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We never went to the supermarket:

a whanau oral history in kai reclamation in the Waipā.

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

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By

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Abstract

Food is an essential part of life and identity; kai forms the foundations of our relationships with one another and with the natural world. In this research I explore my whānau relationship with kai and kai sovereignty to better understand long lasting effects of urbanisation, industrialisation and colonisation. This thesis centres oral histories and lived experiences of multiple generations of my whānau, from the 1950 onwards.

This research comes from a personal desire to understand the roots of my relationship with kai and my Māori identity. By examining the forces that have reshaped the Waipā into a farming dominated landscape, I consider the impacts of colonisation on mahinga kai practices and in turn on kai sovereignty within my own life and that of my whānau. Through these intergenerational kōrero, I highlight that kai sovereignty is not only a critical response to food insecurity, but also a pathway toward cultural renewal, strengthened autonomy, and collective wellbeing. Although kai sovereignty is grounded in community driven systems and shared reasonability, it is equally enacted through small, everyday practices, gardening, cooking, hunting, fishing sharing kai and other activities that sustain māuranga, reinforce whanaungatanga and reaffirm Māori self-determination over the ways we gather grow, prepare and value our kai.

Dedication

In the final days of this thesis, my grandmother passed away. This thesis stands on her, and her knowledge, and her love. This could not exist without her faith in me. She wanted to be remembered as a mother and a grandmother, but she was also a kind person, full of love and creativity. This thesis is only one piece of the footprint you have left behind, one that I choose to follow in. She is missed by her mokopuna, her children and her whanau, and will ways be loved.

I love you with all my heart and soul, and I will miss you for the rest of my days.

I love you.

This thesis is also dedicated to the memory of my late uncle Te Umu McLean. Who loved through kai, joy and humour. Thank you for dedicating your life to the betterment of others around you, including your whānau, whenua, awa, Tainui, and the future. There will never be enough ways to thank you. Uncle Umu, is a consistent person within my whānau's lives, and his presence is impactful on this thesis, he is missed dearly.

Thank you, Uncle.

Acknowledgement

For my mum and nan, thank you for partaking, thank you for trusting and encouraging me to move forward with my studies. Thank you for letting me listen your experiences, and thank you for letting me use them. With out your care and love I would not be able to do anything I do today, you fed me and raised me and taught me. Most importantly thank you for believing in my education. I love you both, more than a small paragraph can ever tell.

I would like to thank my co-authors, Kirk and Uncle Joeph, thank you for partaking. This is a thesis that has worked because you chose to trust and believe in my ability. Without you this thesis would not be a possibly. Thank you for letting me hear your experiences, thoughts and feelings. My endless thanks, ngā mihi.

Thank you to my supervisors Sam and Sandi, who have spent the better part of two years working with me in this thesis. I thank you for the endless meetings and emails, and conversations. Most importantly I thank you for taking time out of your busy days and nights to make room for me, and my work. Thank you got giving me opportunities for study and work that I would have never of gotten otherwise. What time and trust that has given over the last few years has been so important to me, and I am so happy to have such great supporters such as you.

To my closest companions, Hamish and Ari. I thank you for the endless support, and comfort during this time. Thank you for all the dinners cooked, all the coffee made. You both have been the light the end of the tunnel, we have all gone through post grad together and I think we have pulled through for the better. And finally, a small thanks to Goose, for keeping me company on late nights and long days.

Finally thank you to the Clarkes and the Jollys, for all that you have done both in the past and the present. Thank you.

Ngā mihi.

Glossary

Atua – ancestor with continuing influence

Awa – river

Hāngī – earth oven for cooking food

Hapū – subtribe or kinship group

Hau – fruits, products

Hauora – health

Hīkoi – walk, march, in protest

Ika – fish

Iwi – extended kinship groups, peoples

Kaimoana – seafood

Kaitakitaki – guardian

Kaitiakitanga – guardianship, encompassing a kinship between humans and the natural world

Kākahu – garment, clothes

Karakia – incantations and prayer used to invoke spiritual guidance and protection, also used as a meeting.

Kaupapa – topic, project, founding or underlying principle

Kaumātua – elder

Kirikiriroa – Hamilton

Kōrero – conversation

Kōreroreo – talk

Kotahitanga – unity, collective action

Mahinga kai – garden, cultivation, food-gathering place

Mana – legal, effectual, binding, authoritative, valid

Manaakitanga – hospitality, kindness, the process of showing respect and care for others

Manaakitanga – hospitality, kindness, generosity, support

Māra kai – Food garden

Māramataka – luna calanader

Mātauranga Māori – Māori knowledge, worldview, epistemology

Mātua – Parent

Mātua kēkē – uncle

Mauri – expression for the mauri of a person or place

Mārae – cultural, spritiual, and community hub for Māori, a place to stand.

Motu – an island

Noa – free from the extensions of tapu

Paraoa parai – Fry Bread

Paru – dirty or muddy

Pātaka Kai – street food pantry, food storage

Poi – lightweight ball on a string

Powhiri – rituals of encounter, welcome ceremony on a mārae

Pūrākau – story, narrative, traditional story

Rāhui – to put in place a temporary ritual prohibition, closed season, ban, reserve

Roto – lake

Tangihanga – Traditional ceremony mourning the dead

Tapu – restriction, prohibition - a supernatural condition.

Te ao Māori – the Māori world

Te taiao – the natural world, environment

Tikanga – customs and values

Tinana – real, trunk

Tino Rangatiratanga – self-determination, sovereignty

Tohunga – priest or learned person

Tūpuna – ancestor

Tuna – Eel. Long fin eel and short fin eel

Waiata – to sing

Wairua – spirit, soul

Whakapapa – gove history, genealogy

Whakatauki – proverb

Whakawhanaungatanga – connections, relationships

Whānau – family

Whāngai – customary adoption process

Whenua – land

Introduction

In the 1990s, New Zealand filmmaker Peter Jackson scoped out perfectly green rolling hills to create the image of J.R.R Tolkien's shire, home to the hobbits of *The Lord of the Rings.* In a 1954 letter, Tolkien had imagined the shire as an ode to England.[1] I "had a mind," he wrote, "to make a body of more or less connected legend...which I could dedicate simply to England".[2] The vision for the film's setting was to create an environment that could be understood, visually, as English: so why did Jackson and his crew choose to film in the Waikato? In the twenty-first century the Waikato is known as a farming hub, with its key production being dairy. But the Waikato was not always a rolling field of rye grass fit for industrial farming.[3]

Over the last 160 years settlers have "terraformed" the Waikato systemically and physically, forcing the taiao to adhere to settler ideas about what whenua should look like and what it should produce.[4] The term "terraform" comes from science fiction and means …

By terraforming the whenua, the New Zealand settler state has actively enforced cultural assimilation: the state altered the world that Māori would live in.[5] By removing and limiting Māori access to whenua and kai, successive nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century New Zealand governments have limited the ways that Māori can exercise kaitiakitanga in

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[1] Allan Phillipson, 'Dollannan vs the Lord of the Rings: The Battle of Nature and Progress', *World Literature Written in English*, 39.2 (2002), pp. 18–37, doi:10.1080/17449850208589356.
[2] Brady Kruse, 'A Tribute to England: J.R.R Tolkien's Works as the Missing Anglo- Saxon Mythology'.
[3] Michael P Cameron and Kendon Bell, *Dairying in the Waikato Region of New Zealand: An Overview of Historical Statistics*, n.d.; 'Waikato's Dairy Sector', Te Waka, n.d. <https://www.waikato.com/invest/key-sectors/waikato-agriculture-sector/waikato-dairy-sector> [accessed 22 August 2025].
[4] Meg Parsons, Karen Fisher, and Roa Petra Crease, *Decolonising Blue Spaces in the Anthropocene: Freshwater Management in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Springer International Publishing, 2021), doi:10.1007/978-3-030-61071-5.
[5] Sam iti Prendergast, 'Political Critique and Genealogical Vision in Te Oriori a Rihi Puhiwahine, 1870s', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 58 (2024) <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/entities/publication/3c15e43e-714b-43ff-91fe-4db8ac73e27c> [accessed 14 October 2025].

relationship to whenua and kai[6]. As a result many Māori lost the opportunities to be involved in kaitiakitanga, and some have not returned to it. [7]

In recent years I have thought about the disruption between my whānau and whenua, and I have craved a connection to kaitiakitanga, whakapapa and my identity as Māori. I asked myself, 'what led to the disconnect I feel?' The answer could just be baked into a simple term, "colonisation", but that word alone did not give me closure. This thesis asks how I might find closure–or at least a more precise answer to my question–by tracing the disruptions that the colonial state caused in my whānau's relationship to kai, whenua, and te taiao.

Hence this thesis has evolved from a project about state control over whenua into a deeper exploration of my whānau's relationship to kai sovereignty.[8] Through [insert number] whānau interviews and place-based research, I trace changes in my whānau practices of growing, preparing, sharing, purchasing, trading, gifting, and working with kai.[9] I began my research with a strong sense that my whānau's engagement in mahinga kai had declined over the period from the 1950s to the 2020s, but I wanted to understand exactly how and why this decline had occurred. The result is a thesis that centres my whānau but also raises broader questions about government policy, privatisation of whenua, capitalism, farming, and the environment. [10]

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[6] Olivia Oldham, Pania Newton, and Nicola Short, 'Land-Based Resistance: Enacting Indigenous Self-Determination and Kai Sovereignty', *Elem Sci Anth*, 12.1 (2024), p. 00118, art. 1, doi:10.1525/elementa.2023.00118.
[7] Jessica Hutchings and others, 'STORYING KAITIAKITANGA: Exploring Kaupapa Māori Land and Water Food Stories', *MAI Journal: A New Zealand Journal of Indigenous Scholarship*, 9.3 (2020), art. 3, doi:10.20507/MAIJournal.2020.9.3.1; Christina McKerchar and others, 'Enhancing Māori Food Security Using Traditional Kai', *Global Health Promotion*, 22.3 (2015), pp. 15–24, doi:10.1177/1757975914543573.
[8] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty* (Massey Universty Press, 2025).
[9] Gail Adams-Hutcheson and others, 'Gendered Geographies of Resistance, Resilience and Reworking in Aotearoa Feminist Geography Scholarship', *New Zealand Geographer*, 79.3 (2023), pp. 177–80, doi:10.1111/nzg.12381.
[10] McKerchar and others, 'Enhancing Māori Food Security Using Traditional Kai'.

This investigation aims to look at colonisation at the microscale of my whānau and the national scale of policies that have affected the environment, while centring Māori and the Waipā. This research contributes to kai sovereignty knowledge, as it is tracking changes through generations, that involves Pūrākau and personal reflection. This thesis is based on personal histories, but it is not an isolated narrative: it is a story that belongs to urbanised Māori.[11]

[11] 'Identity as an Urban Māori', Canta, n.d. <https://www.canta.co.nz/diversity/7phznise2t8r7566mcqdq17xyg4fy0-29ejr-yrft5-zd5fd-nnmrh-4ckkw-h2638> [accessed 4 September 2025].

Chapter One | Whānau's Personal History

When I was growing up I translated the word "kai" very simply. To me, kai was food. But over the past two years, as I have investigated commercial farming and colonial development, I have come to understand that kai is about power.[12]

Food is a powerful resource. As such, when we examine who controls access to food, and how, we learn about the mechanisms of power that structure society. States have long used food to control groups of people, and to engage in conflict.[13] In Aotearoa, supermarket control of food prices has enormous impacts of the quotidian realities of life. As I reflected on my own relationships to food, eating, and work, I came to understand how my whānau and I are positioned within the vast system of capitalist production, trade, and control.[14]

This chapter traces the development of my relationship with kai by situating my experiences within the wider histories of my whānau and the landscapes that shaped us. I begin by examining how my early understandings of kai shifted as I learned about the connections between food, power and colonisation. I then introduce key places and people that have influenced my kai practices, including our whānau homes in Kihikihi and Te Awamutu, and the generations of whānau who have lived in these spaces. I explore how farming, environmental planning, and food systems have shaped our relationships to kai, before turning to reflect on my experiences as a worker in the food service industry. Together these

[12] Cameron and Bell, *Dairying in the Waikato Region of New Zealand: An Overview of Historical Statistics*.
[13] Mark W. Allen, 'Food, Fighting, and Fortifications in Pre-European New Zealand: Beyond the Ecological Model of Maori Warfare', in *The Archaeology of Food and Warfare: Food Insecurity in Prehistory*, ed. by Amber M. VanDerwarker and Gregory D. Wilson (Springer International Publishing, 2016), pp. 41–59, doi:10.1007/978-3-319-18506-4_3.
[14] Nēpia Mahuika, *'Kōrero Tuku Iho': Reconfiguring Oral History and Oral Tradition*, 2012.

narratives highlight the interconnectedness of the Crown and settler forces which have influenced mine and many other relationships to kai, whenua, and each other.

Chapter outline

Though out this thesis I aim to answer the research questions that were born from my personal growth and an in interest in kai, as well as coming from my honours project. Both of which has raised questions about kai sovereignty.

For this research I am looking to my whānau, highlighting generational changes. This research was formed because of my personal curiosity for whānau and how my own relationship was formed and changed because of local and national colonisation. This has led to my key research questions. Three key objectives guide my thesis and set the parameters for my investigation.

Objective One: To learn about my whānau reclamation of kai

This objective is to focus on what my whānau does in their lives to interact with mahinga kai, and why they choose to partake in kaitiakitanga, and mahinga kai. I want to learn about these relationships and how these relationships have changed over time, as a person grows, and their environment changes.

Objective Two: To explore the impact of food systems in people's lives, including industrial farming

This objective is to understand the impact that capitalist food systems have had on my family's life, this includes both the production, purchasing and consumption of kai. This focuses on the changes that people have had over their lifetime including lifestyle changes, physical changes and working conditions.

Objective Three: To examine current community kai sovereignty projects that are in motion in the Waipā

Kai sovereignty does not stop in the home garden: it is a community effort. This objective aims to look at community impacts that support the growth of kai sovereignty in the local community space. To demonstrate this I have selected three organisations, the national school lunch program, and pātaka kai, street pantries. These projects support kai sovereignty on a larger community level.

During my honours programme I started to learn about the ideas of having sovereign rights over kai, and I wanted to know what that looks like both in my community and in my whānau. These are two separate spaces that interwind and overlapped. Whāuau and communities face similar problems when looking at kai insecurity, and kai sovereignty. This thesis aims to understand my whāuau past and present as we continue our journey with kai. I also wanted to investigate community actions that engage with kai sovereignty, and how we might use the systems in place to gain agency. Throughout this thesis I will explore different aspects of kai within varying levels of community. This is broken down into three chapters, with the addition of an interlude.[15]

My second chapter is a literature review called "Taking books off the shelf" It engages with literature around kai and food sovereignty. This includes key books and articles, as well as the themes and communities they engage with. The aim of this chapter is to set up what key literature has influenced kai sovereignty, as well as improving my own writing style.

Chapter three is " the position of kai within the community and its connection to place", looking at the viewpoints an political space that kai occupies.

[15] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World.*

Chapter five, six and seven, are my interview chapters. Here I have conversations with my whānau through a series of interviews. These interviews reveal an oral history that intersects and explains changes to our environment, our relationship with food and our diet. These chapters highlight the changes to our diets across generations over the last 70 years. These often intersect with intersecting moments in modern Māori history, including urbanisation and ongoing colonisation. Finally, the eighth chapter looks into what groups in local spaces and communities are doing to create kai sovereignty on the local scale. These include community groups that are working on creating spaces to distribute kai to communities such as Pātaka kai, government initiatives feeding school children, and local establishments.

These moments made me think about kai sovereignty, and how disconnected people can be from their food systems under industrial capitalism, where we rely on global supply chains and supermarket shelves rather than our own whenua and mahinga kai. The COVID-19 lockdown made me realise that without restoring these relationships, our communities remain vulnerable to fear, scarcity, and uncertainty.

To first understand how my relationship to kai has developed, I need to reflect on my whānau connections to kai.[16] The relationships that shaped me are central to how I have started to form my own connections to te ao Māori, and the heart of these relationships for me is the family home in Kihikihi.



Figure 1: Kihikihi family home, Image is provided by google maps. [17]

Our Kihikihi home is a central actor in this thesis. This house has been occupied by a family member for over three decades.[18] Over time the house has changed but has remained one of the centres of our whānau. Each person has left a mark, my grandfather built the deck that frames the house; Matua Joe planted the orchard; and my mother's brother worked on the plumbing.[19]

Above (fig. 1) is the house in 2013 when my mother and I lived there. Built in the 1970s, the house sits alongside a paddock that often holds sheep. Gardens that wrap around the perimeter of the fence line meet behind the pōhutukawa, connecting us both to whenua and kai.[20]

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[16] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.
[17] '41 Withmore street', Google Maps, n.d. [accessed 25 September 2025].
[18] Nepia Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition: An Indigenous Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 2019).
[19] Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition*.
[20] Mahuika, *'Kōrero Tuku Iho': Reconfiguring Oral History and Oral Tradition*; Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition*.

The second setting of this thesis is my grandmother's house.[21] My grandmother lives in a small home that she and my papa had in the centre of Te Awamutu. It is within walking distance to the local supermarket that I once worked at as a teenager. Like our Kihikihi house, my grandmother's home was built in the 1970s and has housed a small rotation of whānau occupants since then, including my uncle who lived in the house during the early 2000s. [22]

The bean shaped pool in the back is no longer maintained, and the gardens have become overgrown in the last ten years as my nans arthritic hands cannot do the same busy work that a full garden requires. The garage holds my grandfather's old workshop. The home itself still holds its 70s charm, with the standard two car garage, open plan living, and carpet in every room. The photo is from 15 years ago, when the trees were groomed.[23]



Figure 2: Nan's Home 2010 provided by Google maps 2010. [24]

The Dearings and Mauriohooho

At the centre of this thesis is my mother's whānau. This is the family attached to the Kihikihi house the whānau that helped raise me and was the most prominent in my early life.[25] They worked as a team to raise me, taking turns driving me to my endless sports and looking after

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[22] Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition*; Priscilla Wehi and others, 'Marine Resources in Māori Oral Tradition: He Kai Moana, He Kai Mā Te Hinengaro', *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures*, Special issue on Island biocultural diversity and traditional ecological knowledge, 2.2 (2013), pp. 59–68, art. 2, doi:10.1016/j.imic.2013.11.006.
[23] Sandi Ringham, *Te karanga tūturu o maieke: Ngāti Kuri Women's Taiao Geographies* (The University of Waikato, 2022.)

[24] '2 Loomb Place', Google Maps, n.d. [accessed 25 September 2025].
[25] Mahuika, *'Kōrero Tuku Iho': Reconfiguring Oral History and Oral Tradition*.

me when I was ill. The Dearing name was inherited from my grandfather, John, who immigrated from Canada, in his youth, in the 1960s.

Nan: Te Are Dearing

My grandmother, Te Are Dearing (Mauriohooho), was raised by her grandparents in a Māori adoption relationship called whāngai. She attended Parawera school, a central location in the stories that involve both her childhood and her brother, Matua Joe.[26] Parawera School was set up as a native school, built on whenua that was donated by our tūpuna in 1902.[27] Nan is known for her sporting talents, swimming and playing softball and squash. She is a talented seamstress, crocheter, and an artist, making kākahu, and trying to teach me how to weave. My grandmother has dedicated herself to supporting us, raising us, and loving us. My Papa, John Dearing, married into the Mauriohooho whānau through my grandmother Te Are (from this point known as Are). John was a driver, going between trucks and a local taxi company, while my nan worked as a nursing assistant in local hospitals. [28] Together they raised a small family, having three children Ray, Cindy (My mother), and Julie and later becoming grandparents to myself, and my two younger cousins, who I mention throughout this thesis. Nan took in my youngest cousin when he was born, and she has been caring for him until she passed in 2025. Although he is not interviewed he is in the background of my interview with Nan and is a key example of kai being a physical manifestation of aroha.[29]

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[26] Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition*; Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (Princeton University Press, 2025).

[27] 'Komene Mauriohooho', Te Awamutu Museum Collection Online, n.d. <https://collection.tamuseum.org.nz/objects/24762/komene-mauriohooho> [accessed 2 September 2025].
I have used the term donated because this is the term used native school act 1867. This act created spaces where Māori children where often assimilated into pākehā values. These schools aimed to assimilate, these children by introducing Christianity and settler values through day schools. When they were merged into the state school system in 1897 when it was decided that all classes would be taught in English.
Judith Simon, *European Style Schooling for Maori: The First Century*, n.d.

[28] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World.*

[29] 'A Personal Story of Sandi Ringham, Descendant of Ngāti Kuri, and Her Whānau', Tāmaki Paenga Hira, n.d. <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/stories/blog/2017/a-personal-story-of-sandi-ringham> [accessed 13 September 2025].

During my childhood kai connected me to my grandmother. I have memories of her baking pies from the apple trees my mother grew in our Kihikihi orchard.[30] I remember watching the pie rise and become golden through the dark panes of the old white oven–now unplugged at the wall and used for plastic container storage. I recall the smell of fry bread on Christmas morning, stacked up on the kitchen bench, the sweet scent lingering in the early afternoon.[31] Nan had been working since the birds started calling, all because I begged for it. I can paint the images in my mind of her garden gnome and decorated fruit trees in their uniform boxes and the vines winding around the fence. I remember the times we spent gathering fruit, bagging them up and handing them out to whānau, and neighbours on our Saturday drives after netball. Nan did this up until her passing, making her rounds around the town, my workplace, my mother's salon, the back doorstep of my uncle's house, and her brother's home.

[30] Ringham, *Te karanga tūturu o maieke*
[31] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.



Figure 3: Nan's fruit trees (Images taken by author 2025).

These photos were taken on a sunny winter day in 2025: my nan is picking mandarins for me off her trees with clippers that have been used for over 20 years.[32] These are the trees that have been producing fruit for decades, season after season. Her gumboots have been replaced with my cousin's crocs, something lighter on her joints. The first image is my nan picking me her seedless mandarins, the second image is the grapefruit tree. Just out of sight is a small lime tree, a grapevine, and a navel orange tree. Between the Kihikihi home and my grandmother's home there is a purposeful planting of a range of trees including apples,

[32] Sandi Ringham, "Te Karanga Tūturu o Maieke :Ngāti Kuri Women's Taiao Geographies" *The University of Waikato*, 2022.

lemonade lemons, and feijoas.[33] These orchards enabled us to have fresh fruit throughout my lifetime and my mother's lifetime.

