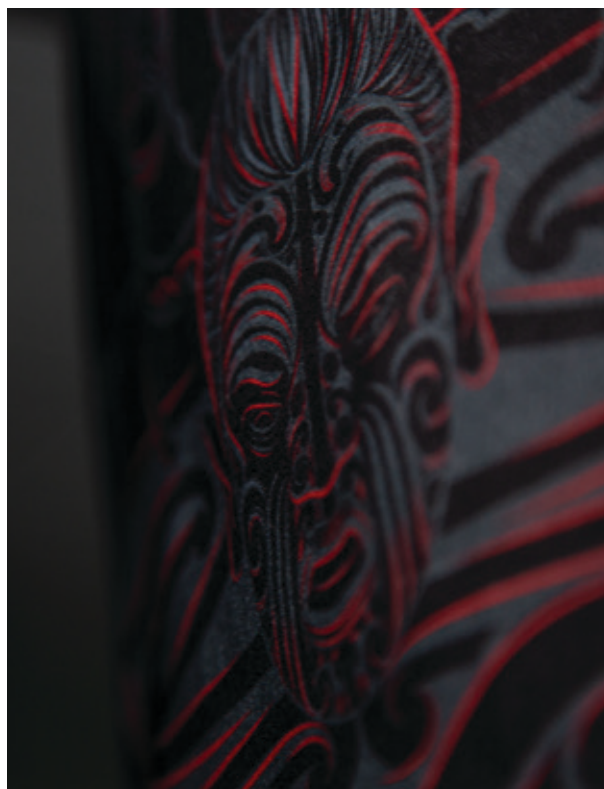
This is the front view of a waka taua, a traditional Māori war canoe whose purpose was to transport warriors along the highway of rivers to get closer to their destination of battle. To paddle these waka, the warriors needed to be paddling in unison, much like that of the team. To be a great team, they need to be of one heartbeat. Everyone puts their paddles in the water at the same time and pulls them out at the same time, every stroke. When approaching the enemy, be careful not to make a splash so as not to alert their enemy. All these skills are what is needed to make a great rugby team. The waka is the Māori All Black team, the players are the warriors on board the waka taua.

**Tētēkura** – *“Ka hinga he tētēkura, ka ora he tētēkura”* When one leader falls, another will rise.

The head of the waka. This figure sits just above the water and pierces through the waves of the ocean and currents of the rivers, breaking the water for the waka to follow. The tētēkura faces the many challenges of rivers and oceans, setting an example for those that follow. Tētēkura is also seen as a young leader. When one falls, another rises in its place. For now, they are the custodian of the korowai (Māori All Blacks jersey), and all actions in the jersey must reflect those of the past, present and future, as only a select few will ever wear the it.

**Poutama** – *“Tāne-nui-a-Rangi”* Tāne of the greatest heaven.

This pattern represents the path that Tāne took when he ascended to the heavens to retrieve the baskets of knowledge for mankind to live in the world he had created. The poutama pattern in this sense represents the players striving for excellence. For their family, hapū and iwi. The pattern represents the hard work and sacrifice a player has undertaken to make the team, much like the journey that Tāne took to the highest heaven.





## RECAP

# REGIONAL BOARD SPOTLIGHTS

Updates from our Regional Boards across the country, outlining rugby activities and celebrations throughout 2025.

## TE HIKU O TE IKA

### Tournaments

#### Te Hiku o Te Ika Māori Rugby Tournament

The Te Hiku Regional Tournament once again demonstrated that the true measure of success is not simply competition, but whānaungatanga. The regular preparation, collaboration and collective intent leading into October reflected a strong commitment to our kaupapa.

Our Tournament was played over two Saturdays:

- Saturday 11 October hosted by Counties Manukau, Waiuku RFC
- Saturday 18 October hosted by Te Hiku O Te Ika at Iwi of Origin

Our total number of teams were 12 across five grades. Participating teams were:

- U14s: Counties Manukau Whero, Counties Manukau Pango, Tāmaki Makaurau
- U16 Tama: Counties Manukau Whero, Tāmaki Paki Toa, Tāmaki Paki Tu, Te Raki Paewhenua
- U16 Kōhine: Counties Manukau
- U18s: Tāmaki, Te Raki Paewhenua
- Tāne: Counties Manukau
- Wāhine: Te Hiku o Te Ika

All the beauty and magic of Māori Rugby was evident over the two weekends, from our powhiri / whakatau, to the haka, free flowing Māori Rugby to the kai that fed each and everyone of our kaitaakaro.

