

Activating Kaitiakitanga (environmental custodianship) through pipi restoration.

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Pipi is a shellfish of huge cultural significance to the indigenous Maori of Tauranga Moana, Bay of Plenty. With the impending threat of losing a large portion of a prominent pipi bed to dredging, the Kaitiaki (indigenous custodians) of Tauranga Moana activated and developed a Pipi Enhancement Programme, which involved moving pipi from the proposed dredged area to selected sites within the harbour. This presentation will provide an overview of the Pipi Enhancement Programme so far. In particular we will discuss how both Maturanga Maori and western science were synergistic in their utilisation, to guide and enhance communities experience and involvement in the project.

Maturanga Māori is a living and breathing knowledge system, it is the basis of Maori environmental custodianship and it is a vital and central component to understanding New Zealand's natural ecological systems. Maturanga Māori has huge potential to provide invaluable contribution to ecological restoration activities and programmes. The Māori world view sees people as part of the natural ecosystem, the Māori language and culture are inextricably linked to the environment. Ecological restoration, species specific or integrated, can be regarded as a restorative action toward Māori traditions and cultural resilience. We will discuss how Maturanga Maori provided the foundations of the pipi project and as a result saw the development of a unique Māori approach to species based restoration and community restorative action programs. We will share some of the major outcomes of the pipi enhancement project, and discuss how pipi were key to activating and empowering kaitiakitanga. Finally, we will talk about the role western science has played in a Maori approach to species restoration, and how western science contributed to outcomes and objectives based on Māori principles of environmental custodianship.