Mother: Cindy Dearing

My mother, Cindy, has been the biggest influence on my life, raising me as a single mum in the Kihikihi home. She was raised in Te Awamutu, among my grandmother's fruit trees, in the small quiet street. Cindy is a hairdresser, owning a salon in Kihikihi for over 20 years.[34] This is the space that I grew up in, which gave us a community that offered us endless support. When I was at the salon, clients would help me with my spelling, reading, and math homework, they would make tea and coffee for themselves and others, as well as bring us kai.[35] They supported us through giving kai, as on occasion my mother would bring home dinner that clients had traded cooked meals or treats.[36] Mum has been playing golf for over two decades, her winnings often included Christmas hams, field trips, kitchen appliances, and wine. These were avenues in which we gained a lot of food and excess that we normally would not have, including air fryers, meat rubs, and food baskets. [37]

She has had the most influence in how I think about kai, this includes how to fuel my body correctly, how to cook, how to shop, and understandings of diet culture.[38]An example of this is how she treated dinner. Dinner time as an event not to influence and improve our relationship but as an act that provided substance, in most cases it was a source of arguments.[39] We ate our dinners at the dining room table, facing the television, watching some poorly aged sitcom. Dinners were rarely cooked from home grown produce; we relied

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[33] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World.*
[34] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.
[35] Natanahira Herewini, *Māori Communities Raising Children: The Roles of Extended Whānau in Child Rearing in Māori Society*, n.d.
[36] Herewini, *Māori Communities Raising Children: The Roles of Extended Whānau in Child Rearing in Māori Society*.
[37] Mahuika, *'Kōrero Tuku Iho': Reconfiguring Oral History and Oral Tradition*.
Mau Te Rangimarie Clark and others, 'Reimagining Eating Disorder Spaces: A Qualitative Study Exploring Māori Experiences of Accessing Treatment for Eating Disorders in Aotearoa New Zealand', *Journal of Eating Disorders*, 11.1 (2023), p. 22, doi:10.1186/s40337-023-00748-5.
[39] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.

on ingredients bought from the local supermarket. I have strong memories of dinner and food in our house, memories that include the smell of the crockpot that covers the whole house, these where often happy moments.[40]

The nights that I would eat dinner next door neighbours, our family friends gave me a different experience. Their dinners were different. Our neighbours were an intergenerational family that always started with prayer. We ate in a dining room under a strong set of expectations: to eat in silence, to sit still, to eat correctly with a knife and fork. When these rules where broken it resulted in being sternly told off at the dining room table.[41] These made moments that where often happy in my home, stressful situations. These dinners taught me that these nights can create and reform relationships, that dinner.[42]

These neighbours also had gardens, perfectly contained in their boxes. Nothing went to waste, all food scraps went to a flock of chickens that were sheltered by fruit trees. Each salad with dinner was pulled from the garden. We often were able to share our fruit with them, from this we got jams made from our feijoa, lemons, and oranges.

When it comes to gardening, my mum has never been known for her green thumb, this is something that she had to learn. Once it was a huge surprise when she managed to keep flowers alive. Mum and I often tried to grow small plants, such as strawberries, but it was my father that always kept the gardens in shape, not my mum. In recent times this has changed with her taking an interest in gardening since the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown in 2020. Although this started with grooming trees, this has grown into keeping a small garden. As of 2025, she has fruit trees outside of her salon and has plans to extend her small shop garden. This new skill has allowed her to be more independent in her kai, something that she

[40] 'Ka Kite, Bro by Willie Davis | PDF | Poetry', Scribd, n.d. <https://www.scribd.com/document/488443433/ka-kite-bro-story-pdf> [accessed 13 September 2025].
[41] 'Ka Kite, Bro by Willie Davis | PDF | Poetry'.
[42] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

was never able to do while I was in school, in addition to not having to look after me full time anymore, therefore having more room for herself, and her nutrition.

In my youth, classic Māori meals such as hāngi and boil up were not part of our home. I usually ate them at school, where they were cooked on site by teachers or parents in the hāngi pit that was in the gully at the back of the school grounds. Boil up was made in the school hall kitchen in a large pot that sat over multiple boilers. School meals were my first introduction to boil up and hāngi. They were served in polystyrene containers that crinkled and steamed when you opened it up, creating a savoury aroma that lasted days in the classrooms, and in the school hall for weeks at a time. Otherwise, I only had the chance to eat fry bread that was dripping in golden maple syrup, and only at my request.

This experience was different to many other children I grew up with, where kai like hāngi and boil up was a common household experience, as it was brought out for family events, such as birthdays, Christmas or as a normal rotation of their weekly meals. This was not my reality; my meals were the standard British style dinner, three vegetables and a meat. My mother did her best to keep up on a healthy diet, based in what she could find within her budget in the supermarket.

Clarkes and the Jollys

The Clarkes and Jollys are my father's family and my step fathers family, both families have been important in how I have been raised. Both families have a long history of farming in the Waikato, and there for, all of my life I've benefited from the very same systems that I critique in this dissertation. It is because of this background I feel as though I am in the position to speak on the intersection of te ao Māori and agriculture. I recognise that these

systems have given me privileges that many do not have.[43] This is a duality that allows me to reflect, question and challenge these systems and spaces.[44] The impact of the farming system has desecrated the environment; wetlands have been drained and removed for green grazing pastures.[45] Sprinkled on top is mined phosphates that are washed into the awa affecting the water and mahinga kai, that once held tuna and freshwater mussels, destroying a once thriving and diverse ecosystem.[46] Introduced species such as possums, stoats, and rats have been eating and competing with native and endemic taonga species, decimating bird, insect and reptile populations.[47] When these elements of biodiversity are affected, the cycle of the ecosystem is disrupted, which in turn impacts mahinga kai and reduces the availability of healthy kai for both humans and taonga species.[48] The decline in health of species such as tuna and/or freshwater mussels results in mass deaths in the heat of the summer, through yearly algae blooms, this is by nurturance pollutions from land use. [49]

During my honours research I found that through my father I'm far more tied to farming than expected. The Clarkes have been working in farming since the early 20th century and were heavily involved in the Farmers Union.[50] Within my previous research I found my great grandfather in town records, writing for the Farmers Union, and making his voice noted in the town meetings.[51] My father was a farmer for AgResearch for over 40 years, and we lived

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[43] Richard Shaw, 'A Tale of Two Stories: Unsettling a Settler Family's History in Aotearoa New Zealand', *Genealogy*, 5 (2021).
[44] Shaw, 'A Tale of Two Stories: Unsettling a Settler Family's History in Aotearoa New Zealand'.
[45] John Reid and Matthew Rout, *The Colonising Environment*, n.d.; Hugh Campbell, *Farming Inside Invisible Worlds : Modernist Agriculture and Its Consequences* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2020) <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/58834> [accessed 20 August 2024].
[46] Sergio Colombo, ross Cullen, and Baskaran Ramesh, 'Estimating Values of Environmental Impacts of Dairy Farming in New Zealand', *Ew Zealand Journal of Agricultural Research*, 52 (n.d.), pp. 377–89, doi:doi:10.1080/00288230909510520.
[47] Stephen Goldson and others, 'Severe Insect Pest Impacts on New Zealand Pasture: The Plight of an Ecological Outlier', *Journal of Insect Science*, 2020, pp. 1–17, doi:10.1093/jisesa/ieaa018; Colombo, Cullen, and Ramesh, 'Estimating Values of Environmental Impacts of Dairy Farming in New Zealand'.
[48] T. J. Stevenson and others, 'Disrupted Seasonal Biology Impacts Health, Food Security and Ecosystems', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 282.1817 (2015), p. 20151453, doi:10.1098/rspb.2015.1453.
[49] Stevenson and others, 'Disrupted Seasonal Biology Impacts Health, Food Security and Ecosystems'.
[50] 'The Sale Yards , the Sale Yards', *Te Awamutu Courier*, 1 June 1945, p. 4 <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/TAWC19450601.2.24>.
[51] 'Correspondence , Correspondence', *Te Awamutu Courier*, 2 May 1947, p. 4 <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/TAWC19470502.2.16>.

in the Tokonui Hospital Workers Village, until I was four. After my parents' separation my mother and I moved into the Kihikihi house. AgResearch has been known for its connection to genetic animal research and is one of many research farms around the county.[52] AgResearch has been in the spotlight for animal cloning, and genetic modification, in an aim to make these a staple in the food system.[53] This has been operating since 1912 and is a Crown owned company that has farms all over the country.[54]

Without farming many members of my community would not be able to make a living. Te Awamutu, Kihikihi and the surrounding areas are built on the foundations of a farming community.[55] These farms provide a lot of the jobs in the community, from tanker truck drivers to factory workers. Examples include the Fonterra factory, hiring more than 330 people as of 2023.[56] Within the Waikato alone there are over eight thousand farms.[57] These farms fill the space around towns, modifying the natural environments with fields of rye grass filling the void between small towns, land which once Māori land, wrongfully removed after the Waikato invasion.[58] The Waipā is made up of several small towns, Kihikihi, Cambridge, Pirongia and, Ōtorohanga, Ōhaupō and Te Awamutu having the larger population. Additionally there are smaller villages such as Te Mawhai, which are maintained through farming. Waikato has the highest number of farms in the North Island hectares to 1,528,316 in 2019.[59]

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[52] 'About AgResearch', *AgResearch* <https://www.agresearch.co.nz/about-agresearch/> [accessed 2 May 2025].
[53] 'About AgResearch', AgResearch, 2 May 2025 <https://www.agresearch.co.nz/about-agresearch/> [accessed 2 May 2025]; Colombo, Cullen, and Ramesh, 'Estimating Values of Environmental Impacts of Dairy Farming in New Zealand'.
[54] Shaw, 'A Tale of Two Stories: Unsettling a Settler Family's History in Aotearoa New Zealand'.
[55] 'Waikato's Dairy Sector'.
[56] D J Minhinnick and P G Senior, 'Statement Of Evidence Of Suzanne O'rourke On Behalf Of Fonterra Limited Corporate 6 APRIL 2023'.
[57] Stats NZ, *Stats NZ. Farm Numbers and Farm Size: Data to 2022. Stats NZ, 2023.* (n.d.) <https://www.stats.govt.nz/indicators/farm-numbers-and-farm-size-data-to-2022 > [accessed 13 September 2025].
[58] 'Number of Farms in New Zealand - Figure.NZ' <https://figure.nz/chart/xci2iJlcR2xu4l5x> [accessed 5 April 2025].
[59] Stats NZ, *Stats NZ. Farm Numbers and Farm Size: Data to 2022. Stats NZ, 2023.*

My father took me on my first and only hunting trip, taught me how to ride a quadbike, how to milk a cow, and how to shoot a gun.[60] Until his recent retirement I continued to spend time on the farm, although it involved bringing him coffee from the nearest shop and sitting on the bike or in the tractor. He was an infinite source of information about past and present farming practices and the landscape, knowledge that was either from his personal experience or information that was learnt from men before him. Currently my father, although retired, is still active in the Te Awamutu dog trial club, and is still active in his garden. His garden has been in a constant bloom year after year, consisting of potatoes, green onion, tomato, pumpkin, grapes, and herbs, as well as a vast variety of fruit trees.[61] He grows the staples and adds them to his dinners and lunches. Dad has always had a garden, a habit he picked up from his mother who kept a garden until her death. Much like my stepfather, my dad enjoys hunting and fishing, both often bringing home fish and meat on a regular basis. [62]

My Stepfather R. Jolly also a multi-generational farmer, who worked on a dry stock farm towards Kawhia that his father owned, and we in part lived on. In addition to this he has worked in the farming retail space, and worked as a contractor at different farms and trucking companies. The old two-bedroom cottage on the dry stock farm looked into a forest of pine and loomed over a steep bank full of native plants. He taught me to ride a horse, to start a fire and allowed me the freedom to explore the farm and the woods around his house. He introduced me to a multicultural Māori and Pākehā family down the road who also lived on the dry stock farm. My first job was working for this family, mustering during the end of shearing season. [63]

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[60] Shaw, 'A Tale of Two Stories: Unsettling a Settler Family's History in Aotearoa New Zealand'.
[61] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.
[62] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*; Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.
[63] Mahuika, *'Kōrero Tuku Iho': Reconfiguring Oral History and Oral Tradition*.

R. Jolly was around for all of my childhood, he was also an avid gardener, planting vegetables and fruit each season. When we moved into Ōtorohanga with my stepfather during my high school years he maintained a small garden and an orchard that we often ate from. At this time my mother never looked after the garden, it was my stepfathers garden.[64] During the time that we lived with my stepfather we always ate as a family, we sat at the breakfast bar and talked, this became our tradition, only ever broken up by the need to watch the weather or the sports news.

Work experience

One of the moments that defined how I think about kai was my first part time job. In 2016 I got my first job working in the local supermarket in Te Awamutu. In the eight years that I worked in the store I worked in most departments with my key departments being chilled, frozen, checkouts and deli. In the checkouts I watched the people struggle with affording food, and I listened to clink of people counting coins and muttering about what to leave under their exhausted breath.[65] I watched people take food without payment, that they could not afford, and I allowed them to walk through the doors and out of the shop.[66] This was the first time I noticed the mental exhaustion that getting kai could cause whānau. For a lot of people food is a weekly stress that I had never noticed in my own home but noticed in the supermarket. I began to notice it everywhere, every day. I saw my friends struggling and

[64] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.
[65] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.
[66] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
For this I was working in the self-serve machines, before they placed security cameras above them, stealing was simple and, easily undetected, as well as simply ignored. Personally, if they wanted someone to discourage stealing, a small, teenage girl was not the right choice to act as security. In addition our store often did not have a permeant security position until after I left checkouts, in addition confrontation could and would get violent and small offences was often not worth the price of food taken.

classmates not bringing lunch to school. What I never noticed before, I noticed every day at school. [67]

During 2020, the country went into lockdown during the COVID-19 outbreak.[68] This was an difficult experience for many people and whānau. Panic spread quickly, people horded supplies resulting in a national restrictions on food in supermarkets. At the centre of this was the fear that food would run out, that our access would be cut, revealing the little trust that people have in traditional supermarkets, I started thinking to myself, why had we placed all our faith in a supermarket system that ultimately nobody trusted?

This thought process became more clear as I watched food being tossed out in large amounts, food that could be eaten. The small amount that was saved went to selected groups such as the church food drive, or the ladies that used the damaged butter to make sweets for the local hospital. The food left was being discarded and piled up each week, some marked down in hopes to be sold, some just left to expire on the shelves. Through my experience I noticed this happened more when food prices went up, sending staples food items out of reach for many whānau. There was more milk in the chiller at the end of the day, the butter and cheese which often had to be topped up four times a day in 2016, cheese was only restocked twice a day in 2022. By July 2025 butter had risen fifty percent in a year, and 120 percent higher than it was 20 years ago.[69]

A supermarket's goal is not to lower food insecurity, but to make a profit off the basic need to eat. If supermarkets worked on the plan to reduce food insecurity they would be looking at making less profit from each item. They could be looking at price gouging and price

[67] 'Ka Kite, Bro by Willie Davis | PDF | Poetry'.
[68] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.
[69] Susan Edmunds and Money Correspondent, 'Pricey Butter Pulling up Food Bills - but There May Be Some Relief in Sight', *RNZ*, 17 July 2025 <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/business/567174/pricey-butter-pulling-up-food-bills-but-there-may-be-some-relief-in-sight>.

discrepancy in independent owned stores. Lowering the price of an overall grocery shop, or financially and publicly supporting solutions that look at dismantling or improving systems internally.[70] In a perfect world these spaces would be a place of distribution, not profit, allowing for spaces where people could bring food to a location where it could be given to those in need.[71]

In the summer of 2024, I began working at a local café and catering company. This experience placed me on the other side of the spectrum, watching customers spend large sums of money on luxury food, in some cases left untouched, for me to scrape into over flowing bins.[72] These spaces operate as purely transactional, where wealth creates a barrier that must be crossed before one can eat.[73] Eating out is often framed as a luxury, when finances are tight people are often advised to cut back by avoiding these spaces, retreating into the home. Yet café are prone to waste, food that goes unsold or made in excess is disregarded. In recent months I have created a way to redirect a small amount of this excess, taking the leftover excess to a pātaka kai on my way home from work.[74]

From these two experiences in addition to my childhood, I have been a part of the food service industry at both ends; being a part of the manufacturing and growth of the product and later distributing it to the final destination. My proximity to these spaces has pushed me to question what often feels like two competing world views, one that values convenience, profit and abundance, and one that values sustainability and equity.

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[70] Kelli Kennedy and Carolyn Snell, *How Can Supermarkets Help End Food Insecurity? : Final Report.* (University of York, 2021), doi:10.15124/YAOWC6W-N709.
[71] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[72] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[73] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.
[74] Emily Jones, *An Investigation into Food Waste Produced in New Zealand Restaurants and Cafes.* (University of Otago, 2018) <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/esploro/outputs/graduate/An-investigation-into-food-waste-produced/9926480375501891> [accessed 14 September 2025].

These memories and experiences of kai have influenced my relationship with health and food. My experiences have helped me form relationships in the earliest part of my life; I see food as an act of love. Collecting kai from the fruit trees that have provided for generations of my whānau, in houses that have been a refuge for countless whānau members.[75] Yet, my personal ever-changing relationship with kai in my early twenties and my late teens has left me asking if I am alone in this change? But I am not, kai is now often brought from supermarkets, with Woolworths and Foodstuffs bringing in record profits with the sector being worth 25 billion dollars in 2024.[76] With this increase of profits there has been an increase at the checkout, with the rise in food costs being noticeable all over the nation. This change feels as if we as a population have lost the right to food sovereignty, as the ability to afford healthy and fresh foods seems to be out of reach for more and more people.[77]

[75] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[76] '"Concerning Picture" in Grocery Sector Now Worth $25 Billion | Stuff' <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/350402674/concerning-picture-grocery-sector-now-worth-25-billion> [accessed 12 January 2025].
[77] Mariaelena A Huambachano, 'Indigenous Food Sovereignty: Reclaiming Food as Sacred Medicine in Aotearoa New Zealand and Peru', *New Zealand Journal of Ecology*, 43.3 (2019), pp. 1–6 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26841826>.

Interlude | Matariki 2025

Matariki is Māori new year, where a cluster of stars rise into the cold morning winter sky. This cluster of stars is important to many cultures, often called in Greek the Pleiades or the seven sisters.[78] These sisters are daughters of Titan Atlas, who was forced to hold up the sky, resulting in leaving his daughters, to protect them from Orion, Zeus transformed them into the star clusters. The Sisters are muses in art, including, depictions made by Elihu Vedder in 1885, who had paintings of the sisters in the Met.[79] Alma Vedder of Warpiri who created seven sisters dreaming, these two and others find creativity in the cluster.[80]

The name matariki, means tiny eyes, or the eyes of Tāwhirimātea, referring to the cluster of stars in the night sky. [81] In te ao Māori the Pleiades are known by their names: Matariki, Pōhutukawa, Waitī, Waitā, Waipuna-ā-rangi, Tupuānuku, Tupuārangi, Ururangi, and Hiwa-i-te-Rangi.[82] Together they are a moment for reflection, remembrance and renewal. Kai is central to these celebrations, not only does Matariki tell us when to start harvesting kumāra, but when we should be preparing the whenua for the new year.[83] This has been celebrated for centuries, but through colonisation the knowledge and rituals were marginalised. Under the

[78] Ray Norris, 'The World's Oldest Story? Astronomers Say Global Myths about "Seven Sisters" Stars May Reach Back 100,000 Years', The Conversation, 21 December 2020, doi:10.64628/AA.thef4qfdd.
[79] Elihu Vedder, *The Pleiades*, 1885, Oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 37 5/8 in. (61.3 x 95.6 cm) <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/13070> [accessed 2 September 2025].
[80] 'Warlpiri Star Gazers Dazzle', *Japingka Aboriginal Art Gallery*, n.d. <https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/articles/warlpiri-star-gazers/> [accessed 2 September 2025].
[81] 'The Legend of Matariki and the Six Sisters | Te Papa', n.d. <https://tepapa.govt.nz/legend-matariki-and-six-sisters> [accessed 2 September 2025].
[82] 'The Legend of Matariki and the Six Sisters | Te Papa'.
[83] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.

Labour government Matariki became an official economic public holiday in 2022 on the national Calendar.[84]

This year I wanted to celebrate with my friends by sharing kai. The menu was a collective work, with some bringing baking, with others bringing salads.[85] The shining star food of the day was fry bread with mince or maple syrup. This was added to with a side of potato salad, a flatmate favourite, and sausages. To make this we did not have access to locally grown kai, so we brought the ingredients from local and independent shops ensuring that our money was kept as local as possible.[86]

This was also the first year that the café where I work celebrated Matariki, we and guests coloured in stars to decorate the windows, and we got the community involved with a colouring in competition.[87] This gave us space to talk about Matariki with tourists and children that came through the doors. This was also a renewal of our spirit as a team, with it becoming turning point for collaboration and team work. This change was directly because of the change in management in front of house as a new creative and passionate Māori manager strived to make visible changes.

Making the parāoa parai (fry bread)

The smell of yeast moved throughout the air as the dough rises, the house was cold, needing more heat we placed the bowl on top of the small bench top oven that I have turned on to help it rise. Adding flour, folding and kneading the dough pushes tension into my arms. As I fold, Ari (my housemate) drops flour into the mixture until it becomes a round mound. The music gets louder as the sun sets, off kilter singing and laughing fills the house. Cooking and kai

[84] 'Matariki, the House and Legislation - New Zealand Parliament', 9 September 2025 <https://www.parliament.nz/en/get-involved/features/matariki-the-house-and-legislation/> [accessed 2 September 2025].
[85] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.
[86] 'Ka Kite, Bro by Willie Davis | PDF | Poetry'.
[87] Trudie Walters and Diane Ruwhiu, 'Beyond Cultural Renaissance: Indigenous Events as Sites of Resistance and Resilience', *Annals of Leisure Research*, 0.0 (n.d.), pp. 1–18, doi:10.1080/11745398.2025.2490516.

often brings our flat (share housing) together, we eat as a community, which many would say is odd for a flat.[88] We often share snacks, cooking, seasoning and treats. Although we each have different tastes in food we allow for small adjustments to make each person happy, changing out elements for more suited textures and flavours. This comes into tonight's dinner, the savoury mince has sieved tomatoes, Hamish's favourite, and cold potato salad, Ari's favourite. As the cuts of dough are dropped into the deep fryer that was borrowed off one of our guests, people fold into the tiny flat kitchen, soon the kitchen is filled with conversation and laughter, all made possible because of kai. In this case kai brought this group together.

The night was filled with positive energy, with laughter. It was a good way to bring in different friend groups that normally would never combine. As the night came to a close as we ate cookies, and blondies that held kit-kats, as a sweet surprise. This was a way to celebrate Matariki, the new year, bringing in and celebrating with positive company. The goal of the night was to celebrate and share what we had, to cook together as a flat and come together as a community. In this house we take pride in sharing and adjusting for each person, we work together as a house to ensure that everyone eats.

[88] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.



Figure 4: The single bowl in the house filled with the fresh fry bread. Taken by author (20 June 2025)

Bread is the staple of many diets around the world, the oldest record of bread dates to 14,400 years ago, in Jordan, and over time has become the third most widely consumed food staple, coming after rice and maize.[89] Wheat and flour was an introduced food, and quickly became a staple in Māori diets. Iwi and hapū, took to building and operating flour mills. In the Waikato in 1853 Maungatautari to Rangiaowhia, at least 21 mills were in operation, under construction or proposed, by 1860 this number almost doubled.[90] For many, flour and therefore bread has been so thoroughly connected to our foodscapes and cultural identity, that we can forget that it was introduced, for many such as my mum, bread was served in almost every meal.

Paraoa parai (fry bread) has been a constant in many people's lives, being served in the home and special occasions. The fry bread is often eaten as a sweet treat or as a savoury staple

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[89] '(PDF) Bread, Oldest Man-Made Staple Food in Human Diet. Bread Intake Is Integral to Good Health and Whole Grain Cereals Beneficial against Chronic Diseases', ResearchGate, n.d. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328981665_Bread_Oldest_Man-made_Staple_Food_in_Human_Diet_Bread_intake_is_integral_to_good_health_and_whole_grain_cereals_beneficial_against_chronic_diseases> [accessed 5 September 2025].

[90] 'Metro — Kneading Sovereignty', n.d. <https://www.metromag.co.nz/food/kneading-sovereignty> [accessed 5 September 2025].

along with any meal.[91] The bread is made from flour, milk, yeast, oil, sugar, and fried in oil. All ingredients that were at first accessible by trade, and then later grown, milled and harvested by Māori.[92] The bread was utilised as a way to feed a large amount of people in a cost efficient way.