We were well looked after and supported by our host club and rohe, and our fields were surrounded by our whānau who travelled from around Tāmaki. We had referees support our tournament from the three different Provincial Unions who have returned from previous years as they recognise the specialness of the kaupapa and enjoy being a part of the brand of rugby we are renowned for.

### Iwi of Origin

Our second week of tournament, we took Māori Rugby to be a part of a bigger Māori sport & whānau-focused event held in Takaanini, also featuring netball, touch, basketball, and soccer, Māori Games, Kiorahi and Kaumatua Games. All participants whakapapa Māori.

At Iwi of Origin, whānau, marae and hapū come together to represent their iwi through ancestral games, traditional games, contemporary sports and activities. The event works closely with tangata whaikaha services to ensure the kaupapa is accessible through adaptive sports, mobility support and inclusive design.

Being part of the event not only lifted the profile of our kaupapa, gave us whānau opportunity to be included in other activities, it also provided a small income opportunity and helped us cover costs of the day.



### Te Hiku O Te Ika Māori Wāhine v Manu Sina

During the second week, THOTI Wāhine assembled in Auckland with 24 hours preparation before playing Manu Sina as they prepared for the Rugby World Cup. Māori dominated the entire game and went on to win convincingly, 42-14. The game was played at Manukau Rovers, with the team staying at Makaurau Marae. An amazing crowd showed up to tautoko and we enjoyed post match connection our Samoan Sisters and celebrate our cultures through rugby.

The team had a full staff of wāhine as team management and was quickly able to gather a team that revelled in the opportunity to play Manu Sina but also under the korowai of being Māori. Management included people who had years of high level experience players and made great coaches: Ravinia Everitt, Aroha Savage, Renee Woodman-Wickcliffe, Arihiana Tauhinu, Steph Te Ohaere-Fox - all former Black Ferns. We hope to build on future fixtures for this team and keep developing what has been started.

There was Māori Rugby within our wider rohe happening at fixtures outside of our tournament weekends, Counties especially participated in other opportunities, their Tāne playing three pre seasons games as alternative to tournament. They also sent two teams up to Northland Regional Tournament that gave them to opportunity to play against mainstream teams.

### Acknowledgements

On behalf of the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board, we would like to extend our thanks to Chair Rob Clark for accompanying the Māori All Blacks to Japan in 2025, and for your roles in representing Te Hiku and your whānau, in supporting the tikanga and kawa of the Māori All Blacks. You were able to provide the additional korowai manaaki for the team and management. He kōrero tahi, he mahi tahi, he painga mō te iwi. Ngā mihi nunui ki a koe.



# REGIONAL BOARD SPOTLIGHT

## TE TINI A MĀUI

### Tournaments & Fixtures

Although no tournaments were held in 2025, within our region we successfully fielded twelve teams (Senior men, U18 & U16 tane). Collectively these teams played 46 games, providing over 300 players the opportunity to represent their rohe throughout the season. The Board provided financial support to every team that took the field, ensuring equitable access and strong representation across various grades.

### Highlights

During 2025, a governance health survey was distributed to each region. The insights gained were invaluable and directly informed the development of our strategic platform. The survey reaffirmed that while we have strong foundations, there remains considerable work to ensure our systems provide the best possible opportunities for our whānau to engage and thrive.

The Board reached an important milestone with the successful completion of a two-day strategic planning hui at Waipatu Marae. This wānanga resulted in the development of a comprehensive five-year strategic plan that sets a clear pathway for our future direction, strengthens our governance frameworks, and enhances opportunities for whānau participation across our kaupapa. The plan also aligns closely with, and is reinforced by, the key insights highlighted through our recent governance health survey.

To continue strengthening relationships across the wider rugby landscape, Te Tini a Māui were honoured to participate in a pōwhiri for David Kirk, Chair of New Zealand Rugby, along with his wife Brigit and their whānau, at Waipatu Marae, Hastings in December. It was a deeply meaningful occasion, with David and his whānau also receiving a tour of the marae complex, which included an opportunity to view the Te Tini a Māui rugby taonga.

Overall, across our region, relationships with Provincial Unions continue to grow. An example of this continued growth is a recent collaboration between Te Matau a Māui (Hawke's Bay Māori Rugby), Hawke's Bay Rugby Union and Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga. This collaboration has created a Māori Rugby Development/Hauora role with a focus on rangatahi active participation and hauora within schools. This is a 'pilot' programme designed to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes for rangatahi and the collaboration is the first of its type in the region between an Iwi Authority, Provincial Union and regional Māori Rugby.

