



Purpose: to advance Hapū wellbeing within the Whangarei District, and to provide a bridge between Hapū and Whangarei District Council and any other agencies of the Crown.

In the late 1980's a Kaumatua Roopu was created and became the destination for Hapu to go to for advice and support regarding the workings of WDC. Since its inception this roopu has gone through many transitions from its very small beginnings until now.

Te Huinga is, now an Incorporated Society, a collective of Hapu within the boundaries of Whangarei District Council. They have been and continue to be committed to working together in the strong belief that so much more can be achieved together than working in isolation. They continue to seek to play a significant part in advocating and advancing the interests of the hapu and the people of Whangarei.

Te Huinga meets monthly with Whangarei District Council (WDC) and have been a conduit to WDC for the past 40 years. In this time Te Huinga have worked with many WDC Māori Liaison officers – Matatahi George, Solomon Tipene, Aperahama Edwards and Andre Hemara. These officers are now replaced with a whole team called “Strategy and Democracy”. We have also worked with many Mayors, the most appreciative of Māori was the past Mayor Sheryl Mai who, unfortunately, did not stand for re-election last year. No matter who comes and goes we continue to work together and strive for an equal partnership with local government.

Te Huinga worked tirelessly to form a strategic Partnership with WDC and in 2012 Te Karearea was born as a strategic partner with WDC elected members. Te Karearea is the voice of Te Huinga and the Hapu ensuring māori values are considered, according to Te Tiriti.

In 2020 Terms of Reference for the Strategic Partnership was agreed, the committee consisted of two WDC elected members and three hapu members. In 2021 it then went on to become a “Standing Committee” of Whangarei District Council. It consisted of 8 Hapu members representing Māori within the boundaries of the Whangarei District and 8 Elected Council Members.

Following Central Government decision to legislate for Māori Wards there was a lot of background work by Te Huinga and others, put in towards supporting the Māori Wards and bringing this kaupapa to realisation. In 2021 elected members finally vote (and pass) to establish Māori Wards in the Whangarei District Council.

March 2022 saw Te Huinga become an Incorporated Society.



October 2022 the WDC Elections arrive and for the first time we have our MāoriWards. There was a great number of very skilled and capable Candidates. We are proud to see our very own Te Huinga member Deb Harding and taitamariki Phoenix Ruka elected to council for the new term 2023 - 2026.

December 2022 Te Huinga interview hapu members to represent on the Te Karearea Standing Committee. The Te Karearea term will coincide with the WDC Election term. A new Caucus of Hapu Representatives were nominated and selected to the 2023 - 2026 term. 4 of the 8 Hapu Caucus are also representatives at the Te Huinga table.

Te Huinga have spent 40 years providing advice and services to the Whangarei District Council and are grateful for the support of previous Councils enabling, within their budgets, support for Te Huinga's costs to be met (prior to this Te Huinga has operated on a volunteer basis). This enabled the capacity for Hapu and WDC consultation to happen. During this time strong lasting relationships with council staff and councilors have been made which has proven invaluable to all parties.

In 2022, for the first time ever, Council provides direct funding that allows Te Huinga to meet its operating costs and enables Te Huinga members to receive a meeting fee for their monthly meetings with council and staff.

Also, in 2022 the Better Off Funding programme was opened for applications through WDC. Due to the short timeframes Te Huinga advocated for funding to be allocated to a MāoriWellbeing fund that would be administered by Te Huinga. This was successful and Te Huinga has created a Sub Committee and engaged a Programme Manager to set the foundation for this fund and its administration.

Te Huinga encourage hapu in the Whangarei district boundary to join us in working as a collective for hapu and maori.

Contact the Secretary or Chair if you would like more information.