This meal is not just a staple in Māori homes but also eaten internationally. Fry bread is a part of a divisive history internationally, being a symbol of an oppressive setter state.[93] As Indigenous peoples across the United States were stripped from ancestral lands, they were given government rations, and from those rations fry bread became both a symbol of survival and a reminder of colonial oppression. Devon Mihesuah, a Mvskoke historian, and Patty Talahongva, a Hopi journalist and advocate, both highlight fry bread as tied to dark times of hunger, economic hardship, and poor health. Mihesuah argues that health disparities affecting native Americans are linked to these imposed diets, and therefore reclaiming food sovereignty and decolonising diets is the key to healing.[94] These histories show that Indigenous communities across the world adapted colonial ingredients into everyday foods, for Māori this adaption has transformed fry bread into a kai that now carries cultural meaning.[95]

Within Aotearoa, fry bread is seen as a cultural kai and often deeply embedded in our memories. For many Māori fry bread carries both comfort and history. It is a food that was brought in through trade and colonisation, yet it has been woven into our gatherings, markets, and whānau kitchens. Māori writers like Jessica Hutchings remind us that sovereignty over

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[91] 'Metro — Kneading Sovereignty'.
[92] 'Parāoa Parai Recipe: Crispy and Fluffy Māori Fry Bread', *Maimoa Creative*, 1 August 2021 <https://maimoa.nz/blogs/news/best-fry-bread-recipe>.
[93] Devon Mihesuah, 'Indigenous Health Initiatives, Frybread, and the Marketing of Nontraditional "Traditional" American Indian Foods', *Native American and Indigenous Studies*, 3.2 (2016), pp. 45–69, doi:10.5749/natiindistudj.3.2.0045.
[94] Andrea Freeman, 'Frybread: Comfort Food or Colonial Byproduct?', The Conversation, 10 November 2024 <http://theconversation.com/frybread-comfort-food-or-colonial-byproduct-242974> [accessed 29 July 2025]; devon Mihesuah, 'Indigenous Health Initiatives, Frybread, and the Marketing of Non-Traditional "traditional" American Indian Foods', *Indigenous Health Initiatives*, 2016.
[95] Freeman, 'Frybread'.

kai is inseparable from sovereignty over whenua, because the whenua determines what and when we eat, she also notes how retuning to ancestral practices of cultivation allows us to create kai independence.[96]

Within this weekend everyone had their first experience with fry bread in some way, mine with cooking it and others with eating it. Fry bread has become a Māori traditional food that has come out of colonial ingredients and cooking methods.

Leftovers were not wasted. Leftover food went home with members of the party, some was taken to work the next day to be given to my co-workers in the café. The excitement of the day truly grew from the idea that a few of my friends had never had fry bread, and were introduced to it for the first time that weekend, including Hamish. It felt light being able to impart an important part of my childhood and culture to the people I deem closest to me.[97]



Figure 5: Taken by Ari folding fry bread dough after rising (20 June 2025).

[96] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty* (Massey University Press, 2025).
[97] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.

To me fry bread as well as rēwana bread (Type of sourdough bread, that is made with fermented potato) are understandings of te iwi Māori ability to adapt to new technologies and methods, as well as resilience during aggressive colonisation. Not only were we able to grow wheat and mill flour, we were able to harvest the yeast. The yeast for the bread often came from the same yeast bug that rēwana bread could be started from. Connecting the two breads together, almost as if they were siblings. The breads printed recipes that have existed since 1862, and is made from maize or wheat flour.[98]

Sharing fry bread this matariki was more than just a meal, it was a chance to remember the ingenuity and resilience of our tupuna and to reflect on how these ingredients where transformed into something meaningful; that allows a renewal of connections with both people and place, in the laughter in the kitchen, the smell of fresh bread, and the sharing of kai. These are the moments that I choose to focus on because they remind me that kai is the nourishment for the body but also, the communities that we form, in this case this community are the friends that we hold close.

[98] 'Metro — Kneading Sovereignty'.

Chapter Two | Taking books off the shelf

Taking books off the shelf is about highlighting the key books and literate that have inspired this thesis, this includes both creative nonfiction and books based in Kaupapa Māori. These books cover both my process of learning, thinking, and writing style. This chapter also deals with key questions of my thesis, as they unfold in my masters. Therefore focuses, on key writings around Ingenious experience, interconnection of kai, people, culture and environment. In addition this chapter notes on my personal thoughts about these writings and how I have developed my thinking process and style, authors and their attention to emotion, environment, connection.

To write this thesis, I had to start to understand myself first. Growing up disconnected from Te ao Māori, I felt as though I had to find my own way back, for many people that often included going back to their community and forming connections with people. For myself, I did not know how to do this. My whānau was small, for us it is separated and distant, with some only returning to our mārae for events like tangihanga. [99]

I had to resist and I did this in the only way I knew how: through education. I started at the University of Waikato, majoring in history and geography. Over time I started learning my own history and began to understanding the complex events that led to my existence, my appearance, and whānau experiences leading me to trying to understand the duality of my life, causing me to question power and relationships in order to detangle some of my Pākehā world views.[100] Eventually this led me to my honours program, which focused on how has

[99] Erin Marie Lincoln, *Going Home: The Importance of Reconnecting to Māori Culture through Whakapapa*, published online 2023, doi:10.26021/15131.
[100] Shaw, 'A Tale of Two Stories: Unsettling a Settler Family's History in Aotearoa New Zealand'.

the whenua changed through industrial practices. This became too big of a task, so during my honours program I asked narrower questions that were about the power of profit, and capitalism on the whenua in the Waipā, which at first was meant to lead me through the choices and bylaws of local governments.[101] This instead brought me to the political hub of farming, the Federated Farmers, and the influence of industrial farming.[102] Federated Farmers is a lobby group that was openly part of terraforming, settling and assimilating Māori and our whenua in the Waipā.[103] These changes have been making progress over the course of 120 years, with connections within all scales of government, from parliament members, seats on local drainage boards, school boards and agricultural corporations.[104] Although this was helpful, I wanted to narrow down on the effects for my masters, focusing on my whānau and our relationships to taonga species, kai, and environment. I wanted to understand the smaller personal scale that has been affected by the colonial ideology, resulting in conversations about capitalism, and the interpersonal changes that people have encountered, including displacement and changes in lifestyle.[105] This led to my research question which seeks to understand, 'how has my whānau interacted with mahinga kai?'

The existing scholarship on the decline and revitalisation of mahinga kai and kai sovereignty as a topic has seen key growth within the last five years, as well as a growing understanding of international food sovereignty studies.[106] This comes along with studies on food insecurity

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[101] Colombo, Cullen, and Ramesh, 'Estimating Values of Environmental Impacts of Dairy Farming in New Zealand'; Cameron and Bell, *Dairying in the Waikato Region of New Zealand: An Overview of Historical Statistics*.
[102] 'Submission-680---Federated-Farmers.Pdf?Sfvrsn=31e85c9_2', n.d. <https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/docs/default-source/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans/district-plan/proposed-district-plan/summary-of-submissions/new-summary-of-submissions-where-errors-were-corrected/submission-680---federated-farmers.pdf?sfvrsn=31e85c9_2> [accessed 14 September 2025].
[103] 'Delegates Report on Dominion Conference to Te Puke Provincial , Delegates Report on Dominion Conference to Te Puke Provincial', *Te Puke Times*, 13 August 1948, p. 1.
[104] 'The Act of 1941 and Administration | Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand', n.d. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/1966/river-control-and-drainage> [accessed 14 September 2025].
[105] Shaw, 'A Tale of Two Stories: Unsettling a Settler Family's History in Aotearoa New Zealand'.
[106] 'A Hunger'; Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*; McKerchar and others, 'Enhancing Māori Food Security Using Traditional Kai'.

in underserved communities. Through this, there has been an increase of kai sovereignty, and te ao Māori content growing on social media, such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.[107]

This research has also come out of academic circles, and one has been curated into a book; "*Pātaka Kai: Growing Food Sovereignty"* is edited by Jessica Hutchings, Jo Smith, Johnson Witehira, and Yvonne Taura.[108] This book is a look into a small group's relationship to kai, becoming an influence in my own journey.[109] At first, I wanted to explore overall relationships with whenua in my iwi, but this is at a scale that was unachievable in a masters such as this. Within the iwi there are multitudes of relationships with te ao Māori, to compact these relationships into one thesis would be to do an injustice to the people involved, as well as blanketing individuals' experiences, that are just as important as each other.[110]

Choices of literate to review.

This review is based in books that are able to accessed by the general public, these books can be accessed in retail stores, Libraries, as well as audiobook sites. I have done this because it is important to be using accessible language and format. I have done this because I want the key writing I use to also be accessible in all forms by my whanau. A key value of kai sovereignty is that it is not an unreachable step that only certain people are able to grasp, but something that should be understood and acted out by the community. Therefore I have highlighted works that use accessible language in their writing, and though general services. I also used creative works aimed for these audiences to influence my style of writing, aiming to create

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[107] Nikki Renall and Lisa and Te Morenga, 'Māori Food Culture and Wellbeing on TikTok: A Content and Thematic Analysis', *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 0.0 (n.d.), pp. 1–18, doi:10.1080/1177083X.2024.2426655.
Social media is an important platform of exchanging information, this is an interconnected space that utilises short videos, posts and, comment sections. This platform has been key in shearing information, organising people and communities.
[108] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[109] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[110] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

am accessible body of work. Works like *"Bloody Woman"* have influenced how I write about my personal reflections

Bloody Woman and other creative works.

This thesis takes inspirations both from biographies, and creative non-fiction writing. My personal writing style is informed by Lana Lopesi, *'Bloody Woman',* which is a personal biography in which she uses herself as an avenue to explore her geographical space and position within her culture, community and family while navigating the world as a Sāmoan fafine (Woman). [111] This book was written in reflection of her past and present, closing with a hopeful letter to her children. The book influenced how I wanted to connect with my audience in a more imamate style of writing, and how I want to treat time, not as a scale that moved but closer to being abstract. Lopesi, also takes the time to interact with the author Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and her book *'decolonising methodologies'* which in itself is a critique of research. Lopesi, uses Smith's theories on power dynamics, and self-determination through research.[112] By centring herself, Lopesi focuses on power dynamics that have affected her, from state power, social influences and patriarchal power.[113] These themes are explored through her own memories, as she connects these moments to larger ideas.[114] This book's beauty comes in how emotions and experiences are used as a tool of self-determination and empowerment, allowing the work to become an authentic research project about power, culture, and womanhood.

Smaller pieces of creative fiction have also influenced how I write. Works such as Apirana Taylor's, *'In The Rubbish Tin'* and Willie Davis', *'Ka Kite Bro,'* create a space for serious

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[111] Lana Lopesi, *Bloody Woman* (Bridget Williams Books, 2021).
[112] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Zed Books Ltd and Universty of Otago Press, 1999).
[113] Lana Lopesi, *Bloody Woman*; Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Smith in this uses power for researchers and the power they hold with over communities, where the powers that Lopesi uses it as an acting force that influences her actions and thoughts.
[114] Lana Lopesi, *Bloody Woman*.

and confronting topics to become digestible and understandable for youth, and non-academic populations. [115] I have come to know these two texts intimately. They deal with themes such as racism, neglect, and cultural differences through the lenses of Māori children.[116] This is a point of view that I often touched on throughout my personal introduction chapter, as I used my childhood to walk through my whānau connection to kai.

The mushroom at the end of the world

This section explores how sensory, ecological, and more than human approaches to storytelling deepen our understanding of kai sovereignty, community and landscape. By drawing on work by Anna Lowenhaput Tsing's and related thinkers, it considers how multisensory narratives, oral histories, and more than human relationships challenge human centred and capitalist framing of whenua, kai, and connection.

This led me to Anna Lowenhaput Tsing's monograph, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*. Tsing is an anthropologist who followed mushroom gatherers in logging forests in Oregon, United States of America.[117] The author uses matsutake mushroom as an anchor point to explore capitalism, and community.[118] She does this through using both secondary resources in addition to elements of oral histories. Through using a variety of different people, including, chefs, pickers, and buyers as she gains a multi-level understanding of the community she interacts with.[119] But her oral narratives are not just local but are used to

[115] Apirana Taylor, 'He Rau Aroha', in *In the Rubbish Tin* (School Publications Branch, Department of Education, 1986), pp. 15–22; 'Ka Kite, Bro by Willie Davis | PDF | Poetry'.
[116] 'Ka Kite, Bro by Willie Davis | PDF | Poetry'; Taylor, 'He Rau Aroha'.
[117] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (Princeton University Press, 2025).
[118] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*.
[119] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*.

connect to a wider sense of scale, For example, a Laotian refugee's story about foraging in Oregon is tied to global matsutake markets in Japan.[120]

She also takes in the geography of the mushroom inviting the use of her senses. In her chapters the sense of smell is used to connect emotions that change over the narrative.[121] She takes these cues from her own experiences, poetry, and through her interviews and conversations.[122] By the end of the book Tsing was fond of the smell, shifting the negative emotions that she noted in the first chapter, to positive emotions such as joy and comfort. In addition, she enhances this experience of senses for the reader through images; Tsing shows that we, as storytellers, should capture more-than-human worlds through multisensory experiences.[123]

Although not in conversation with Tsing, author Liz Cameron explores similar ideas of ecological sensory narratives, in her article, "Indigenous ecological knowledge systems– Exploring sensory narratives".[124] Cameron's argument is that senses help us build a three-dimensional relationship that benefits both more-than-human species and landscapes, which leads to cultural empowerment.[125] Our senses have value through allowing us to connect, analyse, predict, and mediate changes in landscape.[126] I can see this within Tsings writing, she uses the mushroom as a connecter to scale, people and capital, as well as to create a sensory landscape that is intertwined with memory.[127] Tsing uses senses to interpret a landscape through the cultural lenses of the pickers, examples include how she cannot

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[120] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*.
[121] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*.
[122] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*.
[123] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*.
[124] Liz Cameron, 'Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Systems – Exploring Sensory Narratives', *Ecological Management & Restoration*, 23.S1 (2022), pp. 27–32, doi:10.1111/emr.12534.
[125] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*; Cameron, 'Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Systems – Exploring Sensory Narratives'.
[126] Cameron, 'Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Systems – Exploring Sensory Narratives'.
[127] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*; Cameron, 'Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Systems – Exploring Sensory Narratives'.

separate smell from culture, nature and people. A researcher cannot separate these elements because they are inseparable in practice and in meaning.[128] In addition, Tsing values her senses as tools, within the book she uses her senses to describe relationships between more-than-human and human elements, she also uses it as a tool to communicate detail to the reader further engaging with the audience.[129] She uses smell to evoke an emotional response, whether it is sad, happy or comforting.[130] Tsing also heavily employs visual senses using photography and art. This creates visual elements in which readers can position and visualize themselves within the community.

Community is a key theme for Tsing—in particular, she explores the notion that community is not exclusivity a human affair, but showing the community is more than just a human connection, and that these communities also include environment and animals. For example, at the centre of the pickers community is not just the people but also the mushroom itself. If there was no mushrooms the community would not exist, therefore it is a founding member and an active participant in the continuation of the community.[131]

For this she looks at Donna Haraway's companion species manifesto. The idea of community is pushed past just humans and includes more-than-human elements such as work animals and cattle as they all contribute to society.[132] Haraway in her writing includes all flora in this, as they make life for humans, this creates the basis for the holistic viewpoint. Although she takes note of this, her focus is on dogs and their support in our lives.[133] Haraway uses dogs as

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[128] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*; Cameron, 'Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Systems – Exploring Sensory Narratives'.
[129] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*; Cameron, 'Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Systems – Exploring Sensory Narratives'.
[130] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*; Cameron, 'Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Systems – Exploring Sensory Narratives'.
[131] Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World.*
[132] Donna J. Haraway and Cary Wolfe, *Manifestly Haraway* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016), doi:10.5749/minnesota/9780816650477.001.0001.
[133] Haraway and Wolfe, *Manifestly Haraway*.

a way to explore the more-than-human relationships that are deeply connected to communities

The choice of dogs is because of their use in farming, as cattle dogs have a huge part in maintaining a farm, in addition to looking at the kinship that pet dogs provide.[134] Tsing expands on this by asking how nature can help as a companion, in which she locates the answer in the central pillar of the community, mushrooms. The idea of the more-than-human companionship is visible throughout kai sovereignty, as kai does not just provide substance but also is a vital part of community hauora and relationships, with both human and more-than-human, such as tūpuna and atua.[135]

Considering thinkers like Marx allows us to expand our understanding of relationships though the lens of capitalism, reviling how more-than-human spaces and beings are dehumanised and stripped of value within extractive economic systems.[136] In contrast, kaitiakitanga is rooted in te ao Māori, guardianship whakapapa, and reciprocal obligation, where people are not owners of the natural world, but a part of the interconnected system of care. [137] Through this ethic, clear boundaries are established to allow landscapes, species, and ecosystems to rest, recover, and continue, ensuring the wellbeing of both present and future generations.

Through practices like rāhui or a prohibition enforced to temporarily to protect a resource allow eco systems are left to heal and replenish. Karakia a ritual chant, that is used to seek spiritual guidance and protection. Karakia plays an important role here both in establishing and lifting the rāhui before harvesting and to acknowledge the atua, the deities, who protect

[134] Haraway and Wolfe, *Manifestly Haraway*.
[135] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pataka Kai, Growing Food Sovereinty*.
[136] Haraway and Wolfe, *Manifestly Haraway*.
[137] Haraway and Wolfe, *Manifestly Haraway*.

the natural world. This reminds us that kai sovereignty is more than access to food but also about how we maintain more-than-human relationships.[138] Capitalism frames plants, whenua and animals as labour and resources to be exploited; tikanga, te ao Māori protocols, ensures we understand them as relatives who have their own agency and contribute to our wellbeing beyond profit. Within te ao Māori, the idea of more-than-human contribution is normalised.

Pātaka Kai

The third key text is [authors] *Pātaka Kai*. The authors explore forms of kai sovereignty in Aotearoa New Zealand; to do so they employ Mātauranga Māori as the core knowledge system, value, and purpose of the writing. It is an exploration into how Māori are exercising tino rangatiratanga within the barriers that they have been given. This includes both physical barriers and settler laws that contributes to how people exert kai sovereignty. The aim of this book is to inspire people to take up growing their own kai.

The book follows the teachings of Moana Jackson (1945 – 2022, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou) and the foundational values that follow Moana Jacksons work. Firstly, to know ourselves on our own terms as mokopuna of this whenua. Secondly, to understand where we are at, our challenges and potential. Reminding us that we each have collective and individual barriers to face and overcome. Thirdly, to understand what we may need to be thinking about.[139] These are difficult questions we need to raise. For me this is where my research sits, asking questions within my whānau space, raising questions about events that have started international habits, and foundations of our identity. I am asking questions about power and influence that impact on our relationship with whenua and kai systems, with intention to

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[138] 'Monthly Review | Marx as a Food Theorist', *Monthly Review*, 1 December 2016 <https://monthlyreview.org/2016/12/01/marx-as-a-food-theorist/> [accessed 8 September 2025].

[139] Moana Jackson, 'Hui Reflections: Research and the Consolations of Bravery in Kei Tua o Pae Hui Proceedings - the Chllanges of Kaupapa Māori', unpublished paper delivered at New Zealand Councial for Educational research 2011 (Wellington, 2011).

highlight a system that has been exploiting people, more-than-human relations and whenua. Finally, Jackson encourages us to know where we need to focus our attention. This book is a start to bringing this conversation out into spaces that are accessible to people who may not have access academic literature. The conversation has been brought to the shelves of bookstores, and onto the shelves of libraries and is intertwined with an autobiographical writing style that creates an accessible entry point for many people removing the first barrier. The book highlights the ways in which biodiversity and personal empowerment can replace monocultural food growing approaches to kai consumption that can be sustainable, inclusive and Indigenous led in a way that is digestible for all readers.[140]

Further into the book it takes the time to highlight Māori that have taken this teaching into action, focusing on multiple groups and people who now have enacted kai sovereignty in different spaces. This helps iwi and hapū visualise the possibilities, that the goals are not unreachable, that it is a possibility for all people on a variety of scales.

"Pātakai kai" also aims to unravel the of capitalisation of kai which has inevitably led to food poverty and high living costs. This has resulted in people begging in front supermarkets, kai being stolen from supermarkets, the rise in the need for food banks.[141] This provides evidence that many people are consistently struggling to access food.[142] Pointing out that this is a national problem that has multiple solutions that allow for more flexibility within communities. From small local gardens to large scale organisations, highlighting that with an even distribution of kai, lives can be changed.

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[141] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[142] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

This book was foremost in conversation with the community. These are people who are active within local kai sovereignty movements. To exclude the community from the conversation would act as a removal of agency from the community. These people are building relationships and ensuring that these aspects of life are spread throughout the community.[143] In addition to this, the people who feature in the book are not treated as faceless subjects, but are portrayed as people who have an influence on their surroundings, and communities.

The authors aim to understand the cause, action and effect of kai sovereignty through the actions of people. One of the ways that it interacts with the people is through the use of te ao Māori, it centralises the strategies that people use to guide their journey into kai sovereignty.[144]

The authors also interact with the educator Linda Tuhiwai Smith. Smith focuses on decolonising research methods. Smith argues that research should be community based, and help the community it is attached to.[145] Smith writes about history, she notes how history is about power, and how that power was gained and maintained. Through ”*Pātaka Kai*,” we see the authors interacting with Smith’s Indigenous theory of history, that instead of centring colonial power, the book ”*Pātaka Kai“*, chooses to focus on the collaboration and actions of the community. [146]

Although not in direct connection, “*Pātaka Kai*“ is in conversation with the cookbook *Hai kai* by Monique Fiso (Nga Rauru, Ngati Ruanui), who highlights modern Māori cuisine, as well as highlighting pre-colonial kai. This book was based off the dishes in her restaurant by

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[143] Jessic Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*; John Reid and others, *Tauututu: White Paper*, report (AgResearch, 2019), doi:10.57935/AGR.26001505.v1.
[144] Jessic Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*; Reid and others, *Tauututu*.
[145] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
[146] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Zed Books Ltd and University of Otago Press, 1999).

the same name. Fiso wanted to expand what was seen as Māori kai, that it could be more than hāngi, fry bread and boil up.[147] Her book is split into three parts, the first part gives a short history of kai in te ao Māori. Then moves onto the ingredients, and preserving techniques, the final chapter contains the recipes. This book delivers on the theme of kai sovereignty, highlighting the variety of kai that we have available. These two books demonstrate that there is a growing interest in kai sovereignty, and have contributed to the movement. These books have become staples of my research because of it is a celebration of Māori kai, and kai sovereignty.

