HUI TĀNE 2025

NATIONAL MĀORI MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING CONFERENCE

"We are still losing too many brothers to cultural disconnection, drugs and alcohol, violence, incarceration, depression & suicide. There are many good programmes around Aotearoa, but our networks have frayed, and our connections have been lost. We need to bring good people and good kaupapa back to the table, rebuild the network and re-establish the connections.
We need our brothers to know that we care about them, and we will be here for them,
hakoa kōwai hakoa nō hea tū te āo, tū te pō"

Hone Harawira - Hui Tāne Lead

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Hui Tāne 2025: He Tū, He Mana, He Ora: Revitalising Tāne Māori through Connection, Culture, and Collective Healing

Overview

This report provides a full overview of the Hui Tāne 2025 National Māori Men's Mental Health & Wellbeing Conference, held in Kaitāia from 1 to 3 July 2025. The conference's aim was to rebuild support networks that have weakened over time and to confront the serious wellbeing challenges that Māori men face. This report covers the hui's background, the activities that took place, the key themes discussed, and its overall impact.

The conference successfully gathered Tāne Māori from all over Aotearoa, creating a safe and trusting environment based on tikanga Māori. The three-day programme was created to take participants on a journey of exploring meaningful topics, strengthening openness, embracing vulnerability, and building collective connection. Keynote speakers, expert panels, and practical workshops focused on vital issues such as suicide prevention, family and sexual violence, addiction, and defining what it means to live as healthy, connected tāne Māori in today's world.

The discussions at the conference showed a clear, unified message: a move away from colonised, punishment-based, and purely medical models of wellbeing is needed. In its place, a new approach was put forward, one focused on vulnerability, emotional awareness, accountability, and reconnecting with te ao Māori as the main path to healing. The value of lived experience was consistently highlighted as the most important form of expertise.

Feedback from participants overwhelmingly confirms the hui's success, both in numbers and in personal stories. Satisfaction scores were extremely high for all aspects of the event. Attendees reported that the hui had a profound impact on them personally and professionally, and they left with clear commitments to take action in their own lives and communities. The report concludes with a set of strategic recommendations for the future. These include creating a formal national support network, developing the proposed 0800 helpline and online resource hub, using participant feedback to plan future events, and documenting the hui's story to secure ongoing support and build a sustainable, nationwide movement for Tāne Ora.

Acknowledgements

We extend our deepest gratitude to all who shared their time, expertise, and passion to make Hui Tāne a powerful and transformative gathering. Your voices, knowledge, and leadership enriched our kaupapa and strengthened our collective commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of tāne Māori. We acknowledge the following presenters and contributors:

- **Hone Harawira** – Opening Address
- **Kiritopa Henare** – Haka Whanaungatanga; Haka Workshops
- **Phil Paikea** – Ko Tū koe, ko Rongo koe – Safe Man Safe Family; Group Panel on Eliminating Family Violence from the New Māori World
- **Dr Alexander Stevens II** – Group Panel on Eliminating Family Violence from the New Māori World; Speaking the Unspeakable Workshops
- **Dr Jeremy Tātere MacLeod** – Me whāngai i te mauri o te reo, me whāngai i te mauri o te tangata
- **Heemi Kapa-Kingi** – Soften Up Bro Workshops
- **Tamiaho Herangi-Searancke** – Mau Rākau Workshops
- **Rikki Solomon** – Maramataka Workshops
- **Shane White** – Patua te Ngāngara – The opposite of addiction is connection; Group Panel on Building a Māori World Free from Drugs & Alcohol; Workshops
- **Sati Ete** – De-escalation Workshops
- **Professor Rangi Mataamua** – Hau Tapu
- **Mike King** – Ko ahau te Tūmanako – I Am Hope; Group Panel on Responding Positively to the Threat of Suicide
- **Dave Letele** – Tama Tū Tama Ora – Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds
- **Conor O'Sullivan** – Te Tū a te Tāne – Māori Masculinity in the 21st Century and Circle of Brothers
- **Hilda Halkyard-Harawira, Nyze Manuel, Harata Brown, Te Irirangi Tawhara** – Te Tū a te Wāhine - The role of Wāhine in the new Māori World
- **Thomas Steelo** – Rangatahi Workshop
- **Rob Mokaraka** – Gala Dinner Speaker
- **Joe Daymond** – Gala Dinner Speaker
- **Pene Tawhara** – Closing Address & Future Directions
- **MC** – Te Ikanui Kingi-Waiaua
- **MC** – Tukaha Milne

We also thank the many kaumātua, panelists, volunteers, facilitators, workshop leads, support staff, and attendees whose contributions ensured the success of Hui Tāne. Your collective energy and commitment embody the strength and unity of tāne Māori.

Sponsors and Supporters

Hui Tāne would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors and partners, whose commitment to tāne Māori health and wellbeing made this kaupapa a reality. We acknowledge with deep appreciation the following organisations:

- Ministry of Social Development – Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora
- Te Tari Taiwhenua – Internal Affairs
- Te Rau Ora
- Grassroots Trust
- Hāpai te Hauora – Māori Public Health
- Foundation North – Pūtea Hāpai Oranga
- Te Hiku Media
- JR McKenzie Trust
- North Studios
- Te Rūnanga ā Iwi o Ngāpuhi
- Te Hiku Community Board
- The Tindall Foundation

Your support helped create a space where tāne Māori could connect, share, and grow together.

Tikanga Rangahau: Methods and Data

This report is based entirely on a review of 20 documents related to the Hui Tāne 2025 conference. These source materials included full transcripts of speeches, panel discussions, and workshops; the official event agenda; and detailed, anonymous feedback from participants.

Our approach involved several parts. Reviewing all transcripts to find the common themes, key messages, and important ideas that came up in the discussions. We examined the event agenda to understand the purpose and flow of the conference programme. The participant feedback was analysed statistically to calculate average satisfaction scores, and the written comments were reviewed to identify common themes about what people found valuable, what actions they planned to take, and their suggestions for improvement.

