

## Q & A:

### Questions asked to Mahaanui Kurataiao Ltd (MKT)

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#### What is MKT's background? How, when and why did you form? Are you a trust, a private company or something else?

Mahaanui Kurataiao Ltd (MKT) is a 'Manawhenua Environmental Services' company owned by the six Papatipu Rūnanga of Christchurch and Banks Peninsula: Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga, Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke (Rāpaki) Rūnanga, Ōnuku Rūnanga, Koukourārata Rūnanga, Wairewa Rūnanga and Te Taumutu Rūnanga. MKT is a limited liability company with business objectives that align with the charitable objectives of the Rūnanga, all of which are incorporated societies.

The establishment of MKT resulted from by the needs shared by each Rūnanga to find a better way to manage the consultation demands from councils and other agencies arising from Treaty of Waitangi-related legislative responsibilities under the Resource Management Act (1991) and Local Government Act (2002). Previously, Rūnanga had been responding individually to numerous unsolicited requests for resource consent and planning matters via resource management committees and/or committed individuals on a voluntary basis. However, the large consultation loads and expectations of free advice, on-call availability and meeting attendance were not fair or sustainable for these individuals or Rūnanga. Alternatives were investigated for over a year by a joint working party, with representatives from each Rūnanga and support from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. MKT was formed in August 2007 as a result of these investigations. Similar Ngāi Tahu pan-Rūnanga resource management organisations were already established in Otago (KTKO Ltd Consultancy) and Southland (Te Ao Mārama Incorporated). MKT was established on the basis of what had been learned from these organisations, their structures, relationships and resourcing, and has similarities to these Ngāi Tahu agencies, while also having some different attributes.

MKT was established on the basis of an agreement for service provision with resourcing from Christchurch City Council, and subsequently entered similar agreements with Selwyn District and Waimakariri District Councils. The agreements enable MKT to provide tangata whenua information, assessment and advisory services across the full range of Councils' statutory and non-statutory planning, resource consent, operations and other administrative and management processes. The company is largely funded by these councils, as they are the key recipients of MKT services. However, each Rūnanga also contribute based on their use of MKT's services for public consultation and notified planning matters.

MKT can be described as a mechanism that aims to facilitate the response of each Rūnanga for consultation that arises from

various statutes, primarily the RMA and LGA. When relevant, collective consultative processes with all Rūnanga are undertaken, and when necessary individual Rūnanga responses are facilitated. The jointly owned entity reflects the desire of Rūnanga for cost-effective, efficient and consistent ways to participate in environmental management within their collective takiwā – from Ashburton/Rakaia to the Hurunui River – and where appropriate, to enable them to alleviate the cost burden of this participation.

#### What do you see as the role of MKT? Why is what you do important to iwi and the wider community? In what ways do you support tangata whenua?

MKT's role is to provide tangata whenua focussed environmental planning and advisory services on behalf of the six Rūnanga in a manner that better reflects the processes that local authorities, developers, consent applicants and other agencies work to. MKT's role is to do this in a way that reflects the status of these Rūnanga as Treaty partners and the statutory provisions that recognise and provide for the relationship of tangata whenua with their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga. In doing this, MKT aims to remove or reduce the consultation burden on Rūnanga members by engaging in planning processes on their behalf, and to ensure costs fall to the recipients and beneficiaries of this information and advice. MKT also facilitates consultation with Rūnanga on an individual or collective basis and assists with commissioning of relevant cultural advisory reports, where the nature and scale of activities, or the significance of the area indicates direct engagement between the Rūnanga and the parties is needed.

MKT is focussed on delivery for the Papatipu Rūnanga that own the company. However, MKT directly and indirectly benefits the wider community through seeking to implement the values and objectives of the Rūnanga for their takiwā and their taonga (treasured resources). For example, Rūnanga goals for water that is safe for mahinga kai, will ensure that the community can also enjoy water that is safe for recreational and commercial users, as well as waterways that are restored with appropriate buffers and indigenous plantings.

A key benefit for Rūnanga working through a professional planning agency across several takiwā is the ability to be more active and consistent in upholding their kaitiakitanga responsibilities and ensuring that their interests and values are better represented in environmental decision-making. For councils MKT provides a 'one stop shop' to assist in meeting their statutory obligations to tangata whenua – to co-ordinate and facilitate consultation, to ensure appropriate input to council strategies and plans, and to ensure sound information is provided to decision-makers.

## **What is the vision of your organisation? What do you hope to achieve in the long-term?**

The ultimate objective of MKT is to uphold the mana of the Rūnanga as kaitiaki and manawhenua for their takiwā, achieving this through the articulation of their aspirations, goals and objectives for natural resources and taonga in their takiwā into Council planning, consenting, administration and management processes. The vision of MKT is held on behalf of the Rūnanga - that through effective engagement in planning and resource management processes, direct environmental gains will be achieved to protect and restore their taonga.

As a new advisory agency, the short term objective of MKT has been to establish a credible and useful service to Councils in a way that reflects the processes Councils work to, and that recognises the significance of matters to the Rūnanga. A further objective is to establish and maintain effective working relationships with officers to progress the functions of MKT and enable greater understanding and learning for Council officers. The challenge has been to do this in a way that is not simply working as a go-between. Longer term, MKT aims to be able to offer advisory services more widely in the community, particularly targeting advice to developers and their technical and planning consultancies at early stages of development planning. It is at this stage that responses to tangata whenua interests can be best incorporated into development proposals.