A significant piece of work we undertook over the year was the development of a Te Tini a Māui Taonga Policy. This policy ensures the long-term protection and guardianship of all trophies under our care. Our taonga are beautiful treasures which we have a duty to protect and care for, and our Board are working to ensure that alongside care and protection, all taonga are played for regularly each season.

### Acknowledgements

#### Bereavement

**Mr Thomas (Tom) Eruera Whanaupani Mulligan (MNZM)**  
 – NZMRB Chair 1996-2000  
 HBRFU Life Member 1998, NZRU Council, NZRU Board.  
 Tom dedicated many years to rugby as an administrator, including service on the NZRU Council and NZRU Board, and he was Chair of the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board from 1996-2000.

#### Long Service

**Mr Valentine Morrison**  
 Val has served on the Te Tini a Māui Board for over 27 years. He has held various roles including Deputy Chair, Secretary and served on the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board.



# REGIONAL BOARD SPOTLIGHT

## TE WAIPOUNAMU

### Tournaments

#### Rangatahi Ahurei

The Rangatahi Ahurei 2025 was our largest since its inception 38 years ago. There were 17 teams for the Ahurei at Kaiapoi. We are particularly excited by the addition of an U13s grade which was a whānau-led desire and a sure sign of the growth of Māori Rugby across Te Waipounamu. The participation numbers are proof that the hard work our rohe are doing is providing opportunities for Māori players to participate and remain in our game. A huge acknowledgement to Kaiapoi RFC for hosting our Ahurei and to the Canterbury Referees for their professionalism and support.

- Hosted by Waitaha Māori Rugby in Kaiapoi
- 17 Teams in total (winners of grade in brackets)
  - U13 Tamātane (Waitaha)
  - U13 Tamāhine (Waitaha)
  - U17 Taiohi (Waitaha)
  - U17 Kōhine (Waitaha)
  - U15 Tamatāne (Ōtākou)
  - U15 Kōhine (Te Taiuhu)
- 450+ rangatahi & tamariki (players)
- 80+ Hāpai Ō (volunteers)

#### Pahake Ahurei

It was a true highlight of 2025 to be able to put on a Pahake Ahurei. We haven't be able to do so in over two years and it has energised us. This year included teams from Murihiku, Waitaha and Ōtākou across wāhine and colts grades. We are looking forward to re-establishing this kaupapa to its once-flourishing state again.

- Hosted by Waitaha Māori Rugby in Kaiapoi
- Four teams (winners of grade in brackets)
  - Wāhine (Waitaha)
  - Colts (Ōtākou)
- 80 players
- 20+ Hāpai Ō

### Acknowledgements

#### Bereavements

He kura i tangihia he maimai aroha ki a rātou mā ō tātou mate kua riro atu ki te pō. Ko Tumu Te Heuheu Tūkino VIII, ko Matua David Ellison ko Mike "Wattsie" Watts, ko Shane Christie anō hoki tērā. Me okioki koutou ki te okinga a ngā mātua o tua whakarere. Nō reira, moe mārire te moe, e au ai te moe e rarau.

#### Life Members Taonga

Te Waipounamu Māori Rugby were able to retrospectively award taonga to two of our three Life Members. Matua Wiremu Kingita Te Pohe (Bill) Bush MNZM and Matua William Matthews. These esteemed kaumatua of ours attend every kaupapa and continue to work hard for their respective rohe and for Te Waipounamu Māori Rugby whānui. We continue to be blessed with the mentorship and guidance of our Life Members.

#### Long Service

Te Waipounamu Māori Rugby would like to acknowledge Matua Richard Milner, who after 11 years stepped down as Chair of Canterbury Māori Rugby "Waitaha". The Canterbury Māori Rugby Waitaha Council have worked hard to grow their organisation and ensure that Waitaha Māori Rugby remains relevant in our changing environment. Waitaha continue to set the standard for other Māori provincial unions across the motu. Matua Richie hasn't gone too far though; he will still serve on the Waitaha board. E rere ana ngā mihi aroha ki a koe e te rangatira.





TEAMS AND RESULTS

# MĀORI ALL BLACKS

## 2025 SEASON

- 28 June Tokyo  
Māori All Blacks 53 • 20 Japan XV
- 05 July Whangārei  
Māori All Blacks 26 • 29 Scotland



\*denotes Māori All Black debutant in 2025.