By bringing together all this information, we have built a complete picture of the conference's process, content, impact, and potential for the future. The findings and conclusions in this report come solely from this thorough review of the provided materials.

This report was prepared by Codey Bell

Te Rau Rangahau (Insights & Knowledge) Team of Te Rau Ora

TE RAU ORA
Strengthening Māori Health and Well-Being

Whakapapa and Purpose of Hui Tāne 2025

The Roots of Hui Tāne

The origins of Hui Tāne trace back to the Tāne Ora Conference held in Blenheim in 2012. That landmark gathering, organized by leaders like Lee Luke, created a rare and powerful national space for tāne Māori to connect, share, and strengthen their wellbeing. In the years that followed, however, no event of a similar scale emerged, and a national void was left. While many impactful grassroots programmes continued to serve local communities, the absence of a unifying national hui meant that connections became frayed, and the collective momentum stalled.

The drive to fill this void was fuelled by an urgent reality: too many tāne were being lost to cultural disconnection, violence, harmful substance use, and suicide. For revered Māori activist Hone Harawira, this collective crisis became deeply personal after his own whānau experience of loss. This tragedy turned a long-held community aspiration into an undeniable imperative. The intersection of systemic need and profound personal pain gave the kaupapa a clear purpose and a heartfelt urgency that shaped its development.

For years, the idea of another national hui was widely discussed, with many leaders agreeing it was a "great idea" that needed to happen, yet the concept never moved beyond kōrero. Seeing this stagnation, Hone made the decisive call to act, stating, "nobody was putting their hand up. So, I just said we're going to do it in the north because I've got the drive to make sure this happens". With oversight from Hone Harawira and Okena Simon leading the project co-ordination, this transformed a decade of sparse action into a tangible movement, reviving the wairua of the original hui with a renewed focus on sustained action.

From its inception, Hui Tāne was designed as a foundation for building practical, enduring systems of support for Māori men. The vision was to create a culturally grounded network that could respond to immediate needs while strengthening long-term resilience. Two cornerstone initiatives were identified: a dedicated 0800 helpline that could provide non-judgmental support and connect tāne to local help, and an online directory or app linking them with kaupapa and services across Aotearoa. These could include kapa haka, mau rākau, whakairo, waka ama, fishing, parenting programmes, mental health support, education initiatives, and justice reform support.

The intention was to go beyond a single event, weaving together a nationwide network of mentors, advocates, and support hubs, grounded in tikanga, whakapapa, and whanaungatanga. This network would address pressing issues such as suicide prevention, harmful substance use, family violence, and cultural disconnection, while also celebrating success through shared experiences, achievements, and whakawhanaungatanga.

At its heart, Hui Tāne carries the belief that by restoring connection, confidence, and self-worth, every brother, no matter where he is, can find a lifeline. Whether that lifeline is a phone call in a moment of struggle or an ongoing relationship with a kaupapa that uplifts him, the aim is to guide tāne from spaces of darkness back into the light, and to ensure they know they are never alone.

Te Moemoeā me ngā Whāinga. Rebuilding Networks and Strengthening Connection

The vision for Hui Tāne 2025 was explained by Hone Harawira as a direct answer to the critical state of Tāne Māori wellbeing: "We are still losing too many brothers to cultural disconnection, drugs and alcohol, violence, incarceration, depression and suicide". The conference was therefore set up as a positive step to fight these statistics by tackling their root causes.

The main objectives were clearly defined from the start. The primary goal was to "bring good people and good kaupapa back to the table, rebuild the network and re-establish the connections" that had been lost over the past decade. This focus on rebuilding community connections shows an understanding that long-term wellbeing depends on strong, interconnected communities.

Beyond the three-day event itself, the hui was designed to spark the creation of permanent, easy-to-access support systems. Two key long-term goals were central to this vision:

1. **A National 0800 Helpline:** A dedicated, free phone line for tāne in crisis, answered by trained peers who could offer immediate support and connect callers with local help.
2. **A Digital Resource Hub:** An online platform, like an app or website, to act as a national directory of kaupapa Māori support services, groups, and mentors, making it easier for men to find help that suits their needs and location.

The hui also aimed to create a sustainable movement that would last for generations. By empowering the next generation of leaders and getting commitments for future regional and national gatherings, the organisers hoped the energy created in Kaitāia would continue to grow, leaving a lasting legacy of support for Tāne Ora across Aotearoa. This forward-thinking strategy makes Hui Tāne not just a one-off event, but the first step in a long-term plan for real change.

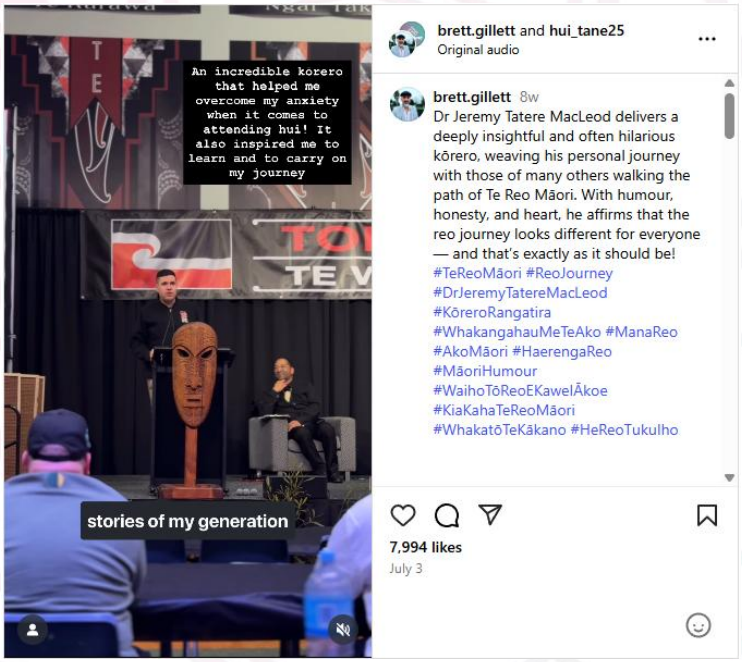
Conference Overview: Structure and Activities

Programme of Events

Over the course of the three-day wānanga, Hui Tāne brought together a powerful collective of 11 speakers, 9 skilled facilitators, and 17 panellists, each contributing to a transformative space grounded in te ao Māori and committed to the wellbeing of Tāne Māori and their whānau.

