

Hauraki Climate Change Symposium Report 29 Oketopa 2025 - Thames Civic Centre

Background

Pou Take Āhuarangi, the Climate Change Pou of the National Iwi Chairs Forum (**NICF**), facilitated a one-day Climate Change Symposium in Hauraki on 29 Oketopa 2025 at the Thames Civic Centre. The symposium was hosted by Ngāti Tamatera and Ngāti Maru on behalf of Pare Hauraki. This symposium is part of a wider NICF programme of regional climate resilience wānanga to support and enable Māori-led risk identification, assessment, adaptation planning and implementation at a local level.

Pou Take Āhuarangi engaged with [Ngāti Tamatera](#) in advance of the symposium to identify the key climate change realities and impacts Pare Hauraki faces and prepare marae exposure assessments. Pou Take Āhuarangi positioned this as an initial engagement for the rohe to provide foundational understanding and awareness of risks posed to Pare Hauraki marae and support discussions on planning and implementation.



Pictured: Entrance to Symposium and Whānau Discussions within the Symposium

Climate Change Symposium Summary

The wānanga brought together ngā uri o Pare Hauraki, local leaders, local government and climate experts from across the rohe. Themes that emerged were local mātauranga-informed indicators, partnered approaches to climate adaptation and emergency management, and that decision-making for climate adaptation must be hapori-led, courageous, intergenerational, and grounded in tikanga.

Hauraki is already living within the early phases of a climate-impacted rohe. Kōrero over the course of the symposium demonstrated that hapori mobilisation, mātauranga, and lived experience consistently led local hapori responses to extreme events, while existing systems and statutory frameworks created inequitable responses and barriers to response pathways. Participants affirmed that future of climate adaptation in Hauraki must be hapori-led and grounded in tikanga, mātauranga and whakapapa. The work ahead includes strengthening partnerships across the rohe and supporting marae and hapū climate adaptation plans.

Session 1: Context-Setting from NICF and Climate Change in Hauraki

Hau kainga opened the space with a whakataui to welcome all attendees into the kaupapa. Pou Take Āhuarangi followed and set the national, regional, and Māori context: that climate change is an everyday risk, not a distant scenario for Aotearoa. Māori communities are at the forefront of experiencing climate impacts. This was relevant to Hauraki's context where many communities were cut off during and after Cyclone Gabrielle due to infrastructure failure - evidence of the region's high exposure to climate impacts. This kōrero reminded attendees that climate impacts will increasingly require challenging decisions, but that such decisions must always be values-based and led by hapori living in that place.

Session 2: Hau Kainga Kōrero

This session was led by Hau Kainga who provided insights on mātauranga-informed climate indicators and hapori mobilisation to respond to climate change and impacts. Apanui Skipper drew on over twenty years of climate research and mātauranga in reading the taiao to provide insights into Hauraki-specific climate indicators. He emphasised that Māori have always been scientists of place, tracking patterns of wind, tide, cloud, manu behaviour and seasonal tohu across generations. His accounts of kaumātua interviews from Pare Hauraki and Te Whānau a Apanui described precise local indicators for storm systems, change in seasons and the timing of major climate events. Apanui described his own mātauranga-informed indicators that demonstrate climate change is already visible within Hauraki's landscapes.

Korohera Ngapo furthered this kōrero with the whakataukī, *ko te pakairiri o te tohunga - ko te karakia*, describing the ways in which tohunga accessed higher knowledge to read the winds, rains and cycles of the environment. He noted that Atua systems are ecological frameworks through which Māori made sense of their surroundings. The behaviour of manu such as kāhu, ruru, tīrairaka and kōtare continues to offer insight into coming weather patterns. He highlighted the increasing frequency of koiwi being unearthed along Thames Coast as another visible manifestation of climate- impacts on the coast.