**Antonio Shalfoon \***  
(Whakatōhea)  
Tasman, Crusaders

**Bailyn Sullivan**  
(Ngāti Kahungunu)  
Waikato, Hurricanes

**Benet Kumeroa**  
(Te Aitihaunui a Pāpārangī)  
Bay of Plenty, Chiefs

**Caleb Delany**  
(Ngāti Tūwharetoa)  
Wellington, Hurricanes

**Cole Forbes**  
(Ngāti Awa)  
Bay of Plenty, Blues

**Corey Evans**  
(Te Aupouri, Ngāti Kahu)  
Northland, Blues

**Cullen Grace**  
(Ngāti Whakaue)  
Canterbury, Crusaders

**Daniel Rona**  
(Te Ātiawa)  
Taranaki, Chiefs

**Gideon Wrampling \***  
(Ngāti Hine, Ngāpuhi)  
Waikato, Chiefs

**Isaia Walker-Leawere**  
(Ngāti Porou)  
Hawke's Bay, Hurricanes

**Jacob Devery \***  
(Te Aitanga a Mahaki)  
Hawke's Bay, Hurricanes

**Jahrome Brown \***  
(Ngāti Porou)  
Waikato, Chiefs

**Jared Proffit \***  
(Ngāti Porou)  
Taranaki, Chiefs

**Jonah Lowe**  
(Ngāti Pīkiao)  
Hawke's Bay, Highlanders

**Kade Banks \***  
(Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Whātua)  
North Harbour, Hurricanes

**Kaleb Trask**  
(Ngāpuhi)  
Bay of Plenty, Chiefs

**Kemara Hauiti-Parapara \***  
(Ngāi Tai, Ngāti Porou)  
Auckland

**Kershaw Sykes-Martin \***  
(Ngāti Porou)  
Tasman, Crusaders

**Kurt Eklund**  
(Ngāti Kahu)  
Bay of Plenty, Blues

**Laghan McWhannell**  
(Ngāti Kahungunu)  
Waikato, Blues

**Mason Tupaea \***  
(Ngaati Tiipa, Ngaati Amaru)  
Waikato, Blues

**Nikora Broughton**  
(Ngā Rauru, Ngāti Ruanui)  
Bay of Plenty, Highlanders

**Pouri Rakete-Stones**  
(Ngāpuhi)  
Hawke's Bay, Hurricanes

**Rivez Reihana**  
(Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Hine,  
Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Tūwharetoa)  
Northland, Crusaders

**Sam Nock**  
(Ngāpuhi)  
Northland, Blues

**Te Kamaka Howden**  
(Tūhoe)  
Manawatū, Hurricanes

**Xavi Taele \***  
(Ngāi Tahu)  
Auckland, Blues

**Zach Gallagher \***  
(Te Ātiawa)  
Canterbury, Hurricanes

**Zarn Sullivan**  
(Ngāti Kahungunu)  
Hawke's Bay, Blues

## MANAGEMENT

**Ross Filipo**  
(Muaūopko)  
Pouako Matua

**Roger Randle**  
(Ngāti Awa)  
Pouako Āwhina

**Greg Feek**  
(Ngāti Kahungunu)  
Pouako Āwhina

**Brad Te Haara**  
(Ngāpuhi/Ngāti Rangī)  
Kaiwhakahaere Tīma

**Christos Argus**  
Kaiwhakahaere Whakapakari

**Jayson Ross**  
(Ngāti Kahungunu)  
Kaitātari Whakatutukitanga

**Thomas Warehaugh**  
Kairomiromi

**Rawiri Durie**  
Tākuta

**Ben Fisher**  
Kaiwhakahaere Kaupapa

**Ezra Iupeli**  
Kaiarahi Mahi Whakahaere

**Jordyn Steel**  
(Ngāti Hei)  
Kaiarumoni

**Caitlin Madden**  
Kaiwhakahaere Hunga  
Pāpāoho

**Callum Smith**  
Kaiwhakahaere Konae  
Ipurangi

**Te Wehi Wright**  
(Te Awara, Ngāruahine,  
Ngāti Whītīkaupeka,  
Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa,  
Ngāti Raukawa)  
Cultural Advisor

**Chelsea Scott**  
Kaiarumoni



# MĀORI ALL BLACKS CAMPAIGN 2025

## An update from Māori All Blacks Management

A huge amount of excitement surrounded the 2025 assembly with a return to face the Japan XV and playing at home in Aotearoa versus Tier One opposition Scotland.