Day 1: Tuesday, 1 July

The first day laid the foundation for connection, trust, and relationships grounded in mana and respect. The hui opened with a formal pōwhiri, followed by an address from Hone Harawira that set the kaupapa and intent of the gathering. Early sessions focused on the importance of relationships within whānau and hapori, including a powerful panel on Te Tū a te Wāhine, which honoured the role of wāhine in our lives and in our healing. Phil Paikea delivered a keynote on his Safe Man, Safe Family kaupapa, bringing strength and clarity to the idea that safety begins with us as tāne. A further panel explored how we can collectively end whānau violence within te ao Māori, drawing on lived experience and culturally grounded solutions.



Dr Jeremy Tātere MacLeod followed with a kōrero that blended powerful storytelling, sharp insight, and humour to reflect on the deeply personal journey of reconnecting with te reo Māori and identity. Drawing on his own whānau experiences and years of cultural leadership, he spoke to the intergenerational realities many tāne face and the challenges of reclaiming mātauranga Māori in spaces that can feel unfamiliar or unwelcoming. Jeremy reminded us that leadership in te ao Māori is not defined by perfection but by courage, humility, and a commitment to uplifting others through tikanga grounded in care. His kōrero struck a powerful chord, reaching over 400,000 people on social media and igniting widespread reflection and resonance across the motu.

In the afternoon, two rounds of interactive workshops allowed participants to wānanga in smaller groups, reflect on their own journeys, and engage in practical kōrero. The structure of the day reminded us that wellbeing starts with our relationships with ourselves, our whānau, our communities and that strong foundations in whanaungatanga must come before deeper exploration of trauma, healing, or systems change.

Day 2: Wednesday, 2 July

The second day turned toward the critical challenges impacting Tāne Māori, grounded from the outset in tikanga and wairua through a pre-dawn Hau Tapu session led by Professor Rangi Mataamua. From there, the kaupapa deepened. Mike King spoke about suicide prevention through his I Am Hope kaupapa, while Dave Letele reminded us of the deep connection between body and mind in his talk, Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds.

Dave Letele – Tama Tū Tama Ora – Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds

Panel discussions explored how tāne and whānau can navigate the impacts of suicide, and how we might collectively build a future free from the harms of drugs and alcohol. Voices like Shane White's brought lived experience and insight, challenging us to move from talk to action.

This day also gave life to Ngā Whāinga, the shared aspirations of the hui. Te Tū a te Tāne – Māori Masculinity in the 21st Century called us to restore confidence and self-worth by reconnecting with whakapapa, tikanga, and kaupapa Māori. Hauora Mauri reminded us that wellbeing is spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental. Afternoon workshops offered space to put these visions into practice. They were also a chance to whakawhanaunga, share resources, and access clinical and cultural expertise that honours Te Ao Māori.

Day 3: Thursday, 3 July

The final day was one of celebration, reflection, and *commitment to the journey ahead.* Rā Whakangahau and Rā Whakanu*i* brought everyone together for shared experiences designed to strengthen connection and uplift the wairua. The day was filled with laughter, activity, and whakawhanaungatanga through a fishing competition on Te Oneroa a Tohe, and a sports day at Te Puna Wai featuring a cross-fit competition, wrestling, water volleyball, bombing competition, card games, mirimiri station and a shared hākari over BBQ lunch.

After two full days of wānanga ā-hinengaro and ā-wairua, the inclusion of a korikori-ā-tinana day was not just a break in format. It was an essential and intentional part of the kaupapa. Physical exertion offered tāne a safe, fun, and competitive outlet to move the emotional and spiritual learning into their bodies, making it part of their full being. These activities were not separate from the purpose of Hui Tāne. They allowed participants to embody the kōrero, locking in transformation through movement and connection. For many tāne, this physical day helped consolidate the overall learning in a holistic way and should be recognised as a critical and necessary part of future Hui Tāne gatherings.

The evening gathered everyone once more for a Gala Dinner, where the celebrations blended with wānanga and purpose. Hone Harawira, Rob Mokaraka, and Joe Daymond each shared heartfelt kōrero that honoured the past, acknowledged the pain, and inspired the future. Pene Tāwhara's closing reflections reminded us that the kaupapa does not end here.

The hui concluded with a unified haka and karakia, passing the mauri of Hui Tāne to the next hosts. Rather than closing on the weight of the issues discussed, Hui Tāne ended with strength, unity, and a deepened sense of collective purpose.

Experiential and Cultural Workshops: Deepening Engagement

A key part of the Hui Tāne programme was the wide range of workshops, each offered four times over the first two days so that everyone had a chance to attend multiple sessions. These workshops were where the main themes of the conference were put into practice, turning the big ideas from keynotes and panels into real skills, cultural experiences, and practical strategies. The workshops offered a rich variety of learning opportunities based in te ao Māori and lived experience:

Navigating Emotions and Embracing Vulnerability: Heemi Kapa-Kingi's "Soften Up Bro" workshop directly challenged the "harden up" culture by teaching ways to better understand emotions and showing that being vulnerable is a strength. The "Circle of Brothers" workshop, led by Conor O'Sullivan, offered a model for peer support groups based on equality and respect.

Addressing Trauma and Harm: Dr Alexander Stevens II "Speaking the Unspeakable" created a space to talk about the very sensitive issue of sexual abuse, using traditional pūrākau as a way to understand it. Shane White's "Patua te Ngangara" workshop focused on addiction, sharing community-based, whānau-led ways to recover. Phil Paikea's sessions on family violence gave men tools to change, based on his "Safe Man, Safe Family" kaupapa.