Long term, MKT hopes to achieve a shift in attitudes toward achievement of matters of interest to tangata whenua, and to build a body of practice and working examples that demonstrate that such responsiveness can generate positive outcomes for any development and any community. The aim is to have tangata whenua included as a “business as usual” approach for Councils and developers, not something to be avoided whenever possible.

## **How do you work with local councils and under which drivers (RMA, LGA, IMPs, statutory, non-statutory?) How close is this relationship with the local councils and does MKT assist in promoting more effective planning in this country?**

MKT is available to work closely with council staff as they review and develop Council strategies and plans, and to evaluate resource consent applications. This advisory service occurs well before the public consultation phase, to ensure that Council decision-makers have the appropriate information and advice on matters of significance to tangata whenua. In practice this is unbundling consultation into the planning process. MKT aims to work with council planners at the outset of any planning process, to identify issues, matters and areas of significance for tangata whenua and develop draft objectives, policy and/or terms and conditions to address these. MKT also advises on engagement and consultation processes that best suit the nature of the work, the timeframes available and the significance to Rūnanga. MKT then co-ordinates consultation with Rūnanga. By providing early input into the planning process, MKT is often able to avoid significant objections by Rūnanga at the submission stage. How well this approach works is largely dependant on the willingness of council planners and their abil-

ity to understand and respond to tangata whenua concerns.

In the past three years MKT has ensured that Rūnanga interests are reflected through the development of robust objectives and policies in a raft of council plans prepared under the RMA, LGA and Reserves Act 1977, including Christchurch City-wide strategies, urban development area plans, integrated reserve and park master plans, and reserve management plans. Some examples are: Christchurch City Council's - Biodiversity Strategy 2008-2035; Surface Water Strategy 2009-2039; Public Open Space Strategy 2010-2040; Belfast Area Plan 2010; Mid-Heathcote River/Ōpawaho Linear Park Masterplan 2009; Brooklands Lagoon/Te Riu O Te Aika Kawa Area Parks Master Plan 2010; South New Brighton Reserves Management Plan 2010; and numerous one-off pieces of advice on the impacts and significance of activities proposed for waterway margins, coastal and urban areas, for resource consent applications and the Council's own operational activities.

## **Can you give us an example of some of the important issues/outcomes that you've been involved in? What was it about these issues that made them so important to iwi?**

Matters of importance to Ngāi Tahu include the protection of significant ancestral sites, the restoration of water resources and quality that provides for current and future generations to access safe and abundant mahinga kai; and access to contemporary mahinga kai sites. Ngāi Tahu also strive for Councils to appropriately recognise them and their culture and traditions, as Treaty Partner, Manawhenua and Kaitiaki. Methods and expressions of this vary depending on the nature of any particular development or management proposal.

A good example of how MKT has worked to assist with matters of significance to tangata whenua is where proposals were made to plan for township growth in the Selwyn District. In this case early consultation had been done prior to the establishment of MKT through first stage non-statutory planning processes. MKT became involved when a plan change was underway, and when assessments were being prepared for consent applications for the stormwater scheme. The area was highly significant for waterways flowing into Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere) and for the occurrence of many springs – which are a taonga to Ngāi Tahu in this area. Recognition and the potential impacts of the development areas and the stormwater scheme had not been reflected in the original plans for the area. MKT established and facilitated a consultation hui with Rūnanga representatives, that generated an agreed method to recognise and provide for the significant taonga. MKT lodged a submission to this effect on behalf of the Rūnanga. MKT also prepared a cultural impact assessment, and through hui, site visits and an outcomes hui with Council officers, facilitated design changes that provided for the separation of the spring flow from the stormwater flow. Specific provision was made for a reserve to give acknowledgement to springs of the area and to Ngāi Tahu as the tangata whenua. While this development planning still has a way to run in terms of the statutory decision processes, it was a combination of the capacity, knowledge and ability of MKT to understand Council process, identify methods and bring a process together for Rūnanga; and MKT's ability to work pro-

actively and effectively with Council, that generated constructive and pragmatic solutions that could be accommodated into the Council's planning and design. MKT will continue to progress the Rūnanga goals for this through the hearing stages of the plan change, and through the resource consent processes for the stormwater scheme.

**What sort of staff do you have- do you employ non-Maori? Do you employ professional planners? Is there an element of volunteerism in what you do?**

MKT is a small organisation and currently has six staff and contractors (four part time), which include a general manager, an administrator, three planners/advisors and a tangata whenua advisor. These people are paid, not volunteers, and at present there is a mix of Maori and non-Maori staff and contractors. It is MKT's policy to employ the best person for the job, and places particular emphasis on planning and policy skills and experience, to enable efficient and effective articulation of Rūnanga objectives into the resource management process.

MKT has enabled the elimination of a large portion of the burden workload and costs to the Rūnanga for responding to requests. However, there remain elements of volunteerism at the Rūnanga for this work - to the extent that MKT needs to maintain communication and liaison processes with Rūnanga and their individual representatives, and when consultation hui are required. These are still provided in a non-paid capacity by the Rūnanga and their people.

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