Kaupapa Māori

This thesis takes a holistic approach grounded in Kaupapa Māori, a framework developed by Māori academics including [names], it establishes research practices that are led by tikanaga Māori, and centred on Māori experiences. Within this approach it is important to acknowledge Māori lived experiences and practices. Rather than having an abstract theory, Kaupapa Māori research often turns to the state of praxis, highlighting the inseparability of theory and action, as research is not only about analysis but also practice.[148]

Kaupapa Māori prescribes whanaungatanga, which is described as kinship or close connection, as a crucial component within research. This kinship is not just limited to people but is interconnected with whenua and taonga species and through land confiscation whanaungatanga was undermined.[149] This was further exasperated by the forced urbanisation of Māori whānau.[150] Kaupapa Māori research is founded on the notion that research is

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[147] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Zed Books Ltd and University of Otago Press, 1999).
[148] Jo Mane, *Kaupapa Māori, a Community Approach*, 2009; Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
[149] Jade Le Grice, Virginia Braun, and Margaret Wetherell, '"What I Reckon Is, Is That like the Love You Give to Your Kids They'll Give to Someone Else and so on and so on": Whanaungatanga and Mātauranga Māori in Practice'.
[150] Hutchings and others, 'STORYING KAITIAKITANGA'; Russell Bishop, *Kaupapa Māori Research: An Indigenous Approach to Creating Knowledge*, n.d.

centred around Māori and legitimisation of Indigenous research theory and method. This research is grounded in key guidelines that are commonly used in Kaupapa Māori research:

Aroha ki te tangata, respecting people's ability to have autonomy to define their own space and environment for an interview. Aroha ki te tangata also extends to the data collected. For myself this includes images, and interviews.[151]

He kanohi kitea, is the seen face or physical presence. Within my research, this means being in the moment and being fully present, physically and spiritually with my whānau. [152]

Titiro, whakarongo kōrero, to look and listen, and to then speak, reminding me that as a researcher I need to take time to understand peoples' lived realities, priorities and aspirations. This guidance emphasises the importance of observing and listening, in an effort to have thoughtful communication within my interviews and interactions, to ensure that I am respectful in my process.[153]

Manaaki ki te tangata, this is the value of hospitality, generosity and the ethic of care.[154] Within the context of the research this includes sharing knowledge and resources, ensuring that the research benefits all, not just the researcher. This is about uplifting the mana of participants. My research has been created to benefit my whānau, and others as it allows the space to disentangle rooted colonial ideals that have been imposed around kai and identity. It creates a space of solidarity, opens communication pathways about our identity and s our relationships with each other and kai.[155]

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[151] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
[152] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
[153] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
[154] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
[155] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.

Kia Tūpato translates into being cautious, this can be the broader socio-political context ensuring that my whānau is safe and respected throughout the process. As well as being aware of my power as a researcher. I have a responsibility to portray my interviewees and their histories through navigating their lived experiences with respect and sensitivity.[156]

Kaua e Takahia te Mana o te Tangata or ensuring that I do not trample on the dignity of people, being mindful of my actions.[157]

Drawing these principles together Kaupapa Māori is more than a research framework, It is a practice that grounds enquiry in values, relationships, and aspirations in Māori communities by positioning research as praxis, it ensures that theory is never detached from action, and that research outcomes are meaningful and beneficial to those involved. For my own research this means that I aim to uphold whanaungatanga, respect autonomy, and safeguard the dignity and mana of participants. Ultimately, this approach challenges colonial research traditions and creates space for research that is both accountable and transformative.

Understanding the depth and importance of Kaupapa Māori also requires recognising the historical and cultural foundations that shape Māori relationships, knowledge, environment, and wellbeing. Māori ways of knowing and being have always been embedded in the relationship with the natural world.

[156] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
[157] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.

Chapter three | The position of kai within the community and connection to people and place

This chapter looks into the changing position of kai, and key economic influences on the production of kai. This section introduces they key terms used in this thesis, including kai sovereignty, food sovereignty, and food insecurity, as well as settler-colonial approaches to kai. it outlines a brief history of these concepts and their social impacts and treatment within academic literature.

In pre-colonial times Māori ate over 10,000 plant species as well as kai moana and bird species.[158] To harvest this kai resource management customs were developed to control gathering, harvesting, cooking, preserving and storage.[159]Some of these practices continue to be utilised. Kai has also been discussed through legal means, which has protected and restricted the consumption, collection and protection of mahinga kai.[160] This includes the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907, this act aimed to supress tohunga to replace it with the perceived modern medicine, for many iwi and hapū, karakia was then hidden.[161] Examples such as the Māori fisheries act 2004 give more recognition to Māori costmary rights to iwi, however, those rights are controlled and governed by a settler government.[162]

Mahinga kai is Māori a food gathering place, it is multidimensional with significance attached to locations, education and community.[163] The importance of mahinga kai for iwi, hapū and whānau goes beyond being merely an action, it is deeply connected to identity, a

[158] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty* (Massey University Press, 2025).
[159] 'Enhancing Māori Food Security Using Traditional Kai', doi:10.1177/1757975914543573.
[160] 'Enhancing Māori Food Security Using Traditional Kai'.
[161] Malcolm Voyce, 'Māori Healers in New Zealand: The Tohunga Suppression Act 1907', *Oceania*, 60.2 (1989), pp. 99–123.
[162] 'Māori Fisheries Act 2004 No 78 (as at 27 July 2024), Public Act – New Zealand Legislation', n.d. <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2004/0078/latest/resultsin.aspx? > [accessed 1 October 2025].
[163] Chanel Phillips, Jackson Anne-Marie, and Hakopa Hauiti, 'Creation of Narratives of Mahinga Kai. Māori Customary Food- Gathering Sites and Practices', *MAI Journal 5*, no. 1 (2016) (2016), pp. 63–75.

sense of belonging and conception of reality.[164] This is proven to be consistently relevant as interactions with kai change, these changes include environmental factors such as water quality. The decline of water quality results in the decline of taonga species such as freshwater mussels and tuna. This is due to the increase of industrialisation of the whenua through intensive agricultural farming, decreasing natural environments such as wetlands, replacing native plants with British rye grass and terraforming rivers.[165] Systematically changing spaces that once flourished with Māori kai.[166] The outcome is the reduced population of taonga species that are perceived as kai fit to consume. Alongside the decline of mahinga kai, there has been an increase of more convenient food services, such as supermarkets, dairies, restaurants and fast food chains.

For some people the health of the community starts at the soil.[167] For Papatūānuku Kōkiri Mārae (South Auckland, Tāmaki Makaurau) this soil initiative is called Hua Parakore, or the soil health framework; whakapapa honouring the relationship between, land, waters, people and soil. This connection is cemented through action, through protecting and enhancing health though physical enhancements, such as composting.[168] Wairua in this kaupapa is the reconnection and enhancing of the divine nature of soil through approaches that prioritised the soil.[169] Mana, is connecting manaakitanga to clean kai, placing the soils health at the centre, this includes the soil surrounding a person, but at the same time advocating for the agency of the soil.[170] Māramatanga, is about being open to new thoughts and ideas about caring for soil, this includes receiving insights from nature, allowing it to guide herself.[171] Te

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[164] Chanel Phillips, Jackson Anne-Marie, and Hakopa Hauiti, 'Creation of Narratives of Mahinga Kai. Māori Customary Food- Gathering Sites and Practices'.
[165] Colombo, Cullen, and Ramesh, 'Estimating Values of Environmental Impacts of Dairy Farming in New Zealand'.
[166] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[167] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[168] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[169] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[170] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[171] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

ao Tūroa is about understanding the connections between social, cultural and ecological systems that play an important role in soil health. Finally, this enhances mauri, through practicing techniques that encourages soil microbiology to flourish through proper planting and growing techniques.[172] Together these are the roots that help the plants grow, flourish, and thrive.

The changing value of kai because of the settler market

The intrusion of settlers has shifted the political and social dynamics. This has led to the formation of the Kīngitanga movement in 1858 and the crowning of the first king Pōtatau te Wherowhero. This was in response to the constant confiscation of whenua, British invasion and to unite iwi and hapū.[173] After the first king's passing he was accessioned by his son Tāwhiao who led the Kingitanga through the violent invasion of the Waikato by the British Crown. The Crown thereafter confiscated much of the Waikato forcing many Waikato iwi and hapū into the Te Rohe Potae (King Country).[174] During this time the Crown appropriated large tracts of land and claimed all rights to natural resources, transferring the whenua into private ownership and implementing systems that actively worked to remove iwi and hapū from their whenua to make space for the growing settler population.[175]

With the growth of the settler population there was a need to assimilate the whenua, this was done systematically though the creation of local and national laws.[176] Settler governments started to focus on the productivity of whenua, including international productivity and commodity productivity. Within this case the whenua was used more like a commodity, used

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[172] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[173] Vincent O'Malley, *The Great War for New Zealand: Waikato 1800–2000* (Bridget Williams Books, 2016).
[174] O'Malley, *The Great War for New Zealand*.
[175] O'Malley, *The Great War for New Zealand*.
[176] Christina M. Kennedy and others, 'Indigenous Peoples' Lands Are Threatened by Industrial Development; Conversion Risk Assessment Reveals Need to Support Indigenous Stewardship', *One Earth*, 6.8 (2023), pp. 1032–49, doi:10.1016/j.oneear.2023.07.006; O'Malley, *The Great War for New Zealand*.

until it can no longer be functional, as the landscape was being maintained for capital gain rather than a tupuna to be cared for.[177] These changes can be defined by the introduction of land ownership, or private property ownership.[178] Private property is the personal or corporate ownership of land that comes with its own set of privileges, given to them by the Crown.

The introduction of land ownership was a key element in how land tenure started to change, this change was centred around individualism. [179] Land began to hold value through money and its relationship to the economic market. [180] For the first time in Aotearoa, land was no longer interacted with as a commons, but as an object with a new set of values attached to it. This shift came with two key consequences. First, the desire to control what was seen as 'wild' nature of the whenua. Second, the shaping of land in to 'settled' ideal landscape, one that was culturally similar to the rolling hills of Brittan.[181]

For many settlers, the wild nature of the land was seen as unproductive and therefore worthless, with words such as 'idle' and 'weedy' used to place a negative meaning onto whenua, and in doing so, to change its value.[182] Under this thinking, land only held value if it was continuously producing, and that production had to meet certain standards. These changes can be seen clearly in the draining of wetlands, which where once understood as important mahinga kai.[183]

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[177] John Reid and Matthew Rout, *The Colonising Environment*, n.d.
[178] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[179] reid And Rout, *The Colonising Environment*, n.d.; Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[180] 'Land Loss, Confiscation, Arability and Colonisation: The Experience of Iwi in Aotearoa New Zealand', doi:10.1177/11771801221122810.
[181] 'Idle Lands, Idle Lands.', *Putaruru Press*, 7 May 1925, p. 7.
[182] 'Noxious Weeds Menace , Noxious Weeds Menace', *King Country Chronicle*, 10 October 1933, p. 4 <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/KCC19331010.2.27>; 'Idle Lands. , Idle Lands.', *Putaruru Press*, 7 May 1925, p. 7 <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/PUP19250507.2.43>.
[183] Parsons, Fisher, and Crease, *Decolonising Blue Spaces in the Anthropocene*.

These sites, while highly valued by Māori allowing access to tuna and freshwater mussels, was then classed as foul wastelands by British settlers. Wetlands were then drained and turned into pastoral lands that could feed cows and sheep.[184] When fields could not produce quality goods, they were fertilized with stolen phosphates, instead of natural regeneration.[185] To the settler, the whenua was just one large exploitable resource that could be modified to feed the growing British population. Wetland draining is often called reclaiming, but for something to be reclaimed it must be lost. Nothing in the whenua before British settlement was lost, hence I have chosen to use the word terraforming. Terraforming is a science fiction term coined by Carl Sagan that was applied to changing the landscape of a planet to make it habitable for human populations and resemble earth.[186] I use terraforming to highlight the purposeful link between science fiction stories and colonisation, both of which have often repeated narratives of invasion and assimilation of landscapes that enforce changing landscapes to fit the colonisers' ideas of progress, systems, and motherland. In this dissertation terraforming is defined as earth shaping or modifying landscapes for complex ideas of imperialism and empire.

Food sovereignty

Food sovereignty differs from food security because of the intended focus on the systems and powers that produce food for capital gain, rather than to ensure people have enough to eat. While food security focuses on the rights of communities to define and be a part of their own food system, food sovereignty focuses on local sustainability and culturally appropriate

[184] Adrienne Puckey, *The Substance of the Shadow: Māori and Pākehā Political Economic Relationships, 1860-1940: A Far Northern Case Study*, 21 December 2021 <https://www.academia.edu/65249681/The_substance_of_the_shadow_M%C4%81ori_and_P%C4%81keh%C4%81_political_economic_relationships_1860_1940_a_far_northern_case_study> [accessed 15 September 2025].
[185] Hele Christopher-Ikimotu, 'Our Land Died so Others Could Live', *E-Tangata*, 22 July 2023 <https://e-tangata.co.nz/history/our-land-died-so-others-could-live/> [accessed 1 October 2025].
[186] 'Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction: Terraforming' <https://sfdictionary.com/view/125/terraforming> [accessed 27 April 2025].

access to food. This movement has also emerged from the struggles of colonisation, displacement and shifting political landscape.[187] This framework was developed in the 1990s by the social movement La Via Campesina to directly challenge capitalist structures and neoliberal values.[188] The focus was on subsistence living and transparent local trade, being free of oppression and inequality.[189] La Via Campesina has encapsulated these values in the definition *"*Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.*"*[190] This definition brings the focus onto the producer and how food is more than nutrition, it includes the active participation in the production of food. This definition allows for the inclusion of self-determination and relational responsibility to care for these food systems and the environments in which they exist.[191] In addition La Via Campesina organised six guiding principles, focusing on people, valuing food providers, localising food systems, local decision making, building local knowledge and skills, and working with nature.[192] These skills are very relatable to Mātauranga Māori, having similar foundations that promote collective and sustainable knowledge; by working with te taiao, caring for people and the wider community, localising self-sustaining food systems that are removed from the state, or capitalist mode.[193] Finally keeping kai choices within the community, or local decision making, removed from the state.[194]

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[187] Rajeev Patel and Philip and McMichael, 'Third Worldism and the Lineages of Global Fascism: The Regrouping of the Global South in thΩe Neoliberal Era', *Third World Quarterly*, 25.1 (2004), pp. 231–54, doi:10.1080/0143659042000185426.
[188] 'What Is Food Sovereignty?', *La Via Campesina - EN* <https://viacampesina.org/en/what-is-food-sovereignty/> [accessed 9 May 2025].
[189] 'What Is Food Sovereignty?'
[190] 'What Is Food Sovereignty?'
[191] AB, 'Food Sovereignty, a Manifesto for the Future of Our Planet | La Via Campesina', *La Via Campesina - EN*, 13 October 2021 <https://viacampesina.org/en/2021/10/food-sovereignty-a-manifesto-for-the-future-of-our-planet-la-via-campesina/> [accessed 15 September 2025].
[192] 'What Is Food Sovereignty?'
[193] 'Monthly Review | Marx as a Food Theorist', *Monthly Review*, 1 December 2016 <https://monthlyreview.org/2016/12/01/marx-as-a-food-theorist/> [accessed 8 September 2025].
[194] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

Food sovereignty is a term often used in Indigenous literature pertaining to food because of its versatility in discussing the provision of food.[195] Unlike frameworks that focus solely on market-based systems, food sovereignty makes space for non-commercial and culturally specific modes of food sourcing, such as hunting, fishing, foraging, seed saving, and community-based agriculture.[196]

Centre values are intentionally flexible, allowing communities to adapt the concept to their specific environmental, cultural, and spiritual contexts. This adaptability is especially important for Indigenous communities whose food systems are deeply tied to land, language, ceremony, and Indigenous environmental knowledge.[197] By centring the right of people and groups to define and enact their own food systems, food sovereignty affirms Indigenous self-determination and supports the revitalisation practices that have been suppressed or disrupted by colonization, industrial agriculture, and environmental degradation.[198] In this way, food sovereignty is not only about survival or nutrition, but also about communal development, education and intergenerational security.

Kai sovereignty

Kai sovereignty includes the cultural dimensions of Te ao Māori and extends to food as sacred, that kai is a gift of life and should not be exhausted.[199] It rejects the idea of food as a commodity and instead sees kai as something that should be available and accessible to all people in the community.[200] This approach removed barriers to food and places responsibility

[195] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*; Oldham, Newton, and Short, 'Land-Based Resistance', 2024.
[196] Oldham, Newton, and Short, 'Land-Based Resistance', 2024.
[197] AB, 'Food Sovereignty, a Manifesto for the Future of Our Planet | La Via Campesina'.
[198] McKerchar and others, 'Enhancing Māori Food Security Using Traditional Kai'; Oldham, Newton, and Short, 'Land-Based Resistance', 2024.
[199] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[200] 'Monthly Review | Marx as a Food Theorist'.

back into the hands of the communities to care for the sources of their kai.[201] At its core, kai sovereignty is shaped by manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, and tino rangatiratanga, keeping food connected to wellbeing, identity and collective strength.[202] This strengthens community ties and relationship to the whenua and whakapapa.

The whakataukī 'Toitū te whenua, whatungarongaro te tangata' which translates to 'People pass on, but the land remains. This expresses a relationship with whenua that is orientated toward future generations.[203] Resources are not simply taken, but maintained so that forests, waterways, and gardens can continue to feed and sustain those who live and the whenua. This relationship connects the maui and mana of the people with the wellbeing of the whenua, strengthening cultural and spiritual life.[204] These principles sit at the centre of kai sovereignty, which aims to protect the health of soil, food systems which ensures that all future generations thrive.[205]

Food is deeply connected to community, culture, and power.[206] In Aotearoa, the value of kai has been shaped by opposing systems. Such as capitalist models that prioritise profit and productivity, and models grounded in collective care and interdependence. In te ao Māori, people are part of the natural world rather than separate from it, carrying the responsibility of kaitiaki or steward. [207] Because of this, the relationship with kai is inseparable from kaitiakitanga.[208] This transforms the value of whenua from something measured economically into something understood through relationships between people and place. [209]

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[201] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[202] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[203] 'Foreword', n.d. <http://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/o-matou-mohiotanga/whenua/owners-aspirations-regarding-the-utilisation-of-ma/online/1/> [accessed 15 September 2025].
[204] Chanel Phillips, Jackson Anne-Marie, and Hakopa Hauiti, 'Creation of Narratives of Mahinga Kai. Māori Customary Food- Gathering Sites and Practices', *MAI Journal 5*, no. 1 (2016) (2016), pp. 63–75, 1 (2016).
[205] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[206] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[207] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[208] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[209] 'What about Haumia? What about Rongo? What Are Māori Views on Kai in Relation to Health and Sustainability in Aotearoa? - University of Otago' <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/esploro/outputs/graduate/What-about-Haumia-What-about-Rongo/9926503770801891> [accessed 7 May 2025].

These relationships create what can be understood as kaitiakitanga foodscapes, ancestral landscapes shaped by values beyond production and profit. Kai is also central to manākitanga, carrying meanings of tapu and noa, and acting as a binding force that brings people together. [210] Tapu is understood as sacred or restricted activities or spaces and can exist in a temporary or a permanent state that can be influenced by ceremonies; noa is therefore ordinary, free from tapu.

This relational understanding of food is disrupted by industrially made and highly processed food systems. Mass manufacturing draws food away from its cultural meanings and disconnects it from mauri.[211] Decision-making is removed from communities and left to corporations, while workers are often displaced, exploited, or made vulnerable within food production industries.[212] In Aotearoa, seasonal and migrant workers are particularly at risk, facing wage theft, unsafe conditions, and structural exploitation.[213] Kai sovereignty demands that justice must exist across the whole food system, from soil to table. It recognises the rights of those who grow, harvest, and prepare kai, local farmers, whānau, and migrant workers and insists that food systems must be fair, stable, and caring. Without this, the promise of equitable access to healthy, culturally appropriate, and sustainable kai cannot be fulfilled.[214]

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[210] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[211] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[212] O'Malley, *The Great War for New Zealand*; Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*; Hutchings and others, 'Storying Kaitiakitanga'.
[213] 'Auckland Grocer Penalised for Attempt to Exploit Migrant Worker', New Zealand Law Society | Te Kāhui Ture o Aotearoa, 16 November 2019 <https://www.lawsociety.org.nz/news/newsroom/auckland-grocer-penalised-12-000-for-attempt-to-exploit-migrant-worker/> [accessed 15 September 2025]; Caleb Fotheringham and RNZ Pacific Journalist, 'Seasonal Workers in NZ "lack Resources" and Vulnerable to "Exploitation"', RNZ, 20 March 2024 <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/pacific/512232/seasonal-workers-in-nz-lack-resources-and-vulnerable-to-exploitation?utm_source=chatgpt.com> [accessed 15 September 2025].
[214] Olivia Oldham, Pania Newton, and Nicola Short, 'Land-Based Resistance: Enacting Indigenous Self-Determination and Kai Sovereignty', *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene*, 12.1 (2024), p. 00118, art. 1, doi:10.1525/elementa.2023.00118.

Kai sovereignty is more than “food security”

The term “food insecurity” is defined by the ability (or inability) of humans to consistently access healthy, sustaining food. It is a vague term that does not always capture the nuances of how people feed their families and communities. [215] In twenty-first century Aotearoa, food insecurity is driven by the rising cost of living, making it increasingly difficult for households to afford basic necessities such as food.[216] As essential expenses such as housing, fuel, and utilities climb. Therefore families are left with less disposable income for food, creating a reliance on food banks and iwi-led programs. As the cost of living increases, it becomes more difficult for people to access adequate nutrition.[217] This is currently a problem that is solved with temporary solutions through community outreach, food banks, government programs and social supermarkets. Although these are helpful programs, they are designed for emergency relief and do not provide long term support systems. Kai sovereignty, by contrast, allows for a long term solution: when communities control the means to produce, gather, and share kai, our reliance on corporate-controlled food supplies is reduced.[218]

Food sovereignty, therefore, is not just the absence of food insecurity. The United Nations defines food security as follows:

> “when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” [219]

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[215] ‘ESS Website ESS : Food Security’ <https://www.fao.org/economic/%20ess/ess-fs/en/> [accessed 9 May 2025].
[216] Dominic Harris, ‘Supermarket Spend Rockets 60 per Cent’, Stuff, 30 March 2020 <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/120689497/coronavirus-supermarket-spending-up-60-per-cent-in-preparation-for-lockdown> [accessed 21 July 2025].
[217] ‘Food Security Update (December 13, 2024) - World | ReliefWeb’, 17 December 2024 <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/food-security-update-december-13-2024> [accessed 15 September 2025].
[218] ‘Food Security Update (December 13, 2024) - World | ReliefWeb’, 17 December 2024 <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/food-security-update-december-13-2024>.
[219] ‘ESS Website ESS : Food Security’.

As Madeline Shilling argues, the UN definition alone does not meet the needs of Māori because it does not capture the nuances of Māori kai.[220] The UN definition has been created to cover the most basic food needs, covering a range of cultural practices and environments. But it has been created in absence of the procurement of the food being consumed, lacking the spiritual connection that most Indigenous communities have with food collection, consumption and connection. In addition, this definition is part of three key pillars, food availability, food access and food utilisation.[221] These pillars are separate and are used to analyse the availability of food distribution and food resources.[222] To define these pillars: availability is having enough resources available on a consistent basis. Availability refers to not only the domestic availability but the agricultural systems ability to meet needs.[223] Access emphasises the relationship between supplier (agriculture and supermarkets) and consumer, considering transport, price and affordability.[224] And food "utilisation" focuses on food safety, health considerations, and space to prepare food as well as methods to keep food safe and sanitised.

This framework defines food security as a series of establishments that connect to provide constant availability of food, leaving the only option for some to rely solely on these systems.[225] When one section fails, the system collapses, a collapse which can be on an individual scale or a community scale. In my whānau, by contrast, kai sovereignty was and is present when there are strong relationship between whānau, whenua, ngahere, awa, and moana.