Cultural Reconnection: Workshops led by Tamiaho Herangi-Searancke (Mau Rākau) and Kiritopa Henare (Haka) gave attendees a chance to reconnect with their bodies and cultural identity through traditional physical practices. Rikki Solomon's workshop on Maramataka taught how to align daily life with traditional Māori lunar cycles for better wellbeing.

Rikki Solomon - Maramataka

Practical Skills: Sati Ete's workshop on de-escalation provided practical ways to handle conflict safely and effectively.

The importance of these sessions any many others was clearly shown in the participant feedback, where workshops and interactive sessions were consistently named as one of the most valuable parts of the hui. This feedback shows that the approach of mixing inspirational talks with practical, hands-on learning was very effective in giving attendees not just knowledge, but also skills they could use right away in their own lives and communities.

Building Whanaungatanga: Connections and Relationships

A central aim of the hui was to rebuild the connections that had been weakened over time. The organisers understood that for Tāne Māori, some of the strongest bonds are forged not in lecture halls but through shared meals, laughter, and shoulder-to-shoulder moments. That understanding shaped the entire flow of the gathering.

Throughout the hui, every meal became a chance to kōrero and whakawhanaunga. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and even the breaks for tea were not just about food. They were woven into the kaupapa as vital spaces to continue the conversations sparked in the main sessions, to reconnect with old friends, and to form new ones. This informal time was not an afterthought. It was the heartbeat of the hui. It created the trust and familiarity needed for a genuine, enduring network of support.

This was very evident on the third day, Rā Whakangahau, for some a day to step outside the conference format and simply be together. In casting lines at the Fishing Competition or during physical activities the day was designed to build relationships through joy, play, and shared experiences. The activities helped deepen connections, turning shared kōrero into embodied relationships where the kaupapa could be carried home not just in memory, but in the tinana and wairua of every tāne present.

The Gala Dinner and Hākari that followed brought everyone together once more in a spirit of celebration and unity. It was not just a closing event. It was a chance to honour the journey they had shared and acknowledge the collective strength that had been built across three powerful days.

The feedback made it clear. “Networking and connecting with others” stood out as one of the most valued parts of the entire hui. This was not just a reflection of what happened between sessions. It was a testament to the organisers’ deep commitment to creating a space where tāne could reconnect not only with each other, but with themselves, their whakapapa, and the strength found in collective belonging.

Key Themes and Insights

Reclaiming the Strength and Aroha of Our Tūpuna

Before colonisation, tāne Māori lived with strength grounded in aroha, manaakitanga, and deep connection to their whānau and whenua. Our tūpuna understood that real leadership was not about control but about protecting, nurturing, and guiding with emotional connection. Hui Tāne 2025 reminds us of this heritage and created a space where men could see that vulnerability, compassion, and responsibility are not weaknesses, but essential parts of true mana tāne.

In those times, tamariki were treated with gentleness and respect. A child's cry was seen as a call to respond with love. Violence within the whānau was rare and strongly condemned, and wāhine were honoured as whare tangata and life-givers, carrying sacred status. At Hui Tāne, this history was echoed in kōrero that challenged tāne to rebuild whānau relationships on trust, safety, and aroha, and to let go of harmful patterns introduced through colonisation.

Colonisation brought foreign ideas of male dominance, emotional silence, and violent punishment that undermined the balance once held between tāne and wāhine. Hui Tāne created space to name these influences and reject them. Speakers and workshops consistently pointed tāne back to tikanga that values empathy and accountability. The call was clear: healing begins when men reconnect to their true roles as protectors, nurturers, and guardians of both people and whenua.

The legacy of our tūpuna shows that emotional strength and openness were once natural to tāne Māori. Atua such as Tāne-nui-a-Rangi embody this balance, combining strength with humility and care. Hui Tāne affirmed that returning to mana tāne is not about becoming something new, but about remembering what has always been ours. To stand in integrity, to lead with aroha, and to lift others is the path our tūpuna laid. This is the strength we reclaim, and it is one of the foundations for the movement now carried forward by Hui Tāne.

Tāne Ora in the 21st Century: Redefining Māori Masculinity

A central theme woven throughout Hui Tāne 2025 was the shared desire to move away from harmful, colonised ideas of masculinity and to reclaim a version of strength that is deeply grounded in te ao Māori. This was not about turning away from being strong. It was about reshaping what strength looks like to include emotional honesty, vulnerability, deep connection, and care.

The panel discussion Te Tū a te Tāne: Māori Masculinity in the 21st Century spoke clearly to this. Panellists reflected that true strength is shown when tāne can express the full range of emotions, say “I love you” and “I’m sorry,” and show up fully for their whānau. These simple yet powerful actions challenge the emotionally closed, overly independent masculinity often celebrated in Western cultures.

Heemi Kapa-Kingi introduced the concept of the “Māui complex”; the relentless expectation on tāne to be everything at once: a cultural leader, a financial provider, a role model, and more. This pressure, he explained, often leads to deep feelings of inadequacy. His call was not for tāne to do more, but to accept who they are, celebrate their unique strengths, and let go of the need for perfection.

Comedian Joe Daymond added to this kōrero by reflecting on his father’s generation, noting how many substituted vulnerabilities with productivity. He challenged the idea that a man’s worth is only measured by his job or income and encouraged tāne to discover who they are beyond the roles they have been assigned. He called for a return to self-worth that is grounded in identity, values, and purpose.

These ideas were brought to life in practical workshops. Heemi Kapa-Kingi’s Soften Up Bro session invited men to break free from the “harden up” mentality and explore emotional strength through connection and openness. Conor O’Sullivan’s Circle of Brothers offered a powerful model for peer support, where tāne could meet as equals and build trust through listening, honesty, and shared commitment.