With reflection on the impact and contribution to the kaupapa from Matua Luke consistently present, the squad, were strongly led by Ross Filipo in his second and final year with the team.

We also said farewell to some long serving management members Roger Randle (coach), Christos Argus (strength and conditioning), Jordyn Steel (commercial) and Jayson Ross (analyst), who were recognised for their commitment and aroha to the team and legacy.

We welcomed some new additions to the management team: Caitlin Madden (media), Chelsea Scott (commercial) and Mark Roberts (analyst), and we look forward to their contributions in the coming years.

Ross led the campaign driving the focus areas of the kaupapa of Angitutanga Protect, Perform and Pass Down, with all staff approaching their mahi with that lens. There was no shortage of motivation with the programme ahead and the team came together well over the first few days in Auckland. This included an amazing team naming involving a local kapa haka group and a visit to Ngāti Whātua and Ōrākei marae to raise the wairua. Thank you to Ngāti Whātua ki Ōrākei. Being welcomed to Ōrākei was an important part of our kaupapa as the Māori All Blacks belong to our whānau.

A few short training days and a trip to Tokyo followed, before the team ran out against the Japan XV as convincing winners. Understandably the team took some time for the combinations to gel, but piled on the points in the second half with a resounding 53 – 20 victory. Pleasingly there were eight new debutants amongst the 23, who were able to run out for the first time in the jersey designed by Kahurangi Falaoa (Ngāti Tūwharetoa). You could see and feel the inspiration the players got when they heard from Kahu about the designs and the meaning of the jersey. Stories of the two manaia, the waka taua, tētēkura and poutama were brought to life in the wānanga.

The team reviewed, recovered and quickly transitioned back to New Zealand to set up a week in Whangārei that everyone was looking really forward to. Being able to spend the week up north, where many players whakapapa to, playing in front our people and whanau was special with the added excitement of playing Scotland.

The group was welcomed to the region and spent some time at Terenga Paraoa Marae, before setting into the rugby preparation. Many community engagements were held during the week which is a reflection of the vital role the team plays to represent whānau, hapu and iwi, be role models for tamariki and uplift Māori.

Thank you to ngā hapū o te Taitokerau and Taitokerau Māori Rugby. The manaaki that we received, and all of the hard work and preparation that went into hosting us, was incredible. E kore e mimiti ngā tai o mihi!

The match was an outstanding occasion with local Sam Nock grabbing the first try to the delight of the big crowd. Scotland showed their ability to exploit mistakes and kick space to go ahead 24-12 at half time and then extend to 29-12 after a couple of yellow cards for the home team. The Māori All Blacks came back strong and scored two tries in reply to move to 26-29 to set up an exciting last 10 minutes. A late penalty attempt to take the draw was turned down to go for the win but we couldn't execute the lineout drive and the score remained the same.

A memorable after match brought two proud cultures together in celebration of what had been an inspirational week for the teams and all involved.

The group left excited and motivated about the chance to play Tier 1 opposition in years to come and hopefully a rematch versus Scotland one day is on the cards.

Despite the loss, overall, the campaign was viewed by all as a huge success. The players left with their wairua restored, immensely proud to be Māori, inspired to continue their cultural journey and continue to be role models.



Gallagher  
INSURANCE



ALTRAD

## TEAMS AND RESULTS

# TŪ TOA MĀREIKURA, TU TOA WHATUKURA

### The E Tū Toa Māreikura and Whatukura programme is a shining light of Māori rugby.

In 2025, the programme was led by Tiki Edwards (Māori Rugby Development Manager) with support from Kahu Carey (Māori Rugby Development Officer) and many Māori rugby volunteers around the country (known as the Kūmara Patch).

The programme has a focus on turning rangatahi into rangatira, and teaches young people about Māori values and ways of living.

This could be through karakia, waiata, pepeha, mihimihi, traditional Māori games using rākau, and finally, rugby-specific drills.

In 2025, over 370 participants were part of the regional camps held across the country. Regional camps were held in April across the motu. Rangatahi were supported by numerous rangatira to develop coaching, management and cultural capability around the country.

91 ngā whatukura and ngā māreikura were selected from regional camps held across the country to attend national camp, from which the national sides were selected. Once again, they were supported by over 50 rangatira while in camp.