Breakout wānanga sessions explored local experiences and perceptions of risk. Many participants described a growing anxiety around deteriorating infrastructure, particularly roading along the Thames coastline, which has become increasingly vulnerable during weather events. The hau kainga and taumata reiterated a consistent pattern: when Cyclones Gabrielle and Hale hit Hauraki, it was local whānau, particularly wahine, who mobilised first to ensure that each household maintained access to kai, power, communication and safety. This aligns with every recent severe weather event review in Aotearoa, all of which show that Māori responses significantly outpace system-led mobilisation. These experiences underline the importance of placing hapori-centred resilience at the heart of all adaptation planning.

Session 3: Emergency Response and Hapori Resilience

Paora Moyle and Denise Messiter from [Te Whāriki Mana Wahine o Hauraki](#) shared lived experiences from the Manaia community, who saw no formal support for three weeks after a major event. They shared how they spoke with emergency officials in Manaia who could not provide generators for the hapori while watching industrial units flown instead to Whitianga. These experiences highlighted the inequities many Hauraki communities face. Their wahine-led phone network became a lifeline, linking information from valley to valley, awa to awa, and strengthening the hapori's capacity to respond independently.

They emphasised that local mātauranga consistently signalled impending impacts before national agencies did. Everything occurring within the hapori was relational, grounded in whakapapa ties, and centred on keeping the most vulnerable safe - from restoring power to protecting kaumātua, children and isolated households. They noted that adaptation cannot occur through systems alone; it must begin in the home, within the hapori. Legislative reform across the LGA, CDEMA and Building Act must reflect this

reality and support people-led responses that strengthen, rather than constrain, hapori capability. This was summarised into their research report, [Hauraki Māori Weathering Cyclone Gabrielle](#).



Session 4: Council Perspectives and Regional Adaptation Efforts

Representatives from Thames-Coromandel District Council, Hauraki District Council, Waikato Regional Council and the Auckland CDEM provided insights into current adaptation and emergency preparedness projects, strategies and constraints. Councils spoke to shoreline pathways projects, the ongoing challenges of maintaining access routes that connect coastal communities across Hauraki, and the scale of investment required for initiatives like Wharekawa Coast 2120, which took five years and placed heavy demands on hapori, iwi and council capacity. In that, [Wharekawa Coast 2120](#) is one of the leading climate hazard informed community plans in Aotearoa New Zealand, and was adopted by three partner Councils at the end of 2023. It is a great example of whole-of-community collaboration to meet the challenges of the future.

The councils emphasised that adaptation requires partnership. The Hauraki Plains, with their low-lying terrain and extensive drainage systems, face unique challenges that require integrated planning between mana whenua, councils and regional authorities. The councils and CDEM described resilience as the ability to understand risk, act in the present, and plan for an uncertain future. Hazard information, including through the [Waikato Regional Hazards Portal](#), can play a foundational role in supporting forward planning.

After these presentations, breakout wānanga sessions focused on a recurring theme regarding the inequitable distribution of resourcing and capability across the system. Participants noted that Many Māori who contribute to these discussions, whether within councils or in voluntary roles, are not paid for their time, despite being ratepayers and despite bearing disproportionate climate risk. Participants reflected on the misalignment between system expectations and the realities of iwi and hapori-led response, and the need to ensure that mana whakahaere and mana whenua obligations are properly recognised and supported. Strengthened relationships will require deliberate collaboration, meaningful implementation of Mana Whakahono a Rohe arrangements, and hapori-directed adaptation funds that enable iwi and hapori

to lead local solutions. A key example discussed was [Te Taki Haruru, Dunedin City Council's Māori Strategic Framework](#). The author of this Framework was present at the symposium and now works at Thames-Coromandel District Council.



Session 5: Lessons Learned, Pathways and Solutions

Shari Gallop (Ngāti Maru ki Hauraki, Te Rarawa and Coastal Scientist at Pattle Delamore Partners (PDP)) and Akuhata Bailey-Winiata (Tūhourangi, Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāti Tūtetawha, and Climate and Hazards scientist at PDP), leading Māori climate change scientists, offered an overview of the adaptation options available to Hauraki. They described the benefits and limitations of raising buildings, noting that engineering solutions must be designed for future, not historic, climate conditions. They reflected on lessons from international examples of community relocation and from Aotearoa's own experience in places like Matatā, where community relocation was driven not by climate change but by geological instability - illustrating that adaptation decisions require careful local analysis. They also highlighted some common barriers to adaptation that need to be worked through such as finding suitable relocation sites for hapū with limited land, and the emerging "user-pays" signals embedded in the incoming National Adaptation Framework and the impact of insurance markets.