Together, these sessions offered more than just tools. They opened a pathway to a new expression of Māori masculinity. One that reconnects with the emotional depth, compassion, and collective strength that existed long before colonisation. It was a call to return home to ourselves and to each other.

Confronting the Taniwha: Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Resilience

The kōrero on suicide prevention at Hui Tāne highlighted the need for a shift in approach. Rather than relying solely on clinical models, the discussion focused on community-led, relationship-based responses rooted in empathy and connection. Speakers shared raw and personal stories, helping to ground the kaupapa in lived experience.

Mental health advocate Mike King emphasised that many tāne carry deep, ongoing emotional pain that is often invisible to others. He encouraged whānau and communities to be more present and to truly listen to those around them, without judgment. One key takeaway was the idea that while reaching out for help is important, the responsibility cannot rest solely on those who are struggling. Instead, it is up to all of us to create spaces where it feels safe to speak openly and honestly. Mike reminded us that the words we use with our tamariki and rangatahi matter deeply, as these messages often shape their inner world and how they navigate distress.

This call to create safe, open environments was echoed in Rob Mokaraka's powerful Shot Bro presentation. He described his past mental health struggles as facing a taniwha that grows in silence and isolation. His story of survival and healing emphasised the strength found in vulnerability and the importance of having a circle of aroha – a trusted group of whānau and supporters who can walk alongside tāne in times of need.

The discussion made it clear that suicide prevention is not only a clinical or individual issue, but a collective one. Building strong, supportive relationships, speaking kindly to one another, and being willing to sit with each other through pain were all presented as essential tools. Hui Tāne helped to reframe this kaupapa through a lens of hope, connection, and shared responsibility. No one should have to navigate darkness alone. Support is not just available – it can be built together.

Breaking the Cycle: Addressing Family and Sexual Violence

Hui Tāne approached the realities of whānau and sexual violence with courage and honesty, naming them as outcomes of intergenerational trauma and the lasting impacts of colonisation. Rather than focusing solely on punishment or blame, the kōrero centred on healing, accountability, and the reclamation of cultural knowledge and stories as tools for transformation.

A powerful example of this was Phil Paikea's keynote, Safe Man, Safe Family. He shared his journey from a life shaped by violence and gang involvement to becoming a dedicated advocate for prevention and change. His story reminded attendees that even the most painful pasts do not have to define the future. At the heart of his message was accountability. Phil spoke openly about the moment he chose to leave behind the harmful patterns he had inherited, driven by a deep desire to be a better role model for his son and a safe presence for his entire whānau. His story set the tone for the wider family violence panel, which reinforced that lasting change begins from within. It cannot be forced from the outside; it must come from a personal decision to take responsibility and seek healing.

This kaupapa was further explored in the Speaking the Unspeakable workshop, led by Dr Alexander Stevens II. He challenged the silence that often surrounds sexual abuse in Māori communities, calling it a "false tapu" that prevents necessary conversations. Rather than relying on clinical language alone, Dr Stevens II used pūrākau to guide understanding. He drew on the story of Ranginui and Papatūānuku's violent separation, reinterpreting it as a metaphor for sexual violence and its ongoing impact. Rūaumoko, the unborn Atua who remains trapped beneath the earth, was presented as a symbol of unresolved trauma, passed down through generations.

By grounding these topics in cultural knowledge and whakapapa, the workshop offered a pathway to healing that is both emotionally and spiritually meaningful. It reminded attendees that today's violence is not random, but often the result of deep historical wounds. To truly heal, we must restore not only behaviour, but also our wairua, our tikanga, and our cultural understanding of how to relate to one another with care and respect. The hui made it clear: the path forward lies in truth-telling, deep accountability, and reconnecting to the wisdom our tūpuna carried.

The Opposite of Addiction is Connection: A New Approach to Substance Harm

At Hui Tāne, conversations about substance harm shifted the focus from punishment and medical treatment to a more human truth: disconnection lies at the heart of addiction, and reconnection is the pathway to healing. Across keynote talks and panels, speakers shared lived experiences and insight that reframed addiction as a wounding of wairua and relationships, not just a health issue.

Shane White's kōrero, Patua te Ngangara (Slay the Dragon), stood as a powerful example. He spoke openly about his journey through methamphetamine addiction and the justice system, naming disconnection from whānau, culture, and community as the deepest cause of harm. "The opposite of addiction is connection," he said. His words challenged the room to look beyond blame or punishment and to ask what kind of support truly restores a person's sense of belonging and self-worth. He did not hold back in his critique of the current justice system, calling it a toxic cycle that punishes pain instead of healing it.

A following panel built on this kaupapa, calling for marae-based solutions that centre mātauranga Māori and whanaungatanga. The marae was recognised not just as a venue, but as a source of healing—a place where haka, waiata, kōrero, and karakia restore spiritual balance and reconnect tāne with their identity, whenua, and whakapapa. The panel strongly affirmed that while clinical services have a place, it is lived experience and cultural grounding that create the most powerful support systems.

Addiction was not treated as an individual weakness, but as a symptom of colonisation and intergenerational loss. The hui made it clear that the remedy to this loss is found in revitalising culture, relationships, and identity. In this way, reconnection is not just a method of healing; it is the outcome, the foundation, and the promise of a better future for Tāne Māori and their whānau.

The Role of Wāhine: Restoring Balance and Shared Leadership

A deliberately centred theme throughout Hui Tāne 2025 was the recognition that the wellbeing of tāne, or tāne ora, is inseparable from the mana of wāhine. The inclusion of the Te Tū a te Wāhine panel on the very first day, which included Hilda Halkyard-Harawira, Nyze Manuel, Harata Brown and Te Irirangi Tawhara, was more than symbolic. Their kōrero grounded the hui in the principle that restoring balance in our communities means uplifting and walking alongside wāhine in shared responsibility and power.