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[220] Taima Moeke-Pickering and others, *Understanding Māori Food Security And Food Sovereignty Issues In Whakatāne*, 4.1 (2015).
[221] Moeke-Pickering and others, *Understanding Māori Food Security And Food Sovereignty Issues In Whakatāne*.
[222] Moeke-Pickering and others, *Understanding Māori Food Security And Food Sovereignty Issues In Whakatāne*.
[223] Madeline Shelling, 'Kai Security' (unpublished, The University of Auckland, 2023) <https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/2292/67837/Shelling-2023-thesis.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y> [accessed 16 August 2024].
[224] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*; Harris, 'Supermarket Spend Rockets 60 per Cent'.
[225] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

Shilling argues that the definition of food insecurity should be changed to meet the needs and goals of the communities rather than the international standards set by the United Nations.[226] She proposes a different definition:

> Kai sovereignty "requires unimpeded access to traditional resources, spaces, values and practices, facilitating the full expression of rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga across all scales of the kai system. Kai security entails equitable access for all adequate, safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate kai, promoting mauri ora and the holistic wellbeing of individuals, whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities."[227]

Shilling's definition considers the social environment of kai in Māori communities.[228] This definition also centres our tino rangatiratanga over food systems, encapsulating all concepts for wellbeing that are key for hauora and kaitiakitanga.[229] This definition also explores deeper understandings between healthy environments and healthy people which is not noted in the United Nations version.[230] Within Shilling's definition is room for both Western interpretations of health and Māori values of houra without interchanging the two systems. This also highlights the systems that people use to gain food, bringing them into the foreground. Whereas other definitions only focus on the consumption and commodification of the product. This is the definition I use throughout my thesis as it directly relates to kaitiakitanga and mahinga kai. Finally this definition encapsulates both food sovereignty and food security into one single definition incorporating the whole food system into a single definition, more in line with the Māori understanding of the world.

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[226] 'Two Concepts of Sovereignty | United Nations Secretary-General', n.d. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/articles/1999-09-18/two-concepts-sovereignty> [accessed 15 September 2025].
[227] Understanding Kaitiakitanga', *Science Learning Hub* <https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/2544-understanding-kaitiakitanga> [accessed 9 May 2025].
[228] 'Understanding Kaitiakitanga', *Science Learning Hub* <https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/2544-understanding-kaitiakitanga> [accessed 9 May 2025].
[229] Jessic Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[230] Shelling, 'Kai Security'.

This his chapter focuses the language that is central this thesis, these terms are one of the pillars of this thesis, to understand the differences allows to expand the understanding of peoples relationship to kai and kai security. The next chapter moves into the methodology, including Pūrākau, and then moves into my ethics for my interviews and their practical use.

Chapter four | Methodology

This chapter introduces the methodology for my interviews. I use Pūrākau to reveal my families' interactions with whenua, and the changes that I can see in this relationship.[231] I begin this chapter by exploring the methods that I will be using in my research, these elements have been chosen because of the context of my research, and they enable me to have a fuller understanding of my family and our gardens.

I wanted to use the narratives that have come to light during my conversations to be at the centre of this chapter, using them as avenues to explore bigger and more complex ideas about kai sovereignty, self-determination, and kinship.[232]To me these pūrākau are the foundation to our lives, our memories.[233] Participants' stories are interconnected with the same people and locations, however, they have their own lives, relationships and external influences. I want to challenge the idea that kai sovereignty is more than large community projects, such as community gardens, street pantries and school lunches. But also include family gardens, much like the ones that my whānau are connected to. This highlights the idea that kai sovereignty begins in the home.[234]

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[231] Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition*.
[232] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[233] Mahuika, *'Kōrero Tuku Iho': Reconfiguring Oral History and Oral Tradition*.
[234] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

Kaupapa Māori has been created as a response to colonial academic theories that enforced a hegemony of thinking, knowing and being.[235] Kaupapa Māori is a foundational element to this research, as Eurocentric research has misinterpreted the lives of Māori communities.[236] This problem has come from colonial control and power over the research agenda. There has been failure to conduct research appropriately, and throughout this, research and knowledge has been portrayed incorrectly with no benefit to the community that was used in the research.[237] This has been connected to the negative impact of research resulting in scepticism.[238] Kaupapa Māori can be compared closer to a praxis, known for being a cycle process that is based in participation in a holistic approach.[239] Additionally, Kaupapa Māori or the 'Māori way' to do research centres Māori interests, challenging Eurocentric 'accepted' interpretations, viewpoints, and knowledge systems. By centring my whānau's lived realties I will highlight a whanau approach to kai sovereignty .[240] In addition, all these relationships are founded on whakapapa and whakawhanaungatanga. Therefore there is a personal and private investment into these relationships that are spoken about within this research.[241]

Within Kaupapa Māori theory there is a range of diversity in lived realties, as well as relationships between people and space. I have aimed for this research to be local and connected to place, allowing space for Māori geography, oral traditions, and tikanga in my whānau to be giventhe time and space to remember the unique ways in which we engage kai

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[235] Rangimarie Mahuika, *Kaupapa Māori Theory Is Critical and Anti-Colonial*, 2008.
[236] Russell Bishop, *Kaupapa Māori Research: An Indigenous Approach to Creating Knowledge*, n.d.
[237] Bishop, *Kaupapa Māori Research: An Indigenous Approach to Creating Knowledge*.
[238] Sarah Tiakiwai, *Kaupapa Rangahau: A Reader : A Collection of Readings from the Kaupapa Māori Research Workshop Series Led by Associate Professor Leonie Pihama and Dr Sarah-Jane Tiakiwai*, ed. by Leonie Pihama and Kim Southey (Te Matenga Punenga o Te Kotahi, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato ; Waikato-Tainui College for Research and Development ; Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, 2015).

[239] Graham Hingangaroa Smith, 'The Development of Kaupapa Māori : Theory and Praxis' (unpublished, ResearchSpace@Auckland, 1997) <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/623> [accessed 25 August 2025].
[240] 'Research at the Interface: A Novice Researcher's Reflections on Weaving Kaupapa Māori and Grounded Theory Methodologies - Bobbie-Jo Pene, Merryn Gott, Terryann C. Clark, Julia Slark, 2024', n.d. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/16094069241289348> [accessed 30 April 2025]; Wilson and Sherwood, 'Using Indigenous Kaupapa Māori Research Methodology with Constructivist Grounded Theory'.

[241] Ringham, "*Te Karanga Tūturu o Maieke: Ngāti Kuri Women's Taiao Geographies"*
The University of Waikato.

sovereignty at home and as a family. This is one of the key reasons that I chose to involve my whānau in this research project.[242]

In addition, I wanted to interview my whānau in order to understand their own stories of kai sovereignty, tino rangatiratanga as each participant has shaped my own relationship with kai in some way. To understand my own relationship to kai required understanding of the people around me. Through doing this I also wanted to start conversations within my whānau about kai and sovereignty. Personally, I noticed a change in my mother, picking up gardening as a hobby for the first time. Although it was hard work, I got to see the joy she had from being able to give me tomatoes that she grew herself.[243]

From these conversations I understood that kai Sovereignty, as a movement, can come from our own backyards and from within our own homes. Kai Sovereignty does not always have to be a project that involves the whole community, but one that can be in homes, on our porches, in our workplaces.[244] This is where I wanted to focus my research, kai sovereignty is often seen in community scale projects, but gardens at home are often looked over. I wanted to spotlight on whānau's home gardens, and how that is an act of kai sovereignty.[245]

What this research reveals about kai sovereignty is that this the garden feels and is different for every person. Not everyone is able to access a large-scale projects such as the ones that I write about in my final chapter, or the ones in the book "*Pātaka kai*." [246] Kai sovereignty and executing tino rangatiratanga can be done in the home, in our backyards, and can be done

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[242] Mahuika, *'Kōrero Tuku Iho': Reconfiguring Oral History and Oral Tradition*.
[243] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*; Ringham, *The University of Waikato*.
[244] Ringham, *The University of Waikato*.
[245] Helena Korpelainen, 'The Role of Home Gardens in Promoting Biodiversity and Food Security', *Plants*, 12.13 (2023), p. 2473, doi:10.3390/plants12132473.
[246] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

with intention in the home.[247] This is the goal of my conversations, to investigate an intimate scale of kai sovereignty in my whānau and our home.

Pūrākau

Pūrākau is more than just the idea of stories, they are oral histories that carry valued lessons and insights. They play a key role in building identity, in my case they inspire me. Using Pūrākau in an effort to support an ongoing kaupapa to deconstruct colonisation in the research sphere, this approach is not limited to one single viewpoint; rather multiple narratives that that encourages multidimensional understandings that consider the individual and collective stories, spaces and solutions to challenging events. Positionality and lived reality are key instruments for understanding Pūrākau.[248]

This form of information transmission includes ecological knowledges and personal histories.[249] Pūrākau in this research centralises narratives of the wheuna, te taiao, and people. When Pūrākau are connected to research they become sovereign narratives that strengthen Indigenous epistemological and ontological constructs.[250] Pūrākau can include both historical and contemporary narratives, creating a better understanding of the narratives that reside with the whenua.[251]

Ethics

[247] Korpelainen, 'The Role of Home Gardens in Promoting Biodiversity and Food Security'.
[248] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
[249] Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition*.
[250] 'Mana Wahine Reworking the Power to Name Taonga - Ringham - 2023 - New Zealand Geographer - Wiley Online Library', n.d. <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/doi/full/10.1111/nzg.12378> [accessed 12 January 2025].

[251] 'Mana Wahine Reworking the Power to Name Taonga - Ringham - 2023 - New Zealand Geographer - Wiley Online Library'.

The ethics guiding this research are both technical and interpersonal; to release these interviews I keep in mind that I want to maintain relationships outside of these interviews, and I intended on ensuring that I do not exploit this trust. I wanted to do this by faithfully portraying my whānau and their lived realties in my research. To ensure this I have relied on Moana Jackson to guide my principles below.[252]

This research included an ethics application, which required preplanned questions (see appendix 1) as well as understanding that the topic at hand may bring up painful and valid emotions, mindfulness and empathy is important.[253] This is helped by the ability to have flexible interviews, that can be continued and paused at the will of participants. This was approved by the Universities ethics board (see appendix 2). While in my application I highlighted the influence of Moana Jackson which informed my research values and approach.[254] The values of these interviews are separated into ten principles that was defined by author Moana Jackson.[255]These principles include:

- The ethic of prior thought and the ethic of moral or right choice, which includes careful preplanning;[256]
- The ethic of imagination, which focuses on the overall impacts of the research being done, with focusses on both the positive and the negative;[257]
- The ethics of time and change, which reminds us of the quality of time as well as the change that comes from it, including noticing changes in behaviour, emotions, speech, and surrounding environment;[258]

[252] Ringham, *The University of Waikato*.
[253] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
[254] falamedia, 'Moana Jackson and the Force of 10 - Fala Media', 31 December 2015 <https://falamedia.net/2015/12/31/moana-jackson-and-the-force-of-10/> [accessed 25 August 2025].
[255] falamedia, 'Moana Jackson and the Force of 10 - Fala Media'.
[256] falamedia, 'Moana Jackson and the Force of 10 - Fala Media', 31 December 2015 <https://falamedia.net/2015/12/31/moana-jackson-and-the-force-of-10/> [accessed 25 August 2025].
[257] falamedia, 'Moana Jackson and the Force of 10 - Fala Media'.
[258] falamedia, 'Moana Jackson and the Force of 10 - Fala Media'.

- The ethic of courage calls for challenging assumptions and asking questions. The ethic of honesty requires transparency, this includes gaps in my knowledge, both about myself, histories, and how I will be using this information; [259]
- The ethic of modesty acknowledges my limitations in both my research and understanding.[260]
- Finally, the ethic of celebration, celebration of both the small achievements and the large ones and the celebration of knowledge.[261]

Importantly, as researcher and whānau I recognise that I need to be mindful of the power dynamics that shape my interviews, both while conducting the interviews and unpacking them throughout this thesis. [262] This will be important to the presentation of my participants' lived realties, histories and personality.[263]

Conducting the Interviews

Interviews were semi-structured, allowing for conversations to develop. Consistent with the concept of whakawhanaungatanga I wanted to ensure that the interviews were conducted in a space of the participants' choosing, ensuring that participants felt comfortable to talk with me. Two interviews were conducted in the participants' homes, and one was conducted in a public park.[264] I wanted to ensure that the ideas of 'where' was important, and it became important to how my whānau and I reflected on these moments. As these unsterile chosen spaces and informal settings allows comfort to voice options, these spaces are also the very homes that kai sovereignty is activated .[265]

[259] falamedia, 'Moana Jackson and the Force of 10 - Fala Media'.
[260] falamedia, 'Moana Jackson and the Force of 10 - Fala Media'.
[261] falamedia, 'Moana Jackson and the Force of 10 - Fala Media'.
[262] falamedia, 'Moana Jackson and the Force of 10 - Fala Media'.
[263] falamedia, 'Moana Jackson and the Force of 10 - Fala Media'.
[264] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
[265] Ringham, *The University of Waikato, 2022*.

For each interview I took lunch with me, this was important as first it establishes an informal tone that the interviews were to be taken under, each interview had a different lunch depending on what I knew about the person.[266] In addition, sharing kai was central to the topic and sharing kai is at the foundation of kai sovereignty while also being an important part of practicing whakawhanaungatanga. Within this thesis I explain that kai is a part of whakawhanaungatanga, building and maintaining relationships, meaning that to conduct my interviews without kai would be to negate my own research and the power of kai to build relationships and understanding. I wanted to ensure the comfort of all people partaking, as there was initially stress about being involved in interviews. For some of the participants, thinking that they were not academic enough, not having enough knowledge or some assumed that the information that they could share would be worthless to me.[267] This was untrue and often involved reassurance from me that I would be thankful for anything that they chose to contribute. This conversation also led me to change the focus of my research, to the connection that my whānau has with kai, how its changed and what historical events changed that relationship.

I used the translation application Kaituhi, run by Te Hiku Media, a Kaitaia based company.[268] The app is designed for transcription of Te Reo Māori and English which was the reason I chose to use the application. From this the interviews were uploaded, into the data system of the University of Waikato.

Re-employing qualitative historic story working, such as life history and Pūrākau, ensures contemporary lives and realties are heard, while using traditional and contemporary modes of information sharing and recounting.[269] Through this the researcher also creates an ancestral

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[266] Ringham, *The University of Waikato, 2022*.
[267] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methododgies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
[268] 'Https://Kaituhi.Nz/Terms-of-Service', n.d. <https://kaituhi.nz/terms-of-service> [accessed 25 August 2025].
[269] Jenny Lee, *Decolonising Māori Narratives: Pūrākau as a Method*, 2009.

connection, that connects the story worker to both the past, present and future, to recount a lived experience or realty.

My choice of focus

Through centring my mum's experiences, I draw attention to the realities of working-class life for Māori women, where time and energy is often stretched thin. For my Mum this included long hours of paid work, domestic reasonability's, and the pressure of everyday survival meant that there was little space left for tending to māra kai or engaging in other form of food production, including fishing, hunting, and diving. In this context, convenience often falls into necessity over choice.[270] For my mum, the supermarket became the only viable option for heathy kai that allowed her to have a certian amount of control in our diet.

This challenges the idea that people have just abandoned mahinga kai and māra kai out of disinterest or distant from culture. Instead, the research points to structural constraints that have shaped mahinga kai practices for the working class.[271] What often gets centred in research or community narratives is how kai sovereignty has been reclaimed in communal collective gardens, or māra kai, or even iwi and hapū led efforts.[272] While these are powerful examples of renewal and resistance they can obscure why kai sovereignty has become a struggle for some, the pressures of capitalism, colonisation, and the growth to prioritise convenience and profit over time rich relational food practices and culture. By focusing on my whānau I learn the about the external forces that has resulted in people and communities having limited ability to maintain these practices.

[270] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[271] N. R. Roskruge, 'Māori Kai Sovereignty to Achieve Food Security', *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 83.OCE1 (2024), p. E1, doi:10.1017/S0029665124000193.
[272] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

Why I chose oral interviews

Oral histories can be enhanced through writing, this allows me to bring through four pūrākau to consider narratives that intertwined with themes such as, capitalism and colonisation. For Māori, many oral transmission of knowledge is a natural and preferred way to transfer and impart history. Waiata, whakatauki, and whakapapa are just some of the ways in which oral histories are carried into the future.[273] I chose to do interviews because I felt it was the best way for my whānau to interpret their feelings and experiences. Interviews gave me the ability to ask and explain questions, statements, kupu and words while also informing participants about their rights and answering their questions.

My nan was important to ensure multiple generations were included in this research. Using oral histories method was suited the way in which elders kōrero cam be incorporated.

When listening to the audio recordings and being in person there are surroundings that I am able to take into account, such as inflections of voice, surroundings, and body language. In addition, my thesis is a multisensory experience, using senses, emotions, and visual media to support and encourage reflection and promote conversation.[274] Examples of this included being shown album photos by all participants. With each photo there was a connected relationship, memory and/or lesson that went with it, enhancing the whanau experience.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the research design and methodology used in my thesis. I aimed to work towards using multiple methods to deliver my research interviews with a key

[273] Hilary Francis and others, 'Decolonising Oral History: A Conversation', *History*, 106.370 (2021), pp. 265–81, doi:10.1111/1468-229X.13141.

[274] Nepia Mahuika, 'An Outsider's Guide to Public Oral History in New Zealand', n.d. <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/entities/publication/2ac5766d-ba27-49d3-9728-8b3942268d89> [accessed 2 October 2025].

goal to create security and safety for my participants, because I want to engage in the lived realties and embodied geographies of my whānau. [275]

In the next chapter I highlight my four interviews with, my mum and nan, Matuta Joe and Kirk, focusing on the themes of kai sovereignty and tino rangatiratanga. The section starts with outlining the political environment and then moves into exploration into participants gardens. It then dives into the theme of kai sovereignty and tino rangatiratanga and finally exploring my own insights and conclusions.

Chapter Five | “Kia ora” introducing my co-authors

This chapter aims to explore different relationships to kai through kōrero. These relationships that include people and kai are embedded into the past present and the future.[276] To do this first we must take into account the political environment of the nation over the summer of 2024 to 2025. In the 2023 election the National party was voted in, led by prime minister Christopher Luxon, David Seymour of ACT, and Winston Peters of New Zealand First.[277] During this election cycle, the treaty principles bill submission was introduced to the nation. This is a bill that aimed to (re)define the principles of the Te Tiriti ō Waitangi and put these defined principles to a national referendum.[278] The redesigned principles of the treaty would first ignore the guarantee of tino rangatiratanga for Māori.[279] The second principle would

[275] Jenny Lee, *Decolonising Māori Narratives: Pūrākau as a Method*, 2009.
[276] Lee, *Decolonising Māori Narratives: Pūrākau as a Method.*
[277] Luke Malpass, ‘Kiwis Voted for a Right-Wing Government – Now They Will Get It’, The Post, 24 November 2023 <https://www.thepost.co.nz/politics/350118294/kiwis-voted-right-wing-government-now-they-will-get-it> [accessed 25 August 2025].
[278] Chelsea Daniels, ‘Debate Intensifies over Māori Rights and Treaty Principles Bill amid Call for a Separate Parliament’, NZ Herald, n.d. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/why-tensions-between-maoridom-and-the-coalition-government-are-reaching-boiling-point-the-front-page/HNKOYZTVIVHTZDSYSRV2AG44UA/> [accessed 25 August 2025]; Malpass, ‘Kiwis Voted for a Right-Wing Government – Now They Will Get It’.
Ara Alam-Simmons, ‘Hīkoi Mō Te Tiriti: Walking into the Future’, *E-Tangata*, 23 November 2024 <https://e-tangata.co.nz/reflections/hīkoi-mo-te-tiriti-walking-into-the-future/> [accessed 25 August 2025].
[279] Carwyn Jones, ‘Carwyn Jones: It is Critical to Submit on the Principles Bill’, *E-Tangata*, 23 November 2024 <https://e-tangata.co.nz/comment-and-analysis/carwyn-jones-its-critical-to-submit-on-the-principles-bill/> [accessed 23 September 2025].

ignore the recognition of tino rangatiratanga, removing the recognition of Māori rights.[280] In article three, it was suggested that the term 'Māori' be erased and replaced with New Zealanders.

In November 2024 there were nationwide organized hīkoi in resistance against the new treaty principles bill.[281] Te Kīngitanga called for a national hui on January 20 2025, around the time that these interviews were taken, and as the Kīngitanga is close to home, this announcement was not missed within our community and whānau.[282]

In December of 2024 the Fast-track Approvals Bill was announced; this was designed to 'streamline the approval process for infrastructure', over-writing some consent processes within the Resource Management Act. This bill gives decision-making power to three cabinet ministers who would refer to a panel of experts with no need for Māori representation. This is seen as anti-treaty and anti-Māori as iwi and hapū participation can be over written and excluded.[283] This incited its own protests and has been met with distrust and resistance from many Māori and non-Māori communities.[284] I think this was in the foreground of all our minds as we entered into our interviews. Although I did not ask about it in the moment, I know the bill was a fear and a tension that lingered in the foreground of many of our minds.

The focus of my thesis and interviews are the relationships that people in my family have to kai, within this term I have two goals that aim to help me achieve this. First, this chapter is focused on the research question, what does kai sovereignty look like in my whanau? Each person has developed their own connection. As each person has Hauora and nuanced

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[280] Jones, 'Carwyn Jones:It is Critical to Submit on the Principles Bill'.
[281] Alam-Simmons, 'Hīkoi Mō Te Tiriti'.
[282] Alam-Simmons, 'Hīkoi Mō Te Tiriti'.
[283] 'Fast-Track Approvals Bill 31-1 (2024), Government Bill – New Zealand Legislation', n.d. <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2024/0031/6.0/whole.html> [accessed 25 August 2025].
[284] 'Fast-Track Bill Passes into Law, amid Protest', RNZ, 17 December 2024 <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/536961/fast-track-bill-passes-into-law-amid-protest> [accessed 25 August 2025].

relationships with kai, this is expanded to the relationships that have been strengthened through kai and kaimahi. Whānau stories are just a small part of the community, there are many other actions and people that make up the wider community. These actions can be as small as handing out fruit from a tree, to creating a flax roots charity. This chapter is an exploration into the relationships my whānau have with the world of kai. [285] Delving into these relationships enables me better explain my relationship to mahinga kai, and how that has progressed towards my current relationship with the taiao.

These goals have been produced from research on community gardens and community mahinga kai.[286] The book "*Pātaka Kai"* highlights the deep enduring connections between mahinga kai, whenua, and relationships showing how these elements are woven together through practice and tikanga. The framework of the book demonstrates that food systems are more than production and consumption, but about reciprocity, balance and care.[287] Each participant in this network, both human and more-than-human plays into the wellbeing of the network as a whole. For example, the soil regains its health, fertility and life through cultivation, while the community gains access to nourishing kai, that strengthens hauora and cultural identity.[288] It challenges extractive models of food production through foregrounding practices that restore ecosystems and community. What emerges is a system of interdependence rather than self-service, a relationship where flourishing is collective and shared rather than individual.[289] In this sense, mahinga kai is not an isolated act of gathering food but an expression of kaitiakitanga where giving and receiving is highlighted.[290] Within these interviews I aim to give the reader an idea of the spaces in which these interviews took place. For this I describe the inside of the homes, but I wish to focus on the gardens, as well

[285] Ringham, *The University of Waikato*.
[286] Jessic Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[287] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[288] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[289] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[290] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

as the people. For this I will be introducing my whānau through their gardens, and their homes.

The first interview I had was with my mum and my nan, they chose to have their interview together. In this interview we were in my mum's childhood home in Te Awamutu, where my nan had lived in since the 1970s. My younger cousin who lives with my grandmother was playing video games in the background in his bedroom, his voice drifting through the house as he talked to his friends.[291] In the centre of the table were the treats that I brought, some of their favourites, and an open tin of cookies, a staple in my nan's home. My mum's favourite, seafood pie, and my nan's mint slice all brought from Kiwi Pies, a local favourite of ours.

Much like the rest of our conversations, the interview was laced with sarcasm, laughter and jokes. This was the first time since last Christmas that we had eaten together as a whānau, it was not a passing moment in the salon, but a meal wherewe could stop and talk. This was also the first time we three had discussed te ao Māori all together. My mum and I have started to have these conversations, but my nan is normally absent. Truthfully, I have never understood why, but I do know that we are not the exception.[292]

[291] Ringham, *The University of Waikato*; 'Ka Kite, Bro by Willie Davis | PDF | Poetry'.
[292] 'My Grandad Told Me Not to Learn Te Reo Māori – and Who Could Blame Him?', 1News, n.d. <https://www.1news.co.nz/2024/04/20/my-grandad-told-me-not-to-learn-te-reo-maori-and-who-could-blame-him/> [accessed 25 August 2025].