An increasing number of players who have attended these camps are progressing to higher honours in rugby, be it at provincial or Super Rugby level, the Māori All Blacks or other Teams in Black.

In recent years, the programme celebrated its second and third All Blacks when Cortez Ratima (#1214) and Ruben Love (#1223) debuted against England and Japan respectively. Justine McGregor, a former Māreikura camp attendee, debuted for the Black Ferns Sevens in December 2025.

### Our Value Statements

Te Ara Ranga Tira	The Chieftly Way
Tū Māori	Proud To Be Māori
Tū Whānau	We Are Family
Tū Aroha	We Love You
Mō Ake Tonu	Forever

### Actioning Values

Paki Tū	Uplift each other
Paki Toa	Help each other be successful
Paki Rongo	Listen and support
Kia UU	Hold fast to my kaupapa
Kia Whiri	Sort myself out
Kia Toa	Be successful individually



# RANGATIRA SPOTLIGHT - TARA BUCKLEY-FANGATUA

Tara Buckley-Fangatua has been involved with the E Tū Toa Māreikura programme for the last several years. She played a key role in coordinating the first Te Waipounamu Māreikura camp and continued her involvement in the programme in the years that followed. Tara was assistant coach in 2019, and then transitioned into the team manager role, which she's held ever since. She's also supported the Whatukura programme throughout the years.

As a rangatira and proud part of the Kūmara Patch Tara wears many hats in service of this kaupapa.

## What is the role of rangatira in these programmes?

Our role is to support our rangatahi and let them shine on and off the field, as well as supporting each other. We have lots of roles within the kaupapa; kaitiaki, coaching, management. As well as the crucial role in preparing our rangatahi for the outside world with discipline, resilience and skills needed to succeed in rugby, we also make sure they have what they need to succeed at home, at school, and in life. These skills include organisation, planning, and time management. Punctuality is a non-negotiable expectation in rugby, and it is just as important for appointments, kura, mahi, and everyday responsibilities.

We also provide emotional support, creating a space where they can feel safe to speak, and we continue this support when the tamariki have returned home. Some rangatahi come in thinking this is all about rugby. What they don't realise is that they are going to leave this kaupapa with a whole new whānau.

## How have the camps aided in your own personal cultural journey?

I was a quiet person coming into this kaupapa. I was too shy to stand up and say my pepeha (or speak in front of a group in general) as I feared judgement on my pronunciation or if I was saying the wrong thing. I can now proudly say, from the support of our crew, that I can stand up and do this if needed. I have a clear understanding of tikanga and uphold that wherever I go.



## What have been some of your most special memories of the programme?

On the field, being seen and fielding a wāhine Māori team! Off the field, my whole reason for jumping on this waka was for my own tamariki and helping them connect to their culture. Now they both hold fast to what they have learned, they have aged out of the programme but are still giving back and making sure rangatahi are aware of how special the kaupapa is to keep it growing.

To be asked to be a part of this waka was a special memory in my life I will never forget. It has changed me for the better, it has given me opportunities I used to wish to be a part of, opened doors for me and helped me open doors for others.

## TEAMS AND RESULTS

# NZ U18 MĀORI RUGBY

## NEW ZEALAND MĀORI U18 NGĀ MĀREIKURA GIRLS

### Amaleila Tiatia

Ngāti Kahungunu

### Annabelle Ngahuia Waiariki

Ngāti Maniapoto,  
Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngā Ruahine

### Bridie Beveridge

Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi,  
Ngāi Tahu

### Elley-May Taylor

Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga

### Eva-Rose Dean

Ngāti Tukorehe, Ngāti Kahungunu ki  
Wairarapa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa,  
Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga

### Hana Patterson

Te Arawa, Tainui

### Harper Koce

Tapuika, Waitaha

### Jaden Lauvale

Ngāpuhi

### Jasmine Pomeroy

Ngā Rauru,  
Te āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi

### Kaiarihi Puku

Tūhourangi, Ngāti Wāhiao,  
Ngāti Whakaue

### Kaydence Benjamin

Te Rarawa

### Kingston Taiapa

Ngāti Porou

### Koatarau Edwards

Ngāti Maniapoto

### Kotuku Hennessy

Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Porou

### Maddy Judd

Ngāi Tahu

### Mahlia Crackett-Crosby

Tainui, Ngāti Maniapoto

### Matilda Chandler

Ngāti Maniapoto

### Preya Richardson

Ngāi Tahu

### Rangitiare Graham

Waikato, Taranaki

### Reve Ngaheu

Ngāti Awa

### Savannah Clark

Ngāpuhi

### Sophia Govind

Ngāpuhi, Tainui

### Te Waikaukau Mathieson-Julian

Taranaki, Waikato, Ngāti Maniapoto

## MANAGEMENT

### Angela Taylor

(Ngāti Wai, Waikato,  
Raukawa ki Wharepūhanga)  
Pou Tikanga

### Bonnie Grealish

(Ngāti Porou)  
Kairomiromi

### Duncan Cameron

(Ngāti Kahungunu ki  
Wairarapa, Te Whānau-ā-  
Apanui)  
NZR Rangatira

### Frankie Tihore

(Ngāti Porou)  
Hoa a Tahu

### Irline Young

(Ngāi Tahu)  
Hoa a Tahu

### Jayson McRoberts

(Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa)  
Pou Whirinaki

### Jo Swinton

(Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti  
Porou)  
Kaiwhakarite Poumua

### Jo Taurima

(Ngāti Kahungunu,  
Ngāti Porou, Ngāti  
Rongomaiwahine)  
Kaiako Poumua

### Kahu Carey

(Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti  
Apa ki te Rā Tō)  
NZR Rangatira

### Kara Thomas

(Ngā Ruahine)  
Kairomiromi

### Karisma Symons

(Kāi Tahu)  
Pou Whirinaki

### Leticia Jones

(Te Arawa)  
Kaiwhakahaere Matua

### Lucy Holmes-Crombie

(Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa)  
Kaiako Poumua

### Ngatai Luke

(Te Āti Awa, Ngā Ruahine,  
Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa)  
Kaiako Matua

### Stacey Grant

(Ngāti Kahungunu ki  
Wairarapa)  
Kaiwhakahaere Whutupōro

### Tara Buckley

(Ngā Puhi, Tainui)  
Kaiwhakarite Matua

### Tiki Edwards

(Whakatōhea, Ngāti  
Rākawa)  
NZR Rangatira

### Tuterangi Nepe-Apatu

(Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tamatea,  
Muaūpoko, Ngāti Porou)  
Kaiako Poumuri

## 2025 SEASON

03 October Pukekohe  
NZ Māori U18 24 ● 22 NZ Barbarians





## NEW ZEALAND U18 MĀORI NGĀ WHATUKURA

### Alex Arnold

Te Ātiawa

### Ashton Savage

Ngāti Maru (Hauraki)

### Brad Meek

Ngāti Porou

### Bronson van der Heyden

Ngāti Maniapoto

### Dylan Giles

Ngāti Ruanui

### Ethan Webber

Kāi Tahu / Ngāi Tahu

### Inoke Vaingalo

Ngāpuhi

### Izaiah Kamana

Ngāti Maniapoto, Te Rarawa

### Jay Reihana

Kāi Tahu / Ngāi Tahu

### Jeremiah Tuhega-Vaitupu

Waikato-Tainui

### Jericho Wharehinga

Ngāti Porou, Te Arawa

### Jesse West

Ngāti Maniapoto

### Koen Rarere

Rongomāwāhine, Ngāti Kahungunu  
ki Wairoa

### Lafa Tofiga

Ngāti Maniapoto

### Jericho Wharehinga

(Ngāti Porou, Te Arawa)

### Leighton Jones

Waikato-Tainui

### Liam Van Der Heyden

Ngāti Raukawa

### Malachi Osman

Ngāti Porou, Ngā Rauru

### Neihana Mataafa

Kāi Tahu / Ngāi Tahu

### Ngawai Amoamo

Te Whakatōhea, Kāi Tahu / Ngāi  
Tahu

### Presley McHugh

Ngāti Kahungunu

### Raef Robinson

Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga

### Riche Stephenson

Rangitāne, Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti

### Rico Nicklin

Ngāti Kua, Rangitāne

### Te Ariki Rogers

Ngāti Whakaue, Te Arawa, Ngāti  
Pikiao, Ngāti Koro

### Tylerjay Wallace

Kāi Tahu / Ngāi Tahu

## MANAGEMENT

### Duncan Cameron

(Ngāti Kahungunu ki  
Wairarapa, Te Whānau-ā-  
Apanui)

Campaign Manager

### Elliot Dixon

(Ngāpuhi)  
Lineout Coach

### Frankie Tihore

(Ngāti Porou)  
Lead Ringawera

### Jeremy Wara

(Waikato-Tainui, Ngāti Pikiao  
(Te Arawa))  
Defence Coach

### Joseph Tyro

(Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Rangī,  
Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi)  
Pou Kaitiaki