The kōrero shared by participants during this session made it clear that adaptation in Hauraki will likely involve uncomfortable discussions and trade-offs, such as ideas around consolidating small towns, redesigning infrastructure, or developing hybrid approaches that combine engineering with nature-based solutions were shared. It was great to hear how some councils are looking into how to embed hapū and iwi adaptation plans into Council Long Term Plans to ensure actions are implemented and momentum maintained by mana whenua, and hearing about how positive relationships between iwi and council in the district are being repaired and built to help support adaptation planning.

Proactive planning is essential for communities to navigate an increasingly-climate impacted future. To support this, its important to have ways to share learnings and have targeted resources for whānau, hapū and iwi. Shari and Akuhata are part of a team co-creating a kete of resources via the [“Natural Hazards and Resilience Platform”](#), an MBIE (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment) -funded project via Earth Sciences New Zealand. Shari Co-leads “Ngā Herenga o Papatūānuku — Collectivising for Adaptation” with Lara Taylor (E Oho!), working with Akuhata, Lucy Kaiser (Earth Sciences NZ & Toka Tū Ake), Milly Grant Mackie (University of Auckland), Yvonne Taura (Manaaki Whenua) and more.

The final workshop asked participants to consider risk scenarios for their marae, envision future conditions, and identify values that must underpin decision-making. These conversations reaffirmed the role of marae as anchors of identity, safety and continuity. Participants stressed that relocation - where required- cannot be approached as a purely technical exercise. It must consider urupā, wahi tapu, whakapapa, ahi kā, and the intergenerational responsibilities that connect whānau to place. Climate adaptation, they noted, requires governance that is both courageous and grounded in tikanga, ensuring that decisions uphold the mana of communities while protecting future generations.

Session 6: Closing Reflections and Future Direction

The symposium closed with a shared recognition that climate impacts in Hauraki are no longer projections but present realities. The region faces exposure to severe weather, sea-level rise and vulnerable infrastructure. The wānanga also demonstrated the depth of knowledge, capability and leadership within hāpori Māori across Pare Hauraki. Local responses consistently outpace formal systems, and mātauranga Māori provides a precise, place-based evidence base for understanding ongoing change.

Discussions over the course of the symposium, as well as participant reflections, affirmed that the future of climate adaptation in Hauraki must be people-centred, hapori-led and grounded in tikanga, mātauranga and whakapapa. The work ahead includes strengthening partnerships with councils, improving data and science integration, developing marae and hapori-specific adaptation plans, and embedding climate change as a standing consideration at governance tables. The day closed with the collective understanding that Hauraki has both the obligation and the ability to shape its own climate future, and that hapori-led adaptation will be the most enduring pathway forward.

Recommendations

The following are suggested recommendations based on discussions at the Hauraki Climate Change Symposium:

- **Strengthening Relationships across Pare Hauraki:** A priority emerging from the symposium is for iwi, hapori, councils, and other key players across the climate systems to work collectively and develop partnered approaches to climate adaptation and emergency management. What this looks like requires further discussion between Pare Hauraki iwi, hapori and councils.
- **Development of Local Adaptation Plans:** At the hapori level, participants discussed the need for marae and hapori adaptation plans to reflect the realities highlighted throughout the symposium.
- **Climate Change as a Standing Agenda Item:** A tono that was put forward at the symposium focused on adding climate change as an agenda item to governance forums - from marae komiti hui to council meetings.

APPENDIX A: Resources for Adaptation Planning

Pare Hauraki

Apanui Skipper - Hauraki Climate and Maramataka Research

PhD exploring Māori climate indicators, environmental tohu and maramataka systems across Pare Hauraki and Te Whānau a Apanui.