The wāhine who spoke did not wait politely for space in a "new Māori world." They declared their leadership in shaping that world now, with courage, clarity, and purpose. Their kōrero reminded us that colonisation did not just harm tāne. It also stripped wāhine of leadership roles and shifted the balance that once existed in whānau, hapū, and iwi. Reclaiming that balance, they emphasised, means looking critically at tikanga and systems. This includes where these may silence or sideline wāhine voices.

One of the panel's most powerful calls was for a re-examination of practices that limit wāhine participation, such as speaking rights on the marae. They did not frame this as a challenge to tāne. Instead, they presented it as a collective return to a more inclusive and life-affirming way of being. Their message was rooted in whanaungatanga and healing, captured in the whakataukī: ka ora koe, ka ora au, ka ora tātou (you thrive, I thrive, we all thrive). This reflects a shift away from hierarchy. It highlights unity and mutual uplift.

Their presence at the hui was a powerful reminder that the healing of tāne cannot happen in isolation. Issues like emotional suppression, disconnection, and violence cannot be resolved by men alone. True transformation requires the restoration of mana wāhine and a deep commitment to respectful, collaborative relationships that honour both tāne and wāhine as essential to the strength of our people.

Voices of the Future: Perspectives from Rangatahi

The Rangatahi Panel brought an essential voice to Hui Tāne, offering insights that reflected the lived realities of the next generation. Their kōrero highlighted the unique challenges they face and affirmed key values of the hui, such as connection, authenticity, and cultural identity.

One of the most pressing challenges they shared was the influence of the digital world. They spoke about the pressure to maintain a “digital identity,” constant exposure to harmful content, and the real mental health impacts of online bullying. These reflections introduced a critical modern lens to the wider discussions on mental wellbeing, showing the need for support systems that can adapt to their everyday environments.

A powerful challenge they offered to older generations was a plea for true presence. Many spoke of adults being physically nearby but emotionally unavailable, often distracted by phones or stress. What they longed for were role models who listen to understand, rather than to respond or fix. This echoed earlier themes at the hui that highlighted the deep importance of being heard with compassion and patience.

They also shared what helps them feel connected and inspired. They asked for authentic role models and meaningful opportunities that speak to their world. Cultural spaces were especially valued, with one panellist stating simply, “kei reira te oranga” – wellbeing lives on the marae. Their contributions both validated the direction of Hui Tāne and offered a clear reminder that any movement hoping to last must remain relevant and responsive to the voices of rangatahi.

The Sacred Space of Tāne Ora

A defining strength of Hui Tāne was its deliberate creation of a tāne-only space. This was a tikanga-based design grounded in emotional safety, trust, and collective healing. Surrounded by other Māori men with shared journeys, tāne could relax their guard, speak freely, and feel heard. This environment uplifted their mana by inviting openness, vulnerability, and authenticity. It allowed tāne to be fully present without fear of judgment, expectation, or the need to carry the weight of others.

The presence of wāhine during a guest speaking, and panel segment brought immense value to the hui. Their role in upholding the kaupapa, offering manaaki, and reminding tāne of their wider whānau connections was deeply meaningful. At the same time, when the space shifted to tāne-only, there was a noticeable deepening in the way men engaged. Tāne felt free to express themselves without needing to project a certain identity or protect others. This created a unique dynamic where emotional honesty could flourish and where the mana of each tāne was honoured in a different way.

It was within this safe and high-trust environment that many tāne shared deeply personal experiences, including disclosures of trauma that had remained unspoken for years. These were not surface-level reflections. They were raw, often painful truths, voiced because the space had been intentionally shaped to hold them. The tāne-only setting was was essential to the depth of connection and healing that took place. In sharing their pūrākau, tāne reclaimed parts of their own mana that had long been unrecognised or suppressed.

As Hui Tāne moves forward, it must continue to protect and uphold the tāne-centred dynamic. This space creates a necessary sanctuary for our men to heal, grow, and lead in ways that feel safe, unfiltered, and deeply authentic. The emotional honesty, vulnerability, and transformation witnessed at Hui Tāne are not accidental. They are the result of intentional, tikanga approach that centres the unique needs and mana of tāne Māori. This must remain a core element of the kaupapa moving forward.

Feedback Evaluation and Impact

Attendee Overview

Attendance spanned many iwi across the motu, with strong representation from Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Porou, Te Arawa, Ngāi Tahu, Tūhoe, Waikato-Tainui, and others. While all age groups were present, the largest proportion of attendees were in middle adulthood, all backgrounds contributing valuable lived and professional experience to the kaupapa. These insights are drawn from those who completed the post-hui evaluation form and, while not exhaustive, provide a well-informed indication of the broader attendee profile.