### Kahu Carey

(Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti  
Apa ki te Rā Tō, Te Ātiawa, Ngāi  
Tahu / Kāi Tahu)  
Head Coach

### Kahurangi Falaoa

(Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti  
Pūkeko)  
Pou Tikanga

### Kara Thomas

(Ngā Ruahine)  
Physio

### Leata Connor

NZR Liaison

### Norm Bell

(Kāi Tahu / Ngāi Tahu)  
Ringawera

### Simon Kneebone

(Ngāti Porou)  
Scrum Coach

### Sonny Raina

(Ngāpuhi)  
Team Manager

### Te Waiti Mareikura

(Ngāti Rangī, Ngāti Maniapoto,  
Te Ātiawa, Te Āti Haunui-a-  
Pāpārangi, Ngāti Pikiao  
(Te Arawa), Waikato)  
Breakdown Coach

### Tiki Edwards

(Whakatōhea, Ngāti Rākawa)  
NZR Rangatira

### Wesley Osman

(Ngāti Porou, Ngā Rauru)  
Pou Tiki Tok

### Wetanui Hotene

(Ngāti Haua (Waikato), Ngāti  
Kahungunu ki Heretaunga)  
Pou Kaupapa

### Willie Brown

(Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou)  
Backline Coach

## 2025 SEASON

20 September Kirikiriroa  
NZ Māori U18 36 • 21 Chiefs XV

25 September Kirikiriroa  
NZ Māori U18 35 • 51 NZ Barbarians U18

## SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## SUMMARY INCOME STATEMENT

as at 31 December 2025	2025 ACTUAL	2024 ACTUAL
<b>Income</b>		
Grants from NZRU	\$180,860	\$166,550
Interest income <sup>1</sup>	\$73,171	\$108,191
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$254,031</b>	<b>\$274,741</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Regional Operating Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$90,000	\$90,000
Board Member Fees <sup>3</sup>	\$43,200	\$36,400
Operational Overheads (Travel & Accommodation) <sup>4</sup>	\$58,457	\$29,574
General Expenses	\$25,100	\$10,576
Professional Development <sup>5</sup>	\$18,000	–
Legal Expenses	\$3,980	\$3,600
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>\$238,737</b>	<b>\$170,150</b>
<b>Net profit</b>	<b>\$15,294</b>	<b>\$104,591</b>

## SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET

for the year ended 31 December 2025	2025 ACTUAL	2024 ACTUAL
<b>Assets</b>		
SSI grant from NZRU <sup>1</sup>	\$2,244,105	\$2,228,811
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$2,244,105</b>	<b>\$2,228,811</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	–	–
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained earning	\$2,244,105	\$2,228,811
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>\$2,244,105</b>	<b>\$2,228,811</b>

<sup>1</sup> NZMRB chose to invest the \$2.0m with NZR's other cash reserves, pending decisions on how to utilise the funds. In 2025 an average interest rate of 3.25% (2024: 5.1%) resulted in an additional \$73k of interest income.

<sup>2</sup> Where regional activity took place, grants are distributed to the appropriate Māori Regional Board.

<sup>3</sup> Remuneration for NZMRB for face-to-face meetings and reflects actual attendance at Board meetings.

<sup>4</sup> Air travel and accommodation costs increased for directors attending board meetings and various other events throughout the year. The rise reflects higher travel requirements driven by the Board's desire to engage fully in NZR's new strategic plan and enhanced stakeholder engagement coinciding with the appointment of a new Chair.

<sup>5</sup> Professional development costs reflect investment in director training undertaken with the Institute of Directors to support governance capability.

## SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

# COMMENTARY TO SUPPORT THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements reflect New Zealand Rugby's accounting of income and expenditure applied to the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board (NZMRB) and the Regional Māori Rugby Boards. Other activities related to Māori Rugby are undertaken by NZR and reflected in its annual accounts.

These include:

- a. Funding for two Māori Under 18 development teams, 3 regional camps and 2 national camps.
- b. Funding for NZR facilitated E Tu Rangatahi programme and Rangatira workshops for Māori coaches, leaders and other volunteers.
- c. Salary costs and overheads for Māori Rugby-specific roles and a portion of NZR staff and overheads for other staff who directly support the NZMRB.





# MĀORI ALL BLACKS®

**Published by New Zealand Rugby**

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