Link: [Ko Te Kawa Tūpanapana i ngā Hau Tūpua a Tāwhiri-mātea : The validation, revitalisation and enhancement of Māori environment knowledge of weather and climate](#)

Te Whāriki Mana Wahine o Hauraki - Emergency Response & Community Resilience

Information on hapori-led emergency response, wahine leadership networks and community safety initiatives.

Link: [Te Whāriki Manawāhine O Hauraki - Hauraki Women's Refuge • Healthpoint](#)

Tikapu Moana / Pare Hauraki Taiao Hub

Regional taiao and coastal information for Hauraki, including adaptation planning and environmental kaupapa.

Link: [Pou Rahui](#)

Wharekawa 2120 Community Plan

Long-term adaptation plan co-designed with iwi, hapori and councils for Kaiaua and the wider Wharekawa coast.

Link: [Wharekawa Coast 2120 Community Plan](#)

Hauraki District Council – Hauraki Plains Adaptation Plan

Link: [Hauraki Plains Adaptation Plan](#)

TCDC Shoreline Pathways Project

Coastal adaptation initiative for Thames Coast and Coromandel communities, including erosion mapping and access planning.

Link: [Shoreline Management Pathways Project | TCDC](#)

Climate Data

Waikato Regional Hazards Portal (WRC)

Publicly accessible hazard maps, flood overlays, erosion data and climate information relevant to Hauraki.

Link: [Waikato Regional Hazards Portal](#)

NIWA Climate and Weather Research

National climate data, projections, severe weather research and localised modelling. Used extensively by speakers such as Apanui and aligns with PDP scientific analysis.

Link: [Updated national climate projections for New Zealand](#)

Ministry for the Environment - National Climate Change Risk Assessment (NCCRA)

Outlines priority climate risks for Aotearoa, including Māori systems, marae, urupā, coastal communities and critical infrastructure.

Link: <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/national-climate-change-risk-assessment-2020/>

Ministry for the Environment - Coastal Hazards and Climate Change Guidance

Link: [Coastal hazards and climate change guidance](#)

New Zealand SeaRise: Te Tai Pari O Aotearoa

Localised sea-level rise projections, vertical land movement data, interactive maps and hazard scenarios for every community in Aotearoa.

Link: <https://www.searise.nz/>

Waikato Storm Tide & Coastal Inundation Maps (WRC)

Modelling of storm surge, sea-level rise and coastal inundation risk for communities along Tikapa Moana / Hauraki Gulf and Hauraki Plains.

Link: [Waikato Regional Council](#)

Tsunami Evacuation Maps – NEMA & GNS Science

Critical for coastal marae emergency plans.

<https://www.tsunami.govt.nz/>

GNS Science Natural Hazard Database

Information on landslides, earthquakes, tsunami and volcano risk.

<https://www.gns.cri.nz/what-we-do/hazards/>

Case Studies

Ngāti Toa Rangatira – Te Ara o Raukawa Moana Climate Project

An iwi-led example of coastal risk mapping, mātauranga integration and adaptation planning referenced as a model during the symposium.

Link: [Te Ara o Raukawa Moana](#)

Managed Retreat and Adaptation Case Studies

Examples referenced by Aku and Shari including Matatā (Bay of Plenty), Port Waikato, South Dunedin and others highlighting how Aotearoa communities are navigating relocation and risk.

Link: [Climate Adaptation Case Study Archives](#)

Marae Resilience Planning

National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) – Marae Emergency Preparedness Resources

Guidance tailored specifically for marae on emergency planning, readiness, operational response and recovery.

Link: <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/resources/marae-emergency-preparedness/>

NEMA: Lifeline Utilities Guidance

Critical for marae that serve as welfare centres or are near key electricity, water, transport or telecom networks.

Link: <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/resources/lifeline-utilities/>

Get Ready (NEMA) – Community Emergency Planning Toolkit

Accessible preparedness tools for households, marae, and communities.

Link: <https://getready.govt.nz/prepared/household/>