Figure 1: Iwi Affiliations

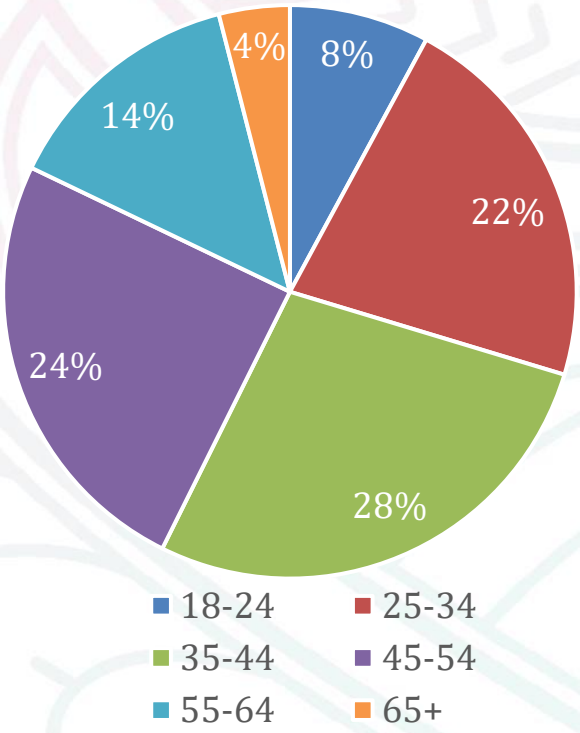


Figure 2: Age Groups

Quantitative Feedback

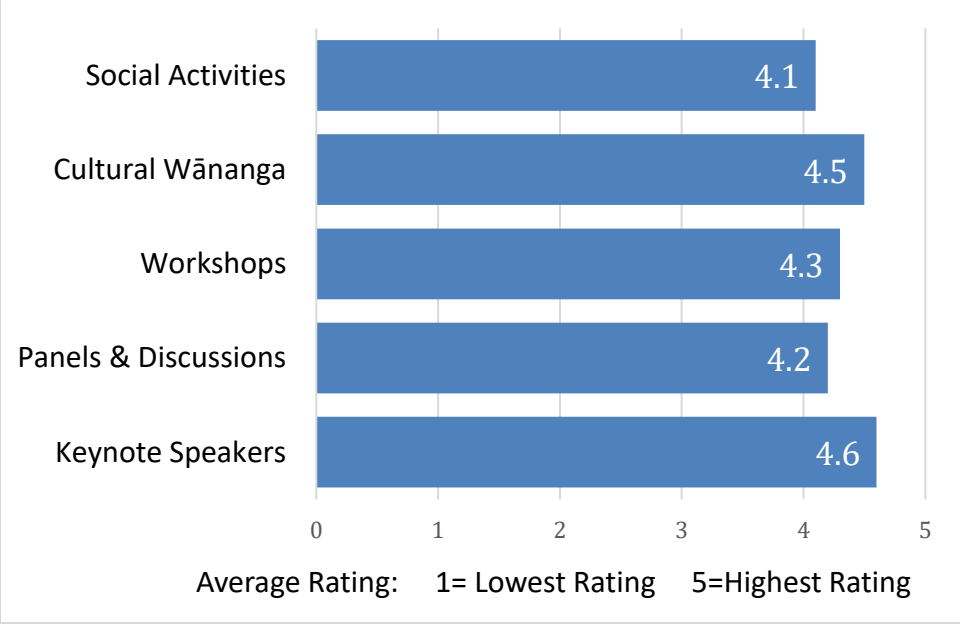
Participant feedback clearly demonstrates the success of Hui Tāne 2025. 101 attendees rated 22 different aspects of the hui using a 1 to 5 scale, with 5 indicating the highest level of satisfaction. The results paint a powerful picture of an event that was deeply valued and impactful.

As shown in the tables below, average satisfaction scores were exceptionally high across all areas. Keynotes, panels, and workshops all received strong ratings, confirming both the quality of the content and its relevance to those attending.

The hui received its highest scores in areas that reflected its core purpose. Restoring Confidence through Whakapapa and Tikanga averaged 4.8 out of 5. Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Keynotes, Creating Space for Discussion, and Supporting Holistic Wellbeing each averaged 4.7. A further cluster of strengths averaged 4.6, including Keynote Speakers, Bringing Good People and Kaupapa, Addressing Health Statistics, Strengthening Cultural Support Network, and Inspiring Recommendations. Rebuilding Relationships and Networks and Meeting Wellbeing Expectations followed closely at 4.5.

These responses offer more than positive feedback; they provide clear, measurable evidence that the hui delivered on its strategic intentions.

Te Uara o Ngā Wātū / Session Value



Ngā Hua o te Hui / Outcomes of the Hui

How well did Hui Tāne Deliver?

The overall satisfaction results were outstanding. Hui Tāne 2025 received an average rating of 4.5 out of 5. One of the strongest indicators of impact was Inspiring Recommendations, reflecting intent to recommend the hui to other Tāne Māori, which averaged 4.6.

This level of positive response reflects more than enjoyment. It affirms the value, relevance, and strength of the hui's design and delivery, and signals its lasting impact on those who attended.

Most Valuable Takeaways and Inspired Actions

The open-ended feedback from participants offers rich and powerful insights into the depth of Hui Tāne's impact. These reflections go well beyond satisfaction, revealing moments of inspiration, cultural reconnection, and genuine commitment to change.

Most Valued Insights

An analysis of 101 participant responses highlights several recurring themes around what was most treasured:

The Power of Lived Experience
Participants consistently identified the keynote speakers as a highlight, noting the pono (integrity) of their kōrero. The courage of speakers such as Phil Paikea, Mike King, and Dave Letele in sharing their lived journeys created deep resonance, helping attendees connect with complex issues in relatable ways and sparking real hope.

The Strength of Connection
Whakawhanaungatanga was central to the hui. Participants valued opportunities for genuine connection, shared learning, and building networks with like-minded tāne working across similar kaupapa. The safe environment, where honesty, vulnerability, and courage were embraced, allowed many to feel truly seen and a sense of belonging.

Practical Tools and Knowledge
Workshops were praised for offering concrete skills and tools that could be immediately applied to daily life. Participants highlighted that Hui Tāne was not only about kōrero, but about gaining practical strategies for growth and action.

Cultural Reconnection and Validation
For many, the hui provided a deeply affirming cultural experience. Attendees spoke of cultural identity as a pillar of wellbeing and reflected on the healing power of being reminded that "it's okay to not be okay." The hui normalised struggles while reinforcing pride and belonging in te ao Māori.

Inspired Actions and Commitments

Feedback also revealed a clear shift from inspiration to action, with participants making commitments to personal, whānau, and community change:

Personal Wellbeing
Tāne committed to tangible changes in their own lives, such as improving physical health, strengthening their hauora, being more present as fathers, and showing greater openness with partners. One participant shared their resolve to “constantly check my kōrero and connection with my son”—a direct outcome of the parenting discussions.

Community and Professional Action
Many attendees planned to carry their learnings back into workplaces and communities, collaborating with others to support whānau. Some were inspired to pursue qualifications in social work or counselling, motivated to expand their ability to uplift others.