Figure 6: Nan's garden and my old playhouse, Te Awamutu (Taken by author 2025).

The photo above (Figure 6) captures the remains of my nan's vegetable garden, the two overgrown planter boxes along the fence line was where she would once plant cabbages, cauliflower, and silver beet. The wild mint once spilled over the playhouse from the plastic tubs. The mint would be used for play cooking in my playhouse, making what I called soups. The smell of mint was intoxicating. These vegetables would populate our dinners, being boiled and salted alongside a ham steak, or a cob of corn. Mum would use it in her pumpkin soups during the winter. Near the pool behind the house, I got to grow a small strawberry patch each summer which I would pick and eat the berries that were not eaten by bugs or birds. This had been the setting for many Christmas lunches, birthdays, tangihanga, and summer pool parties with my cousins.[293] This is where many of us call home. In the front yard my nan has five fruit trees, not including her grapevine. This garden has been around since my mother's childhood, the fruit that is plucked off the trees occupied my school

[293] Lee, *Decolonising Māori Narratives: Pūrākau as a Method*; Wehi and others, 'Marine Resources in Māori Oral Tradition'.

lunches as well as those of my mum and Ezra, my cousin. The trees have feed generations and are a core element of my grandmother's house.

It was important for nan to grow her own food because it encouraged her hauora: the trees ensured that she went outside and that, on her busy days, she had a moment to relax. The trees guaranteed that we had healthy foods to eat. They provided food outside of the supermarket system, allowing my nan to save money on the food bill. But this garden provided the heart of the home, it was central to the relationships that were strengthened at the dinner table. This role, now that the garden is gone, is left to the fruit trees alone. The fruit trees help strengthen relationships through sharing. The fruit trees ensure that nan has time outside.

In many of our houses, the gardens would of become intergenerational, still thriving under my nan's watch. Knowledge from the garden was passed down to the next generation, keeping the māra kai alive.[294] This type of collaborative work is what builds relationships and strengthening relationships to whakapapa. Gardens were and often are spaces of community work and are looked after by the community. Over time this has changed as gardens and māra kai become independent and individualistic. [295] When the gardener can no longer maintain the garden what happens to it?

[294] McKerchar and others, 'Enhancing Māori Food Security Using Traditional Kai'; '(PDF) Creation Narratives of Mahinga Kai: Māori Customary Food Gathering Sites and Practices', 25 October 2024 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303892768_Creation_Narratives_of_Mahinga_Kai_Maori_customary_food_gathering_sites_and_practices> [accessed 25 October 2024]; Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[295] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.



Figure 7: Hairplay at the cottage, front yard (Image taken by author, June 2025).

Above (Figure 7) is the in-process garden at my mum's salon in Kihikihi, this garden is her current project. Mum wants this garden to do two things, to be pretty and practical. The garden provides an outlet for her, allowing her to have creative expression and control over her workspace. The lemon tree is mirrored by a lime tree on the other side of the ramp. In the corner is the base of an old bird bath made by our cousin, with a ceramic koru on the front. Around the back is a repurposed bathtub that she intends to become a small flower garden, and on the other side of the ramp is an identical garden. She also hopes to restore the fence line gardens to their former glory, planting vegetables here. During our interview, mum had not yet moved into the cottage so the māra kai were not a subject of conversation. But 10 years ago, my mum could never see herself taking on a project like this. Therefore, to me she has shown that we can learn, and nothing is out of our bounds. The garden that she notes in the interview is based on her home in Kawhia, in which she has been caring for since last

winter. This garden is along the side and at the base of the property, they both get the morning and afternoon sun. This garden is also important because of the isolation of the township of Kawhia. With the closest supermarkets being in Te Awamutu and Ōtorohanga both 50 minutes away. This garden in the home allows for freedom, allowing for fresh food without the taxing drive.

For my second interview was with Kirk, we were outside a café on the lawns of the Lake Rotoroa in central Kirikiriroa. Within sight was the water quality meter the council had put in place to inform people about what safe water activities are recommended by providing information about the health and quality of the lakes water. The water quality meter is maintained by the ground keepers at the lake. The smell of the lake wafts over us as the algae is in full bloom.[296] The water quality indicator was in the red that day, resulting in a complete ban on all water-based activities on and in the roto. As I look at the indicator, I see that the hole that holds the arrow, the one that lines up with the red is scratched while the other two look almost new.[297] This tells me that the red slice is almost always in use. At most points of the year the lake is in the red and closed for use as the water is too toxic to be used, touched and/or fished out of. This lake was once a vibrant swimming location, being used for fishing, sailing and swimming. This no longer happens, actions are limited on the lake, water activities are now restricted to boating. This is a loss of potential, is a loss of educational spaces, a loss of recreational spaces.

Kirk, although not related to me, has been a valuable part of my research thinking about the experiences of generation Z and the kohanga generation. He is also a tribal member of Tainui. He was invited to participate because of his age being over 18, as well as his

[296] Erin Hogan Fouberg, Alexander B. Murphy, and Harm J. De Blij, *Human Geography: People, Place, and Culture* (John Wiley & Sons, 2015).
[297] Fouberg, Murphy, and Blij, *Human Geography*.

upbringing included Mātaunaga Māori and farming life, and was different to my whanau experiences adding variation into my research. I met Kirk though a previous tutoring job I had in Te Awamutu. Kirk grew up on a farm around lake Ngāroto and is one of many children that were raised by farmers in the Waipā.



Figure 8: Kirks Flat Garden (Images taken and supplied by Kirk 2025)

The image above (Figure8) is is the garden Kirk had built in the backyard of his flat.. He planted a wide range of vegetables, such as broccoli, carrots, and lettuce. In the background are young fruit trees with their first fruit harvest. Although Kirk clams it is not much, it is glowing and has created a space for him to connect.

As a young adult in a cost of living crisis food has become unaffordable, growing food allows for leniency in a small budget.[298] This allows for protection around the fluctuating prices of

[298] Goldson and others, 'Severe Insect Pest Impacts on New Zealand Pasture: The Plight of an Ecological Outlier'.

food, protecting the budget. It can help movement towards financial freedom. In addition this gives Kirk a space for him to feel self-sufficient, to feel connection to the whenua. These are both positive impacts as financial insecurity can and does affect a person's hauora, it creates problems such as stress, or unhealthy diets.[299]

When I asked why he had built the garden, he replied **"as older I've gotten more into making or growing my own food like I made myself a garden box"**, he enjoys the process of growing and gardening, it makes him feel as though he **"is living off the land."**[300] Kirk understands his limitation at the moment, but there is a wish to be further removed from the system, but much like the rest of us he is tied to the supermarket. Being removed from the system allows freedom from the capital gains system of pricing, having more control over quality, freshness, and product.[301] The ability to control what types pesticides, soil, and fertiliser are used is a part of this freedom. [302]

My final interview was my nans younger brother Matua Joe in his Kihikihi home. Matua Joes wife, my auntie, was in the kitchen making fresh pasta sauce from the last of the seasons tomatoes that she had grown behind the house. The aroma fills the house with a savoury smell, herbs, spices and the fresh vegetables that have just been pulled from the mārakai. The cat Moimoi stalks a small mynah bird on the porch which is a consistent distraction for all three of us. Matua Joe is one of the kaumatua of our mārae and often leads pōwhiri at the local prison. But is also known to enjoy gardening and fishing much like his older brother. His home is located down the road from the Kihikihi home. For as long as I remember, Matua has lived in the Flat Road home in kihikihi, but he also lived in the Kihikihi home over 20 years ago. Although there

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[299] Deborah Tania Davies, *Kainga, Kura and Kai: Sustainable Gardens as a Mechanism to Enhance Educational and Cultural Outcomes* (University of Otago, 2024) <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/esploro/outputs/doctoral/Kainga-kura-and-kai-Sustainable-gardens/9926590274901891> [accessed 19 September 2025].
[300] Lee, *Decolonising Māori Narratives: Pūrākau as a Method*.
[301] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[302] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*; Taylor Alyssa Jade Arnt, 'Asserting Rangatiratanga and Kaitiakitanga in Response to Colonialism, Capitalism, and Climate Change : The Case of Ngāi Tahu' (unpublished, University of British Columbia, 2024), doi:10.14288/1.0442048.

are no images of it, when he lived there, each garden was booming with vegetables, where the double garage is now was a mahinga kai mirroring the orchard I spent my childhood in. In his current home he has a range of fruit trees, and native plants, with a garden they have been maintaining for many years. He has access to the old family homestead, and can use the river for watercress and tuna, and he often share the spoils.

Chapter Six | "I was busy"

For most of my childhood my mum, Cindy, was a solo parent who worked over 40 hours each week. As mum described it, **"I was busy."** There was little opportunity to experiment in the garden during that period, the 2000s and 2010s. Although we did not have a māra kai, the orchard planted by Matua Joe decades earlier ensured I still had oranges, apples, and feijoas in my lunchbox. His labour allowed her, even in her busiest years, to continue feeding us kai from the whenua. Both Kirk and my mother make note of the connection of time and mahinga kai. Kirk feels like he barely has **"time to exist"** caught between full-time work, domestic reasonability's, and the relationships he needs to maintain (9/01/25). Yet within these pressure, the still finds time to garden, fish and dive, not because he has the spare time but because he chooses to reclaim fragments of it.

These pūrākau reveal that expandable time is its self a privilege. Mahinga kai, while central to identity and wellbeing, requires hours that are not always available under the demands of modern life. Kirk and mum's kōrero echoe wider critiques of capitalism and time in what Marx described as the commodification of life itself, where leisure becomes rationed and bargained for.[303] This also reflects what is called time poverty, where cultural, recreational, and relational are sacrificed to the demands of work. Where labour was once organised around communal and seasonal patterns, rather that schedules.[304] By continuing to garden, fish, and dive despite limited hours, shows he's reclaiming time, asserting that these practices are worth preserving in conditions of scarcity.

Now, with me grown and more time on her hands my mum has also reclaimed the garden. In recent seasons she's been able to make breakfast with her tomatoes, or summer salads from her lettuce. This is an example of when offered more time, a person has time to tend to a māra kai, their own Hauora and kai sovereignty. Matua Joe and his brother now have more time to dedicate to- hobbies in their retirement, including gardening and fishing. Something that would have been harder to find time for when raising a family and working full time.

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[303] 'Capital-Volume-I.Pdf', n.d. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf> [accessed 20 September 2025].
[304] 'Capital-Volume-I.Pdf'.

Kai is more than sustenance, its connection, identity, and resistance. For my whānau the act of growing, gathering and sharing kai, is rooted in whakapapa, in memory and in expressions of tino rangatiratanga. From my mother's reclaiming of space and time for her tomatoes and lettuce, or Kirks garden box that is built in the backyard. The pūrākau that people chose to share with me showed that kai Sovereignty is about tino rangatiratanga, hauora, and relationships between whenua and people. Reclaiming kai practices is more than retuning to the whenua, It is about coming back to ourselves to Māoritanga, and I hope that is can be further nurtured and shared.

Within the interviews I asked want was kai to them? There were two different interpretations of kai within my whānau. For example, my mums '**home grown more than massed produced'**, and when possible, '**good and wholesome food'** is key to her checklist for kai. In the background my nan agrees with her staple humming and nodding in the background (13/01/25). This interpretation centres the product, highlighting nutrition and necessity. For both my grandmother andmother, kai is understood as sustenance, a key part of the day, central to health.

This contrasts with the men's thoughts, Kirk and Matua Joe understood kai as a way that connects closer to the explanation in the first half of this chapter. Kai is the '**essence'** or '**the way of life**' as both Kirk and Matua Joe defined it (5/02/25). Kirk explained it as: "**It is the process of making the food, prepping the food, gathering the food, hunting food, fishing for food** (9/01/25)**."** It is not just about the meal, the final product, It is the process, the connection to whenua and awa This is a deeper, relational approach grounded in Te ao Māori, that centres practice, process, and whakapapa.

There are many reasons why a person would grow a garden, including being a hobby, for hauora, food security, fun, or saving money. For my nan and Matua Joe growing up growing food was not just a lifestyle choice it was a necessity. Both made a point to say **"they never brought kai at the grocery shop"** growing most of the kai they consumed, either grown in the gardens, hunted, or caught from the rivers; as going into town was seen as a privilege, an adventure, an all-day event (Matua Joe 5/02/25, nan 13/01/25). Therefore mum grew up in a world where growing kai was the normal,

installing the values of good a wholesome food, that has had staying power. This becomes noticeable in mums definition and understanding of kai.

Matua Joe was raised on a sheep station near Parawera, his first memories of mahinga kai was collecting tuna and watercress from the river. He used to hunt wild turkey and rabbits, and occasionally enjoying lamb or beef when available. To my nan some of the memories that she chose to share was about her late brother, eating peas in the garden instead of bringing them into the kitchen, or swimming in the creeks instead of picking watercress. Nan chose to highlight the relationship that kai enacted rather than the final product; whereas for Matua Joe there is a focus on the final product. To my nan and Matua Joe the garden was never questioned, it was just a fact of life. This is how many, including my father sees their garden, when food is unavailable you have to make space and time for one.

In addition, gardens can be a form of tino rangatiratanga, or self-determination by providing a space to have control over resources and environment; a space for connection to culture, atua and kinship, allowing for reconnection.[305]

For my grandmother the labour of the garden is hard work, unable to maintain while she is raising Ezra in her golden years. In my nans older age, she is unable to garden the same way she once did, resulting in the overgrown gardens, the removal of the mint, and tired state. She still maintains her trees, as they are often easy to prune and pick off. These trees give her reasons to be outside that she would not have without these trees.

[305] Oldham, Newton, and Short, ‘Land-Based Resistance’, 2024.

Chapter seven | ‘Ka mate te wai Māori, ka mate te whenua! Ka mate te whenua, aue, ka mate te tangata katoa."

If the Māori water dies, the land dies! If the land dies, oh, all people will die!

‘Ka mate te wai Māori, ka mate te whenua! Ka mate te whenua, aue, ka mate te tangata katoa" (5/02/25). Matua Joe opens his interview with this powerful quote, summarizing the deep connection between people, kai, and the environment. It speaks to a co-dependent relationship, without healthy wai, there can be no healthy whenua, and without healthy land, the people cannot survive. He draws a clear link between wai, Māori and whenua, that each are interconnected. Highlighting that when freshwater dies, the people die and when the land dies, the people die too; this is told as a warning. This quote sits heavy in my mind. I imagine a dark shadow crawling out of the river, slowly swallowing everything in its path turning it black. But the beauty is that this shadow is not unstoppable. It can be pushed back with collective effort, with mahitahi and care for our environment. Through kaitiakitanga, that darkness can be turned around, our future has been changed, but It is not hopeless, It is not gone it has just changed.

One way that this shadow is pushed back, is through maintaining the relationship to whenua. Kai moana was always part of my whānau’s life. During the interview my grandmother she pulled out a photo of my great-grandmother sitting on the beach with my great-grandfather, my great-grandfather, and my nan’s oldest son Ray. They were sitting under Mauao (also known as “Mount Maunganui”) in 1973. Behind the image was my nan and papa diving as they often did. When Mum started narrating her first memories, they were located at this beach. She recalled being stuck on the rocks with her brother as their parents dived in the blue waters below. After my nans death these are the memories that she recalled, her fondest memories are around the collection of moana kai.

My mum opened up about her dislike for tuna, she recalled my great grandfather drying freshly caught tuna. Although she is a fan of seafood she never liked tuna, but she does enjoy fishing. Her grandfather would often push her to try the drying tuna on the fishing line, comparing it to beef jerky (13/01/25). While recalling this story she scrunched up her face, pruning it into a painful sound. Nan laughed, she has been known to be a huge fan of seafood, dried tuna, and took the most joy out of diving. My nan taught my grandfather how to dive, she would search for kina, mussels and paua. These early memories of diving, fishing, and eating seafood set the stage for how kai has always been woven into my whānau life. But they also opened up kōrero about how tastes, practices, and environments have shifted over time.

This made me think about fresh water mussels, prompting me to ask the question, **'do you recall fresh water mussels?'.**[306] Nan replied yes, and explained that she did not like them, describing them as '**muddy, and brown'** (13/01/25) because of the farm runoff. Comparing them to the **'cleaner ones'** (13/01/25) that she would dive for at the base of Mount Maunganui. But there is a reason for this, industrial framing has changed the water landscapes, turning them into disposal highways for farm run off.[307] Not only has it destroyed wetlands and rivers, it has minimized spaces where we can swim and engage with mahinga kai. Mussels are known as filter feeders, processing large volumes of water as a way to obtain kai. When they are pulled from polluted water their flesh can change flavour and they become toxic. This is the impact of the industrial farming complex, directly changing the value of a once prised kai.[308] These early memories of diving, fishing, and eating seafood set

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[306] Michele Melchior and others, *Distribution and Current State of Freshwater Mussel Populations (Kāeo, Kākahi) in Wadeable Waikato Streams*, n.d.
Fresh water mussels are often found in the fresh water lakes and rives all over the country. They are currently endangered.
[307] Colombo, Cullen, and Ramesh, 'Estimating Values of Environmental Impacts of Dairy Farming in New Zealand'.
[308] Amber Julie McEwan, Aaria Ripeka Dobson-Waitere, and Jeffrey S. Shima, 'Comparing Traditional and Modern Methods of Kākahi Translocation: Implications for Ecological Restoration', *New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research*, 54.1 (2020), pp. 102–14, art. 1, doi:10.1080/00288330.2019.1636099.

the stage for how kai has always been woven into my whānau's life. These kākahi were used as medicinal remedies, dried, boiled, or raw. Their shells where used as knives, for weaving, cutting hair and peeling vegetables. They were an important part of a system. Kākahi, once plentiful have decreased in numbers, becoming uncountable, their space is now been taken over by golden clams which has become a pest population.[309]

Gardens are kai to hauora, they support the mental, spiritual, and physical wellbeing or people. First, they increase nutrition in diets, and it grants better access to healthy wholesome kai. For many others a māra kai provides opportunity for a reconnection to whenua, to atua, or a life that feels very distant for people generation Z. When Kirk gardens he feels as though he's reclaiming **"a way of life that has diminished',** that has declined because of colonisation and capitalism (5/02/25). He uses gardening as an active form of decolonisation, reconnection and resistance. Kirk states; **'supermarket chains are taking over basic needs and people are being disconnected from Māoritanga'** Māoritanga can be defined as Māori culture, Māori way of life, for Kirk and many others this includes the process of having a māra kai (5/02/25). Kirk sees the supermarket as a disruption, and a hurdle to connection to Māoritanga. Kirk wishes to be free from the system, he does not want to rely on convenance.

Māoritanga can be defined as Māori culture and way of life, and for many, this includes the practice of nurturing a māra kai and sustaining mahinga kai. For Kirk, the supermarket represents a disruption, a barrier that distances him from Māoritanga and his ability to live independently of systems of convenience. Similarly, Matua Joe highlights how '**health and safety compliance to the government'**, enforced through agencies such as Fish and Game New Zealand, impose further restrictions on traditional food gathering (5/02/25). Licences and fees, such as the $156 annual charge required to hunt game birds, create financial and

[309] 'Gold Clams', n.d. <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/freshwater-pests/gold-clams/> [accessed 12 September 2025].

structural barriers that prevent Māori from fully exercising their rights to mahinga kai.[310] This barrier became clear when Matua Joe reflected on his own experiences of fishing, hunting, and gardening, linking kai to tikanga and sovereignty. One example of this is seen in the family album, where stories and skills are passed down to children on camping trips, ensuring that mahinga kai practices remain part of our whakapapa. My aunty and Matua Joe showed me the family album and they came across a photo taken on a camping trip. In the photo was their daughter and her cousins. They recalled teaching the children how to catch tuna in the rivers around Pirongia. This is an another example of the transmission of knowledge, through whānau, that encourages connection to each other, and whenua.

These stories of tuna, diving for kai moana, and remembering the taste of kākahi show how food is more than just sustenance, its memory, whakapapa and whenua woven tightly together through knowledge transmission. While industrial farming has polluted waters and diminished spaces of mahinga kai, knowledge is still carried. Their memories remind me that kai is not just what we eat but, the stories that we carry, and the reason that we have to protect it through kaitiakitanga.

Manaakitanga and koha

Although Matua Joe grew up with little, he never considered himself unlucky. He recalled a deep sense of community, sharing staples like a **'cup of sugar'**(5/02/25) which would be retuned on the next trip into town. This is the koha system, a practice of reciprocity, gifting, and non-transactional exchange that he sees as foundational to being Māori; to many of us this is a core part of being Māori and practicing manākitanga. Koha is a gift, offering, donation, or contribution, that holds connotations of reciprocity. This system is expressed through a simple cup of sugar in my uncle's kōrero, but continues to be expressed in many

[310] 'Standard Licence Options', Fish & Game, n.d. <https://www.fishandgame.org.nz/freshwater-fishing-in-new-zealand/fishing-licences-and-regulations/standard-licence-options/> [accessed 29 September 2025].

other ways. The koha system is often used in our flat, as there is a mutual trust that we can use the house hold staples. We understand that we have to share the cost of these items although it is unspoken, we rotate buying these items when one of us has the means.

For my mother the koha system utilised her labour, she would trade favours with clients and friends to get luxuries, or other favours that used skilled labours. An example occurred last winter, this was used to gift our flat heated wheat bags, handmade by an artist. Trading a woman's haircut and blow wave for three wheat bags of the same price. This is trade through something of equal value. Alongside this was our regular trading of fruit, in exchange we would receive back jams, jellies and baked good that contained our excess fruit from our orchids. My mums practice of koha was informed by my nan, she is known to share kai within her community. During the interview she talks about a neighbours down the cul-de-sac.

" I give fruit to my neighbours behind us, some oranges and there is a lady that is a grandmother that raises her grandson, I give her some oranges" (13/01/25).

Nan often finds community in this small group of people, some being the people in the street around her. She often makes time to gather fruit from Kihikihi and drops it off where It is needed. She leaves bags at the salon for mum, she takes a bag up to Flat Road for Matua Joe and she would drop a large bag into work for me, which then often got handed out to my students at the time. Matua Joe brought kai out to the contractors working on the road outside of his house, distributing watercress, fruit and fish after befriending them. He notes that sharing feels **'natural',** calling the habit '**inherent to being Māori' (5/02/25).** Which when understanding that it is a part of our cultural identity makes sense, to be Māori is to consider people, whenua and their needs. This is a part of resistance to capitalism, ensuing that people's needs can be met, as capitalism centres around profit maximization choices are

made based on the idea that private owners want to accumulate wealth. Disrupting this through sharing product with no profit gain, this pattern is countercultural and a form of active resistance.

To share food with no capital gain is against the machine of the capitalist, as it does not support the notion of profit or individuality, but is supporting the collective; by ensuring that others needs are met through handing out your excess, to see others needs as equal or higher than your own. This mentality is also extended to whenua, Matua Joe spends his free time restoring and helping on Punui River Care projects, placing the needs of the whenua above or equal to his own; or my mum using her walks along the beach to pick up trash that has been left or washed up. To care is to protect and prioritise.

Manākitanga is kindness, hospitality and support, this was also a common note in our conversations. Although not brought up by name, the actions in manākitanga were present or mentioned, the actions that were chosen for the interviews were the normal, not the exception. These values are consistent with themselves and Māoritanga. Despite if they put a specific name to their actions or not.

Personal insights into the interview chapters

Kai sovereignty is seen as a part of self-determination this could also be seen as a move towards self-sufficiency. In te ao Māori there is a link between cosmology, the structure of the universe, through whakapapa.[311] Whakapapa is the geological framework that connects atua, whenua, and kai. Kai is not just an object but a taonga with its own mauri and

[311] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

whakapapa connections.[312] Therefore, kai is not just a substance but is part of a wider interconnected system that relates to its own whakapapa and whenua.

Kai is spiritual and cultural and every act of growing, gathering, preparing, and consuming is a connection to our atua, reaffirming our place in the whenua. Within the context of these interviews this is being affirmed; in the home, in the salon, community projects and all through whanau māra kai. There is also importance of tapu and noa, food lifts the value of tapu and by eating kai transitions a person into a state of noa, building relationships and shows unity. Examples of this can be the use of kai in pōwhiri, where eating as a group lifts the tapu transiting into a state of noa, this in turn fosters connection and unity among the host and guests.[313]

Therefore, kai has been a pathway for reconnection for iwi and hapū, allowing Māori to find their place and reconnect with the whenua. This has also been heavily influenced through people sharing their experiences and pathways on social media, as a new form of korerorero. Some people are turning away from mass production, becoming weary of the systems that have grown their food, becoming disillusioned through pricing and packaging and health issues.[314] For some this includes returning to an tupuna diet, this has been used in replacement of modern diets.[315]

Kai has been fundamentally changed by colonization and capitalism which has disrupted not only our food systems, but also the cultural relationships that we as Māori have with kai.[316]

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[312] '(PDF) Creation Narratives of Mahinga Kai: Māori Customary Food Gathering Sites and Practices'.
[313] 'Key Tikanga Concepts and Their Relevance to Wāhine and Tāne', Waitangi Tribunal, n.d. <https://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/en/inquiries/kaupapa-inquiries/mana-wahine/te-kete-puputu/briefs-of-evidence-3/key-tikanga-concepts-and-their-relevance-to-wahine-and-tane> [accessed 25 August 2025].
[314] Nikki Renall and Lisa and Te Morenga, 'Māori Food Culture and Wellbeing on TikTok: A Content and Thematic Analysis', *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 0.0 (n.d.), pp. 1–18, doi:10.1080/1177083X.2024.2426655.
[315] 'TUPUNA KAI: A Māori Diet Based on What Ancestors Ate - YouTube', n.d. <https://www.youtube.com/> [accessed 25 September 2025].
[316] Daniell Webb,' A Socialist Compass for Aotearoa: Envisioning Māori Socialism' *Counterfutures* 8 (2019): 73-97

Colonization has introduced new foods, new systems and values. Prioritising capitalist frameworks, mass production, and land ownership.[317] This lead to displacement of iwi and hapū, as settlers clamed whenua. In the Waikato this lead to an invasion in 1860s, which led to most of the whenua in the Waikato being removed by force, and reoccupied by settlers who terraformed the wetlands into pastural farming.[318] This bloodshed set up the current industrial farming practices, wetlands were drained and replaced, rivers were carved out, deepened and straightened.[319] Policies such as the Land Drainage Act 1908 allowed power for local councils to enact drainage of wetlands, allowing settlers to change these spaces into pastural landscapes for agriculture.[320] In addition to this there was a change in how we farmed, what once was done through thinking about space, place, and environment, was now done on industrial scale.[321] This disrupted and diminished biodiversity, resulting in the decline of tonga species, such as fresh water mussels, and tuna.

This disruption impacted how Māori interacted with whenua and kai, changing consumption patterns and disconnecting Māori from mahinga kai. This decline is directly tied to land privatisation**,** environmental degradation, and restricted access to natural food sources.[322] As a result, the quality, availability, and variety of kai has diminished, narrowing dietary choices and pushing many Māori including my whānau into dependence on supermarkets, imported and processed foods.[323] The systems that I described never had Māori in mind, not having our values, needs, or health in the foreground. Instead, they function in an introduced capitalist

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[317] A Hikairo Spelman and B. V. Dieriks, 'Worlds Apart, Te ao Māori and Western Worldviews in Aotearoa, New Zealand', *Bioethical Inquiry*, published online 2025, doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-025-10439-2.
[318] Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Mātou = Struggle without End*, Rev. ed. (Penguin, 2004).
[319] Colombo, Cullen, and Ramesh, 'Estimating Values of Environmental Impacts of Dairy Farming in New Zealand'.
[320] Land Drainage Act 1908 (NZ).
[321] Colombo, Cullen, and Ramesh, 'Estimating Values of Environmental Impacts of Dairy Farming in New Zealand'.
[322] 'Land Loss, Confiscation, Arability and Colonisation: The Experience of Iwi in Aotearoa New Zealand', 27 April 2025, doi:10.1177/11771801221122810.
[323] Karyn Stein, 'Māori Women Promoting Food Sovereignty in Aotearoa (New Zealand)', n.d. <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/esploro/outputs/doctoral/M%C4%81ori-Women-Promoting-Food-Sovereignty-in/9926479891401891> [accessed 19 September 2025].

structure that prioritise profit, over community, convenience over tikanga.[324] Kai sovereignty, in the Māori context, is about tino rangatiratanga, the right to self-determination over our food systems, land, water, and wellbeing.[325] The process of land alienisation that have affected us include the native land court, invasions, public works acts, and fraudulent sales, mechanisms through which vast areas of Māori land were transferred into Crown or settler ownership during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[326]

These conversations with my whānau have led me to three key conclusions, that when lives are overwhelming and busy, we as a people turn to convenance. Second is that people often turn to gardens, and mahinga kai as a form of resistance and decolonisation, allowing people to remove themselves form the weight of corporations, governments and economy. Finally It is supports hauora, through contributing to physical, spiritual, mental and cultural health.

This can move into my key question "how has my whānau interacted with mahinga kai?" This does not have a consistent answer and has waves of interaction, that flows with the constrains of modern life.

As Kirk highlighted in his interview, time and energy can be seen as a commodity, where and how we spend out free time is bargained for. This includes bargaining for our leisure time, including our hobbies, our phones, our televisions and our culture. As people, we enter different phases in our lives, this free time extends or declines. An example is my mother retaking up mahinga kai after being able to start working into a looser routine. This is achieved by working from home and having shorter days. Or Kirk cutting down on his

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[324] 'Land Loss, Confiscation, Arability And Colonisation'; Reid And Rout, *The Colonising Environment*, n.d.
[325] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[326] Te Rarawa and Ngāti Whātua nations) Mutu (Ngāti Kahu Margaret, '"To Honor the Treaty, We Must First Settle Colonisation" (Moana Jackson 2015): The Long Road from Colonial Devastation to Balance, Peace and Harmony', *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 49.sup1 (2019), pp. 4–18, doi:10.1080/03036758.2019.1669670.
The dates at the end of the quotes, are the dates that the interviews were conducted, allowing for an extra information around time and space.

fishing and diving because of his increased responsibility with his whānau. Finally, Matua Joe, who because of his golden retirement years can make the most out of his time, spending it fishing and gardening. In a similar fashion this is the same with hobbies. Hobbies share similar qualities to mahinga kai, where they increase a person's quality of life through improving mental health.[327]Additionally, this include hobbies being good for taha tinana, physical health, as hobbies have shown to reduce stress, depression, and anxiety.[328] Hobbies also connect communities and people much like mahinga kai.[329] Mahinga kai does these in addition to revitalising and maintaining connection to place, space, and culture. When people's lives change how they spend their time changes, peoples time is not set, but closer to being fluid.

The second is that many of my whānau want to remove themselves from the market controlled environment of the supermarket and the wider market; Kirk aims to be self-sustainable, Mum wishes to keep her food costs down, and achieves this through her small garden. This comes from a wish to have more tino rangatiratanga, in their lives. For Kirk control is being outside the supermarket, having choice and agency in what he eats.

In my nans and Matua Joes youth the mahinga kai was a key element of survival, without it kai would be limited. My nan and Matua Joes reliance on mahinga kai echoes broader Māori experiences during times of land alienisation and economic hardship, when customary food practices where essential to sustaining whānau. Today these practices have transformed, no longer about survival but to feed and assert cultural identity, and kai sovereignty in the face of global markets.[330]

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[327] Michelle Cleary and others, 'Exploring the Impact of Hobbies on Mental Health and Well-Being: A Scoping Review', *Ssues in Mental Health Nursing*, 46 (2025), pp. 804–14.
[328] Cleary and others, 'Exploring the Impact of Hobbies on Mental Health and Well-Being: A Scoping Review'.
[329] Cleary and others, 'Exploring the Impact of Hobbies on Mental Health and Well-Being: A Scoping Review'.
[330] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

The kōrero shared by my whānau highlights the roles that mahinga kai has in our lives, when life becomes overwhelming, convenance is often chosen, showing how deeply tied our food practices are to the pressures of work, routine, and responsibility. Yet at the same time, my whānau turns to gardens, fishing, and mahinga kai as a form of resistance.[331]In addition to being a pathway to hauora, strengthening mental health, creating intergenerational connections and reinforces cultural identity, throughout connection to whakapapa and whenua.

These stories remind us that kai is never just food. It has power, it has choice, it has wellbeing, it has sovereignty, For my Whānau, the garden, the fishing line, the shore, the kitchen, and the table are all sites of resistance.[332] They resist the colonial histories that drained wetlands and disrupted food system. They resist economic pressures of rising food costs, and corporate control.[333] They resist the disconnection from whenua and whakapapa that modern convince culture encourages. Scholars such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith remind us that resistance is not always loud or dramatic, it can also be quiet, everyday acts of survival and care. In this way, my whānau's practices of mahinga kai are part of a wider Indigenous movement to reclaim sovereignty over kai, to reassert relationships with whenua and moana, and to restore balance in ways that supermarkets and convenience cannot.[334]

What I have understood through this research is that kai sovereignty in my whānau is expressed in many ways. For my grandmother, one way is to share her homegrown and cooked kai and her techniques with her loved ones and friends. This act allows her to maintain and form relationships while also supporting her community. This includes my

[331] Oldham, Newton, and Short, 'Land-Based Resistance', 2024; Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[332] Oldham, Newton, and Short, 'Land-Based Resistance', 2024.
[333] Oldham, Newton, and Short, 'Land-Based Resistance', 2024.
[334] Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.

mum, the neighbours and my flat. We all have small acts that allow us to have agency over our kai, no matter the size.

My mother, Matua Joe and Kirk reinforce kai sovereignty and connection though the act of growing, hunting, and harvesting and their māra kai. Relationships with kai and people are strengthened through these acts, as a person tends to their māra kai they create and maintain a connection to the whenua, to the soil and to whakapapa. Each person has found a way to maintain a relationship to whakapapa, whenua and soil, and therefore has an element of kai sovereignty in their daily lives.

Through this process there is also agency in what kai they consume, there is a choice in what products are used in the production of kai, and what kai is available. This is, at times, removed when only having access to the mass-produced foods, there is no choice in what products are used to grow, fertilise, and clean the produce. Allowing people agency in the production choices involved with supplying themselves with kai. This is a level of agency that cannot be obtained in these supermarket.

From this I can better understand my own development as a person, I can trace my personal values around kai to my whānau. This links into how we treat kai in our flat. My Hamilton flat where I live makes it hard to grow substantial amounts of kai, so our kai sovereignty is dependent on the sharing of kai. First, we tend to ensure that our dinners and lunches when possible are communal, this allows us to have one moment of the day where we can all take a breath together and it strengthens our relationships. But these communal dinners do more than just become a routine that maintain our relationships, through having these dinners as a community we ensure that everybody does eat and that they eat a healthy dinner. When left to our own devices our dinner options often become unhealthy, irregular. Through ensuring that every other person in the flat eats well, we force ourselves to eat just as well.

When thinking about community bonding, our flat works best when we all are present for dinner. We work better as a flat, there is a tendency for less fighting, or bickering. In our current state, Ari (flatmate) and I often have shift work within a catering company, this means that we are often not present for flat dinner. This results in us not eating meals or not eating healthy as we often opt for easier grab and go meals or are fed during our shift at work. In this space (the flat) kai is what regulates our relationships, we have built a our relationships around kai, it ensures that we take a moment to regulate ourselves, and check in with each other.

In chapter eight I have looked to kai in the context of my whānau and their relationship to kai. In the ninth chapter I look at kai in the community, looking at programs such as school lunch programs and pātaka kai (street pantries). Finally moving into my final thoughts and conclusions.

Chapter eight | Conclusion Kai sovereignty in action

All throughout my interviews, one thing that I noticed was that people used kai to relate to each other; that kai is a fundamental part of a community, whenua, awa and people are intertwined in a way that cannot be separated. In this conclusion I want to look at some of the efforts into food security and kai sovereignty within the Waikato, this includes both local efforts and state efforts. These programs are linked because they are looking towards the future, a topic that was talked about in all of my conversations above.

In this chapter I will be exploring the local programs that have potential or support kai sovereignty. I have chosen two programs, the National School Lunch Program and the Patakai Program. I have chosen to highlight these programs, because I believe they have ability to support kai sovereignty. For kai sovereignty does not manifest from just growing food, but comes from the work that the community does. These are flax root systems grow and develop so we will be able to see environmental changes that encourage and support local people and families.

School lunch programs and community gardens.

Many families would argue that a healthy diet is a key part of a child's health, growth, education, and future.[335] Healthy and quality kai has been proven to be a key part of a child's ability to learn, improving focus, improving mental and physical wellbeing, alertness and increased mood, in addition to improving school attendance.[336]

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[335] 'Eating for Healthy Children Aged 2 to 12/Ngā Kai Tōtika Mō Te Hunga Kōhungahunga - HE1302', *HealthEd* <https://healthed.govt.nz/products/eating-for-healthy-children-aged-2-to-12-nga-kai-totika-mo-te-hunga-kohungahunga> [accessed 5 August 2025].

[336] 'Free School Lunches: Studies Show Better Attendance, Improved Alertness - Researchers', *RNZ*, 19 March 2024 <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/512134/free-school-lunches-studies-show-better-attendance-improved-alertness-researchers>.

In 2019 the Labour government enacted the school lunches program called Ka Ora, Ka Ako.[337] By 2020 a quarter of all schools had access to these programs, this has slowly expanded to all school groups.[338] The school lunches were brought in to support food insecurity and child hunger, in some cases saving families up to $60 to $70 dollars a week through removing the responsibility of providing school lunches from families.[339] The school lunch program is the largest intervention for food security and childhood nutrition since milk in schools, which was implemented throughout 1937 to 1967.[340]

Schools currently have meals have provided many students.[341] On the whānau scale, there has been a reduced financial strain as these school lunches have made a ripple effect within their communities.[342] Through this, there is local opportunity to partake in kai sovereignty and an opportunity for schools to be involved in their own school lunches. Examples include schools being able to choose their own supplier, as well as growing kai on school grounds.[343]

This choice has changed under the coalition of ACT, New Zealand First and National as the program was cut 107 million dollars under David Seymore.[344] The school lunch collative has failed to live up to expectations under the national government. Not only have these meals failed to live up to school students and staff expiations of value and quality, this has been

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[337] 'Healthy School Lunches Programme', n.d. <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/wellbeing-in-education/free-and-healthy-school-lunches> [accessed 3 July 2025].
[338] Jamie de Seymour, Boyd Swinburn, and Sally Mackay, 'Aotearoa's Government-Funded School Lunches Failing Nutrition Standards', *Public Health Expert Briefing*, 29 March 2025 <https://www.phcc.org.nz/briefing/aotearoas-government-funded-school-lunches-failing-nutrition-standards> [accessed 3 July 2025].
[339] Pippa McKelvie-Sebileau and others, 'Health, Wellbeing and Nutritional Impacts after 2 Years of Free School Meals in New Zealand', *Health Promotion International*, 38.4 (2023), p. daad093, doi:10.1093/heapro/daad093.
[340] McKelvie-Sebileau and others, 'Health, Wellbeing and Nutritional Impacts after 2 Years of Free School Meals in New Zealand'.
[341] Kasvatustieteiden Tiedekunta and Master's Programme, *Hungry to Learn: School Meals, with Lessons from Finland's Broadly Supported Universal Programme.*, n.d.
[342] Pippa McKelvie-Sebileau and others, 'Health, Wellbeing and Nutritional Impacts after 2 Years of Free School Meals in New Zealand', *Health Promotion International*, 38.4 (2023), p. daad093, doi:10.1093/heapro/daad093.
[343] 'Behind the Scenes with New Zealand's School Lunch Programme', *Wintec*, 8 May 2021 <https://www.wintec.ac.nz/about-wintec/news/article/2021/03/08/behind-the-scenes-with-new-zealand's-school-lunch-programme>.
[344] 'School Lunches Have 'profound' Impact on Learners' Wellbeing', *NZ Herald*, 4 July 2025 <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/government-told-free-school-lunches-have-profound-impact-on-wellbeing-months-before-funding-cuts/JLA6RCSVHBADJM3MT53ORW7YK4/>.

made clear in public online forums and newspapers.[345] Examples of these problems include incorrect meals being provided for halal students, including meals with pork products.[346] Additionally, there is evidence that portion sizes are too small, schools not receiving enough meals, and in some cases schools have been given inedible meals.[347]

The program has benefited many other countries who have implemented it, a positive example is Finland.[348] Since the end of world war two, school lunches have been put in school systems as a way to battle poverty and malnutrition, this has in turn related to the longest running free lunch system in the world. [349] This school lunch system highlights its benefits for both the pupil and the family. First it supports education and social protection within the school, opportunities for improved health and increased learning capacity.[350] It supports gender equality through lowering the amount of expected jobs on mothers, and allows for more money throughout the home.

These ongoing issues have forced schools to use their own funds to cover costs of poor or missing school lunches. Nutritional value has also declined since 2022, with current meals failing to meet 30% of the energy requirements that children need.[351] Kai has a direct impact on a child's education. Better diets and consistent access to kai can lead to improvements of mood and concentration in the classroom, which in turn supports academic performance.[352] Within the research, both staff and researchers saw the benefit of all students enjoying the

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[345] '"It is Pretty Bad, I Hate It": Hundreds of School Lunches Going Uneaten', *NZ Herald*, 1 July 2025 <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/education/hundreds-of-school-lunches-going-uneaten-its-pretty-bad-i-hate-it/ACEETZL5LNDH3PLBGO3JHRX4LE/>.
[346] '"It is Pretty Bad, I Hate It": Hundreds of School Lunches Going Uneaten', NZ Herald, 1 July 2025 <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/education/hundreds-of-school-lunches-going-uneaten-its-pretty-bad-i-hate-it/ACEETZL5LNDH3PLBGO3JHRX4LE/> [accessed 3 July 2025].
[347] '"It is Pretty Bad, I Hate It"'.
[348] 'Kuusipalo_Manninen_2023_Food_Meals_Case_Study_Finland.Pdf', n.d. <https://www.schoolmealscoalition.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/Kuusipalo_Manninen_2023_Food_Meals_Case_Study_Finland.pdf> [accessed 5 August 2025].
[349] 'Kuusipalo_Manninen_2023_Food_Meals_Case_Study_Finland.Pdf'.
[350] 'Kuusipalo_Manninen_2023_Food_Meals_Case_Study_Finland.Pdf'.
[351] McKelvie-Sebileau and others, 'Health, Wellbeing and Nutritional Impacts after 2 Years of Free School Meals in New Zealand'.
[352] 'Behind the Scenes with New Zealand's School Lunch Programme'.

same kai with no stigma or questions attached, as peer judgment is a barrier in reaching out for help.[353] Allowing children who needed the help to hide from peer scrutiny reduces the feelings of shame that are attached to support.[354]

Over the past five years working in the private tutoring system, I have run two programs supporting maths for students aged 5–6 years, these students are immigrants and refugees, with English being their second or third language.[355] In the second year, students showed noticeable improvement form teachers, my staff, and families. The only change was providing them with apples or fruit before the lesson. Many of these children and their families faced language barriers, which meant instructions did not always translate and students often came without extra food for an after-school snack, or the families could not afford additional kai. As a result, we began offering afternoon tea. In some cases, these apples came from local trees donated to me by friends, or oranges from my grandmother's tree, or donated by the school I was partnering with. This small change led to better results and improved behaviour in the classroom. In addition there was an increase of attendance as students were able to come straight from class instead of going home first. [356]

With my teenage students at the private tutoring company, the free school lunches were a positive initiative when they were first introduced, I noticed the immediate change in my students. When they came to their lesson there was less sneaking of food during lessons, in addition to students that were far more interested and ready to learn during their hour. These

[353] 'Kuusipalo_Manninen_2023_Food_Meals_Case_Study_Finland.Pdf'.
[354] McKelvie-Sebileau and others, 'Health, Wellbeing and Nutritional Impacts after 2 Years of Free School Meals in New Zealand'.
[355] 'Knighton Normal School: Is This the Most Diverse School in New Zealand?', RNZ, 11 November 2024 <https://www.rnz.co.nz/life/people/identity/knighton-normal-school-is-this-the-most-diverse-school-in-new-zealand> [accessed 22 September 2025].
[356] 'Kuusipalo_Manninen_2023_Food_Meals_Case_Study_Finland.Pdf'.

two meals and how they improved the lives of these students, they insured a quality education by giving them something to eat, allowing them to focus better in school.[357]

This stopped when ACT took over their meals, taking an individualist approach, giving back autonomy to parents about school lunch choices.[358] Comments that were often positive turned sour and eventually students would rather starve than take school lunches.[359] For me there was a clear difference between students not eating or having the meals, compared to when lunches were first rolled out. This was the first government funded lunch system that had been introduced in the country, but schools have been trying to ensure that each student was fed without government support before this. In some cases, this was from donations, or meals subsidised by the school, this included my primary school.

I was in primary school from the years 2006 to 2012. Kihikihi school had support from a local farmer, enabling the teachers to be able to hand out apples each day. These boxes of kai were kept in each classroom so each student could grab them as needed or wanted. In later conversations with mum this apple or two were the only form of food that they had during the school day. This was a part of the fruit in schools program, which was established by the Labour led government in 2005, this program was targeted at low decile schools.[360] This program was arranged through the Ministry of Health and managed by a produce organisation.[361] This was aimed to increase a child's fruit intake , as well as teaching about nutrition and health.[362] Some days students were given the leftover sandwiches from the

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[357] 'Free School Lunches: Studies Show Better Attendance, Improved Alertness - Researchers', RNZ, 19 March 2024 <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/512134/free-school-lunches-studies-show-better-attendance-improved-alertness-researchers> [accessed 4 July 2025].
[358] Tiedekunta and Programme, *Hungry to Learn: School Meals, with Lessons from Finland's Broadly Supported Universal Programme.*
[359] 'Free School Lunches'.
[360] Tiedekunta and Programme, *Hungry to Learn: School Meals, with Lessons from Finland's Broadly Supported Universal Programme.*
[361] Tiedekunta and Programme, *Hungry to Learn: School Meals, with Lessons from Finland's Broadly Supported Universal Programme.*
[362] Tiedekunta and Programme, *Hungry to Learn: School Meals, with Lessons from Finland's Broadly Supported Universal Programme.*

bakery on the main road in Kihikihi, but this was not as consistent as the apples. This is a type of corporate and charity donation.[363]

Towards the end of my time at Kihikihi primary school they opened a breakfast club in the school hall, this was school funded and parent run, each child had an ability to come in and get breakfast no questions asked.[364] This was a part of a program called Kickstart Breakfast, which was a partnership, between the dairy company Fonterra, and the cereal company Sanitarium.[365] The Kickstart breakfast program was a community partnership model, where companies provided schools with food with additional government support.[366] This was a small action compared to the school lunches, but it was a form of community action to regain control for hungry students. To many students these school kai programs made a difference, as over the last decade between 20 and 25 percent of children have suffered the challenges of hunger, food scarcity, with Māori and Pacific being affected in the highest rates.[367]

These school lunches where a topic of convocation with my mum and nan and their desire to improve these meals, mum wanted to start localising kai production by growing fruit trees on the school grounds, as well as having a student run māra kai in the school grounds. School lunches made by local companies, with fruit and vegetables being supplemented by the school's gardens. Allowing children to learn how to grow and keep a garden, in addition to ensuring that children know the life cycle of kai. Fruit trees in schools are possible and have been done in the past. My grandmother recounted her youth of picking fruit off the trees at school which would then be handed out to the children as well as having a vegetable garden.