Cultural Engagement
Strengthening ties to te ao Māori was a recurring commitment. Attendees expressed intentions to strengthen cultural practices, learn te reo Māori, participate in mau rākau or kapa haka, and reconnect with their marae.

This feedback demonstrates that Hui Tāne created more than an event; it generated a transformative and sacred experience. It equipped and inspired tāne Māori to make positive, lasting changes for themselves, their whānau, and their communities, grounding growth in both lived experience and cultural identity.

Attendee Recommendations for Future Hui Tāne Events

Participants shared thoughtful suggestions for enhancing future Hui Tāne gatherings. These were not criticisms, but reflections of a deep appreciation for the kaupapa and a desire to see it grow.

A key recommendation was to extend the hui to four or five days to allow more time for workshops and in-depth kōrero. Attendees valued smaller group sessions and proposed structured networking activities to strengthen early connections. Some suggested shifting the Gala Dinner earlier in the programme to build whanaungatanga sooner. Accessibility was also raised, with a call to explore lower or no-cost attendance options to enable broader participation.

Content-wise, some participants asked for even more practical life skills workshops on topics such as budgeting, business development, and relationships. There was a desire to further explore themes like fatherhood, separation, and digital wellbeing, particularly for rangatahi.

A widely supported suggestion was to have qualified mental health professionals onsite, given the emotional depth of the hui. Attendees also encouraged post-hui engagement through online gatherings and the possible formation of a national body to support regional initiatives and sustain momentum.

These recommendations affirm the impact of Hui Tāne 2025. Rather than suggesting major changes, participants are asking for more time, support, and resources to deepen the kaupapa already underway. For funders and stakeholders, this feedback signals a successful and high-impact kaupapa that is strongly aligned with the aspirations of tāne Māori and their communities.

Future Directions

Summary of Key Findings

Hui Tāne 2025 successfully re-established a vital national platform for Tāne Māori. It bridged a ten-year gap and restored connections that had faded over time. Grounded in tikanga and whanaungatanga, the hui created a space of high trust where participants could engage openly with some of the most pressing issues facing Māori men, including suicide, violence, and substance harm.

A standout achievement was the clear emergence of a shared vision for modern Māori masculinity. Rather than being rooted in toughness or dominance, this vision embraced vulnerability, emotional strength, accountability in relationships, and a deep cultural grounding in te ao Māori. Lived experience, cultural reconnection, and community-led approaches were consistently elevated as key drivers of change.

Participant feedback confirmed the event's profound personal and collective impact. More than a one-off gathering, Hui Tāne 2025 signalled the beginning of a renewed, nationwide movement for Tāne Ora. This movement is grounded in identity, connection, and transformation.

Strategic Recommendations

Drawing on the vision of the organisers and rich participant feedback, a clear strategic direction has emerged to transform the success of Hui Tāne 2025 into a sustainable, nationwide movement. The following four recommendations outline the path forward.

Prioritise Development of Support Infrastructure
Two key outcomes identified by participants, the creation of a national 0800 helpline and an online resource directory, must be actively progressed. These initiatives are essential for turning the hui's energy into permanent and accessible support. Immediate attention should be given to securing funding and beginning development.

Integrate Feedback into Future Hui
Tāne attendee feedback offers clear direction for future improvements. Next hui should include even more time for workshops and whakawhanaungatanga, practical topics such as financial literacy and relationship breakdowns, and on-site access to qualified mental health professionals.

Share the Kaupapa Widely
To sustain momentum, the kaupapa of Hui Tāne 2025 must be documented and shared. Producing high-quality documentary content and comprehensive reports will help inform the public, educate stakeholders, and support advocacy efforts. These outputs will also strengthen

the case for future investment in Tāne Ora initiatives.

Establish a Formal National Network
To maintain momentum and avoid the loss of progress seen after the 2012 hui, it is essential to formalise leadership. Appointing a full-time dedicated national coordinator will enable consistent engagement with attendees, co-ordination with Tāne Ora groups nationwide, and planning of future regional and national hui.

While Hui Tāne creates a powerful space for transformation, the long-term aspiration must be broader than delivering one-off events. There is a clear need for a national strategic direction dedicated to Tāne Ora, which would guide and align efforts across sectors. Currently, it is unclear whether strategic objectives that centre Māori men exist across government frameworks or whether they have been diluted through generalisation or amalgamation.

A dedicated national body could take the lead in exploring this further by mapping current strategies, identifying gaps, and co-designing a pathway forward. The vision should be to achieve measurable outcomes such as improved life expectancy, wellbeing, and reduced suicide rates for Māori men. Hui Tāne can serve as a mechanism within this wider vision, but the movement itself must be underpinned by clear, long-term intent and accountability.

Our Future

Hui Tāne 2025 was more than a national wānanga. It was a return, a renewal, and a reawakening. After more than a decade without national gatherings of this magnitude dedicated to Tāne Māori, this hui reignited a vital movement. It brought together leaders, whānau, and community members who carry deep commitment to building a future where Tāne Māori are safe, supported, and thriving.

What emerged was not just conversation but a clear pathway. Across workshops, panels, and powerful keynotes, the call was consistent: restore connection, uphold cultural identity, and centre mātauranga Māori in all aspects of wellbeing. Tāne Māori do not need to walk alone or shoulder heavy burdens in silence. Instead, they need spaces where honesty, healing, and strength can coexist, guided by the wisdom of generations past and present.

The true impact of Hui Tāne 2025 will not be measured only by the success of the event itself but by what happens next. The kōrero and kaupapa must continue. The relationships built must deepen. The systems that have too often failed Tāne Māori must be challenged and transformed. This report serves not only as a record of what took place but as a living document to guide the future.

We leave this hui with the mauri passed on, the vision made clear, and the challenge accepted: to uphold the mana of Tāne Māori every day, in every corner of Aotearoa. Let this be the beginning of a sustained, connected movement that honours the strength, vulnerability, and leadership of Tāne Māori now and for generations to come.

HUI TĀNE 2025