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[363] Tiedekunta and Programme, *Hungry to Learn: School Meals, with Lessons from Finland's Broadly Supported Universal Programme.*
[364] Florence Kerr, 'Sandwich Gang Feeding More Kids', *Stuff*, 2 November 2015 <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/73579863/ngaruawahia-sandwich-gang-now-feeding-close-to-1000-children>.
[365] Tiedekunta and Programme, *Hungry to Learn: School Meals, with Lessons from Finland's Broadly Supported Universal Programme.* pp. 112
[366] Tiedekunta and Programme, *Hungry to Learn: School Meals, with Lessons from Finland's Broadly Supported Universal Programme.*
[367] Tiedekunta and Programme, *Hungry to Learn: School Meals, with Lessons from Finland's Broadly Supported Universal Programme.*

Part of their school routine was to keep the garden tidy. Ensuring that children are leaving schools with the knowledge to grow their own kai, to hopefully bring this knowledge back into their own home, a community garden or a māra kai, teaching kai sovereignty.

This is a program that has already been implemented in some schools, with Kihikihi School having a relationship with the local community garden on Lyon street where they have programs for all children to help out in the local community garden. This has been brought back into the 2025 school schedule, being a part of the garden to the table program.[368] With the program being split up into two elements, spending time in the kitchen and in the garden.[369] These gardens have brought a positive impact in the home, with students taking the skills and excitement back to their homes, cooking the reprices that they learnt or even starting their own garden.[370]

This program has achieved the goal of teaching skills that students can take home. It shows that this is something that rangatahi would be interested in and benefit from. as an examples of what my mum and nan would want to see is Kihikihi School building a garden on the school grounds. This has been done at Te Awamutu Primary School through the Enviroschools, the students learn how to perform daily tasks and problem solve through gardening and environment.[371] The students not only keep chickens but have a worm farm, which in turn fertilises the school's gardens.[372] The eggs from the chickens are sold to keep the costs of running the garden to a minimum. [373] The program has also combined with the

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[368] Viv Posselt, 'Education on a Plate', *Te Awamutu News*, 26 April 2023 <https://www.teawamutunews.nz/2023/04/education-on-a-plate/>.
[369] Posselt, 'Education on a Plate'.
[370] 'School Garden Grows Our Aroha and Community Connections', *Enviroschools*, 25 November 2019 <https://enviroschools.org.nz/creating-change/stories/school-garden-grows-our-aroha-and-community-connections/> [accessed 5 July 2025].
[371] 'School Garden Grows Our Aroha and Community Connections', *Enviroschools*, 25 November 2019 <https://enviroschools.org.nz/creating-change/stories/school-garden-grows-our-aroha-and-community-connections/>.
[372] 'School Garden Grows Our Aroha and Community Connections'.
[373] Viv Posselt, 'Education on a Plate', *Te Awamutu News*, 26 April 2023 <https://www.teawamutunews.nz/2023/04/education-on-a-plate/> [accessed 5 July 2025].

Wintec to help raise the seedlings in a greenhouse when the children can interact with them.[374] Mum wishes for programs like this to be developed all over the country, with the main goal to teach youth how to care for a garden, to allow them to have the skill set to become independent in the home.

To my mum the ideal would be a combination of these two programs, having local grown lunches in schools, where the gardens are grown in schools and locally. This idea allow for both community and schools to be actively involved in the production of kai, teaching important lessons about health while seeing the payoff each day they eat lunch. Mum hopes that this brings the ideas of tino rangatiratanga and kai sovereignty at an early age setting children up for a bright and full future.

[374] 'School Garden Grows Our Aroha and Community Connections'.

Pātaka kai, free pantries

Give what you can, take what you need.



Figure 9: The free Pātaka Kai, Lyon Street, Kihikihi (image taken by author, 2025)

Pātaka kai is a chain of local community free pantries that are throughout the motu. These street pantries are designed for anyone to take from them.[375] In some cases these pantries have more than just kai, including books and clothing, reflecting a broader need for essentials in communities. While Pātaka kai are a type of open street pantry and have been noted as an international movement. Within Aotearoa the movement started with Swanie Nelson who made use of leftover kai from her soup kitchen in Ōtara.[376] From here Pātaka kai has then expanded through communities as an informal response to food waste, poverty, climate

[375] Lynda Johnston and Gail Adams-Hutcheson, 'Street Food Pantries as Gendered Sites of Labour and Home: Suburban Geographies of Food (in)Securities in Kirikiriroa, Aotearoa New Zealand', *New Zealand Geographer*, 79.3 (2023), pp. 213–21, doi:10.1111/nzg.12377.

[376] Lynda Johnston and Gail Adams-Hutcheson, 'Street Food Pantries as Gendered Sites of Labour and Home: Suburban Geographies of Food (in)Securities in Kirikiriroa, Aotearoa New Zealand', *New Zealand Geographer*, 79.3 (2023), pp. 213–21, doi:10.1111/nzg.12377.

action and food insecurity.[377] This provides a means where responsibility of providing the kai is local, and the local commutes are the ones who directly benefit.[378] As well as connecting to Māori values of manaakitanga, kotahitanga, and reciprocity.

Pātaka kai in its current form is not kai sovereignty but is a small bandage on the large wound of kai insecurity. In Hamilton there are twelve Pātaka kai that are dotted around the city that are marked on the Hamilton City Council website.[379] These places create supplement to food banks, and community kitchen. These have become key to the survival of many people who traditionally would go to a food bank or community kitchen to meet their needs when government financial assistance and support do not fulfil the needs of the people.[380] These pantries support community well-being creating accessible kai and limiting barriers, including distance, shame, and social welfare requirements that are often set to unrealistic standards.[381] Despite their popularity, Pātaka kai does not equate to kai sovereignty nor does it solve kai insecurity, it creates a space where, in part, these can be enacted in moments, and individuals can be impowered to share with members in the community in need.

In my interview Matua Joe uses the Pātaka Kai that is on Lyon street, saying **"we grow excess kai, we take it up to the Pātaka Kai. we don't let food go to waist."** (5/02/25) This is directedly putting food in homes that need it to people that need it. Capitalism kai reject the logic that food is a communal good, and sold for profit. Making food, once again, something to be shared freely, without the exchange of money. By doing this we have created alterative access points for kai that does not rely on corporate chains, such as foodstuffs, and

[377] Johnston and Adams-Hutcheson, 'Street Food Pantries as Gendered Sites of Labour and Home'.
[378] Johnston and Adams-Hutcheson, 'Street Food Pantries as Gendered Sites of Labour and Home'.
[379] 'Kai Map', n.d. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/53611525b3f6436cacc3743fb9d5aa1a> [accessed 22 September 2025].
[380] Johnston and Adams-Hutcheson, 'Street Food Pantries as Gendered Sites of Labour and Home'.
[381] Johnston and Adams-Hutcheson, 'Street Food Pantries as Gendered Sites of Labour and Home'.

Woolworths. These points take surplus, damaged, and unsellable kai, and redistributing it into communities and homes in need.

Looking towards the future these Pātaka kai can be centres of community trading, where people share local produce that they have grown or made. Local shops could use the space for kai that they could not sell. Pātaka kai is a temporary form of solidarity, connecting the community through this excess kai and providing people in need kai without facing the shame that is often connected with not being able to afford food.

Pātaka kai highlights the power of community-led programs, to meet immediate needs and reframes kai as a communal good rather than a commodity. While it is not kai sovereignty it demonstrates how values such as manaakitanga, kotahitanga, and reciprocity can be enacted in everyday life. These street pantries do not address the root causes of kai insecurity but does allow for community support, to create a space where short term solution can be offered.

Conclusion

This study set out to learn how my whānau have navigated their journey with kai sovereignty. In addition, this was also a reflection on my own connections and relationship to kai sovereignty. My final conclusion is that our relationships with kai have been disrupted by the rise of capitalism. From the fast-paced nature of our lives, the number of activities bidding for our attention and free time, it has become difficult to find space for a garden. This includes the rise in convenience culture, mass-produced and inorganic foods that have become staples in our diets, and why we have taken these as staples in our diets, replacing Māori ways of growing, gathering, preparing, eating and sharing kai. This has resulted in a community that is far more individual than they were in the past.

In my first chapter I introduce myself and my whānau history, this is important framework because it establishes up who I am and my relationship to kai. This is a relationship that is grounded through whakapapa, a relationship established though generations that have come before us and will be continued well after us. For many, whakapapa is nurtured through spending time with whenua. For my whānau, one of these ways is through mahinga kai.

The chapter "Taking books off the shelf" focused on the important grey literature that is important to the expansion of the ideas of kai sovereignty, these are important because of the flax roots nature of this movement. The texts I have chosen are the key to the movement, they are both informational and accessible to the wider public. These books include *Pātaka Kai* and *Hiakai.*

This research has shown me that the journey with kai sovereignty does not have to be an individual journey but one that is community driven. The community should be the ones that determine the needs of the people. For this to work well, the community must determine and break down the barriers they face by creating solutions. Spaces such as māra kai, Pātaka kai and community spaces already exist under community leadership, as well as being community funded. Through expanding and funding the programs that already exist, communities will be able to ensure that kai will be distributed correctly, and in spaces that are in need. Making this more common in communities allows for the removal of shame around food insecurity, allowing room for people to ask about and use support systems.

Through my interviews I have come to understand that kai is important to Māori identity as it directly connects us to our whakapapa and whenua. Labouring over kai, as well as consuming it, strengthens relationships and therefore whakapapa. For my whānau it is connecting over dinner, connecting over kai. Kai is a vessel of knowledge, that allows for the transmission of whakapapa and mātauranga. This thesis is an example of that transmission, within this year I

have learnt about my whānau, our whakapapa and our connection to kai. Kai and whenua are directly connected and are the basis for te ao Māori, they guide our years, they guide our seasons, and they guide our tikanga. These interviews also make me aware that there are many forms of kai sovereignty, but each follow a core sense of values, sharing, learning and educating.

Kai sovereignty is inherently anti-capitalist as it resists the commodification of kai and instead positions food as a resource best utilised for the collective wellbeing of the community.[382] Rather than being treated as a product for profit or individual accumulation, kai within this framework is understood as taonga that carries whakapapa, relationships, and responsibilities.[383] In this way, kai sovereignty challenges the capitalist logic of extraction and market dependency by centring relational obligations, reciprocity and the long term health of people and the environment. Mahinga kai highlights this practice, as traditional food-gathering sites and systems are sustained not for commercial gain, but to provide nourishment, to strengthen whakapapa connections, and to practice kaitiakitanga.[384] This shift empowers communities to reclaim control over how kai is grown, gathered, shared, and consumed.[385] Through placing the community first, kai sovereignty fosters connection and strengthens collective resistance. The use of personal narratives and whānau oral histories has allowed me to understand personal connection with the whenua. This has allowed me to see links between the person, the community and kai.

Kai sovereignty may well be the answer to kai insecurity, as it empowers local communities', iwi, hapū, and whāunu to take control of their own kai systems. In doing so, they take control

[382] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*; 'Enhancing Māori Food Security Using Traditional Kai', 5 May 2025, doi:10.1177/1757975914543573.
[383] 'Enhancing Māori Food Security Using Traditional Kai'; Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[384] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.
[385] Jessica Hutchings and others, *Pātaka Kai, Growing Food Sovereignty*.

of sustainability and cultural education rather than relying on corporate and market driven solutions. Kai sovereignty prioritises people, whenua, and te ao Māori. Allowing us as communities and individuals to choose how we grow and distribute kai. This is also a local system that supports resilience, through redirecting reliance on corporations to both grow and sell kai.

Kai sovereignty also moves the idea of food security from the accountability of the individual onto the community. As a country that produces food for six times more than our population needs, we still have people struggling maintain food security.

For further studies on this topic I would be interested in expanding my interviewing process, allowing space for more people to be involved in the research. This could and would be used as research for identifying community barriers, as well as working with people who would benefit from these programs. I would want the research to be grounded in community experience and community management. In addition, I would like to be involved in community development of these projects, putting theory into action. I am interested in the expansion and localisation of the programs that are explored in previous chapters.

Spaces such as māra kai, Pātaka kai and community spaces already exist under community leadership, as well as being community funded. Through expanding and funding the programs that already exist, communities will be able to ensure that kai will be distributed correctly, and in spaces that are in need. Making this more common in communities allows for the removal of shame around food insecurity, allowing room to ask and use support systems.

Ultimately, kai sovereignty is not only about resisting capitalist food systems, but about affirming whakapapa, strengthening whānau and restoring balance between people, whenua, and kai for generations to come. My hope is that the rangatahi in my future get to be in the whenua, and have these experiences, and I hope I get to be a part of their journey.

Kai sovereignty shifts the responsibility for food security away from the individual and back to the collective. This country produces

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Research Ethics Application

ALPSS Human Research Ethics Committee
(ALPSS/S Te Kura Aronui)
(ALPSS/School of Social Science)

Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240
Phone:
E-mail: alpss-ethics@waikato.ac.nz

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Before applying for approval applicants must familiarise themselves with the Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations in the University Calendar

***http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/assessment/ethicalConduct.html*.**

Use this application if your research project involves the collection, use, and/or reuse of human data. This form is to be completed by staff and students doing research **prior to** the collection of any data from human participants.

Upon completion of this form please submit to/or email to your Division Human Research Ethics Committee [HREC]. Health Research and Health, Sport & Human Performance applications should be submitted to the central HREC (humanresearch@waikato.ac.nz).

Applicant Checklist

A positive answer to one or more of the questions below indicates the need for review by the HREC accredited Human Research Ethics Committee. Health Applications should be submitted by email to humanethics@waikato.ac.nz.

- ❑ Are you investigating a topic that concerns health, disability or well-being?
- ❑ Are you using an instrument intended to assess health, disability or well-being?
- ❑ Is referral to a health service provider a potential outcome of participation?
- ❑ Are participants being recruited in their capacity as DHB employees?
- ❑ Is the researcher intending to collect tissue samples (e.g. bloods, saliva, urine) from healthy individuals?
- ❑ Is the researcher intending to utilize interventions related to exercise and nutrition?

Submit this application form when the checklist and the Application Cover Sheet is complete and has been signed.

- ❑ Personal details (on Application Cover Sheet)
- ❑ Consent Form (attached)
- ❑ Information Sheet (attached)
- ❑ Academic Details (on Cover Sheet)
- ❑ Signatures (where required)
- ❑ Research Instruments (attached)

Application Cover Sheet

Human Research Ethics Committee
(ALPSS/School Name in Māori)
(ALPSS/School Name in English)

Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240
Phone:
E-mail: alpss-ethics@waikato.ac.nz

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Name of Principal Investigator:	**Reese Mae Clarke**
School / Division / Institute:	ALPSS – Te Kura Toi School of Arts
Email address:	**reeseclarkedearing@gmail.com**
Phone number:	0224098446
Office:	
Student ID (if applicable):	**1555334**
Proposed start date of field research / data collection:	**December 1, 2024**
This is an application for approval of: (please tick as many as apply)	Master's degree research
Name of degree / paper (if applicable):	**Master of History - Environmental Planning Thesis - ENVPL594**
Supervisor's name (if applicable):	**Dr. Sandi Ringham**
Supervisor's approval (signature):	
Funding sources:	**NA**
Project sponsors (e.g. equipment sponsors):	**NA**
Associated Applications (record the associated application code and title):	ALPSS592 Dissertation

- ❑ I request approval for this research or related activity and attach all relevant documentation necessary for evaluation under the Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations. http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/assessment/ethicalConduct.html

- ❑ I have read and complied with the University's Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations.

Principal Investigator's signature: 

Date: **5-12-2024**

Project Overview

Please provide us with basic information about your project.

1. **Project Title: The impact of settler industrial agriculture on mahinga kai in repo throughout the Waikato, from the 1980s – to the present day.**

2. **Briefly state the research topic, research questions and/or research objectives** (boxes will expand as you write).

Research topic (20-50 words)	**The impact of settler industrial agriculture on Mahinga kai in repo (wetlands) throughout the Waikato, from the 1980s – to the present day.** **This research investigates the changing experience of Mana Whenua and mahinga kai. This includes identifying personal and external boundaries to mahinga kai.**
Research questions (bullet point)	- How has legislation over time supported the growth of settler industrial farming? (policy review) - - How has industrial farming and supporting legislation impacted how Māori access and interact with mahinga kai? (policy review) - How has the increase of settler industrial faming contributed to the population decrease and wellbeing of tuna (eels) and kākahi (freshwater mussels)? (interviews and desktop research) - How has this decrease in these taonga species affected iwi and hapū relationship with mahinga kai? (interviews)
Research objectives (bullet point)	- To understand the relationship between laws, farming, animal populations and mahinga kai. - To understand mana whenua relationships to Mahinga kai. - To learn how legislation and industrial farming has impacted access to mahinga kai and taonga species the Waikato over time.

3. **What research activities are you planning to undertake? Briefly respond to this question by <u>Listing</u> research activities. Please note you will be asked to provide further details Under Q. 18. NB: delete examples**

Research activity	Brief comment (10-30 words per item)
Semi-structured interviews	Participants will take part in a semi-structured interview about mahinga kai and their personal experiences and relationships with it.
Tipi Haere	Mobile wānanga in spaces that participants find significant to their narrative. Tipi haere will take place near lakes, rivers or gardens.

4. **Justify your project, provide a summary of the research, its methods, anticipated benefits, value and/or its contribution to the field.**

(a) Research summary (under 300 words)	This research focuses on the direct impact on taonga species through case studies of tuna (Eels) and kākahi (Freshwater mussels), two species that have

	been heavily affected by the introduction of industrial settler farming. Since Colonisation Māori have been forced to change how they interact with the whenua, this includes mahinga kai. This change has led to mana whenua being reliant on the very settler farming systems that displaced our tupuna. The whenua has been impacted endlessly though environmental changes and long impacts. Industrial farming today has been built on the economic base livelihoods of Māori, which was stolen in the 1860s during the Waikato Wars. This exact whenua has benefited Pakeha families for generations at the expense of iwi and hapū and their tikanga causing the destruction of important resources such as wetlands and biodiversity. The alteration of the whenua has come from settler culture such as property laws, the introduction of capitalism, and the creation of laws that marginalise mahinga kai and kaitiakitanga practices. There is a knowledge gap in research that attends to how agriculture has affected the collection and harvesting of kai and mahinga kai practices (Parsons et al., 2022). To understand the decline of these taonga species there needs to be an investigation into two factors; the statistical impact of declining tuna (eel) and kākahi (freshwater mussel) populations, and research into the ways in which taonga species' decline impacts the community (Steniner et al., 2023). Recent research indicates these taonga species are at-risk species, but there is little research that explores the impacts on mana whenua and their local mahinga kai and practices.
(b) Methods summary (under 300 words)	A literature review will be completed before the interviews. Academic, news and social media articles will be reviewed in preparation. For semi-structured interviews I have established a set of questions that will guide conversations. I will approach the interviewee formally and inform them on the purpose of the project, as well as advising them of their rights. Tipi haere (mobile wānanga) is a selected method because it allows te taiao to be represented in the collection of oral histories. Place, whenua or moana are crucial to better understand kaitiakitanga and how people interact with the growing and/or harvesting of kai. Tipi haere allows for environmental tohu (sign , cues) to be identified and included in the research (Ringham 2023). As mana whenua travel the land and visit significant sites such as mahinga kai environmental tohu trigger memories and enhance conversations on site. Participants will have a copy of the guiding questions to review beforehand.
(c) Anticipated academic benefits/value/ contribution to the field summary (max 200 words)	The research hopes to fill a knowledge gap around the social history of Mahinga kai with a focus on systematic and dynamic barriers that created the decline of taonga species. Including elements such as land privatisation, capitalism, legislation and industrial settler farming. This research will also focus on the social history of tuna and kākahi to explore the relationships between mana whenua and the two species. Investigating the collection, wellbeing and decline of kākahi and tuna in the Waikato through oral history and written elements will have relevance to both environmental history and environmental planning, as both spaces have neglected these two species as well as the importance around them.

The Researcher(s)

Please tell us about you and/or your research team.

5. List all members of the research team and briefly describe their roles within the research project:

Name	Role
Reese Clarke	**Researcher**
Sandi Ringham	**Lead supervisor**
Sam Iti Prendergast	**Supervisor**

6. Outline (250 words max**) relevant qualifications to undertake this research.**

Qualifications and Prior experience	Bachelor of Social Sciences with Honours in History form the University of Waikato. The researcher in previous research has looked into the creation of the modern Waipā landscape through power dynamics that have terraformed the environment from 1899 including pastural farmlands and awa. This research has created a pilot study of the physical spaces and grasps the cultural landscape in the Waipā, both in Te ao Māori as well as Pākehā farming social environments. In addition, the researcher has a preestablished relationship with the whenua through whakapapa and kaitiakitanga. This prepares the researcher well to investigate further the political impacts of farming on mahinga kai and taonga species.
Training/expertise in relevant research methods	The researcher's background is on agricultural history in the Waikato, this was through desktop research as well as archival research. The result was an honours dissertation that focused on the historic political powers that where enacted on whenua in the Waikato. As well as the aforementioned the researcher has completed ENVP412 Advanced Māori, Indigenous and Pacifika Environmental Planning in which students prepared a hypothetical Indigenous engagement proposal. This assignment focused on Indigenous methodologies and engagement between treaty partners. The researcher is well versed in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and collaborative methods In addition to this the literature review within this Masters includes an extensive desktop search into academic and grey literature that covers environmental planning, histories and conservation. The researcher has developed extensive knowledge of the social and political histories of awa in the Waipā. The researcher has taken a range of classes that centre Māori: ENVPL 302 Māori resource management. HISTY 302 Blood, land, DNA Contemporary Indigenous Histories and archives. GEOGY 219 Māori Lands and Communities. ENVPL421 Advanced Māori, Indigenous and Pacikica Environmental Planning. In the class, the researcher completed students' hypothetical Indigenous engagement proposal. This assignment focused on Indigenous methodologies and engagement between treaty partners, and the researcher was versed in the Tiriti o Waitangi and collaborative methods Over the summer of 2023 – 2024 I worked at Auckland Museum under the archaeology department as a summer intern. Documenting and categorising Toki for online data bases, as well as producing a final report. This was taken under Māori Futures Programme New Horizons Summer Internships 2024/2025 - Internship Applications

	Reese, the researcher is also trained in first aid and holds a current first aid certificate form St Johns first aid courses. This was issued in 2023.
Personal knowledge of topic/area of interest	My honours looked into the decrease of wetlands in the Waipā and understanding the local powers and farming infrastructure that pushed this decrease and terraforming of the whenua and in addition to the decline of environmental well-being of local awa. All elements combine to explain the current landscape of local industrial farming. Other previous works that I have written aimed to understand the current health of the peat lakes in the Waipā and how that is connected to settler farming. This was presented at the young historian's conference in Wellington in 2023.
Other…	

7. **What, if any, discipline-specific codes of ethics or professional standards will guide your research?** Outline here:

This paper will combine the following two papers, both the National Oral History Association and the 10 commandments of Moana Jackson 2013 paper.

This paper will follow the interviewing principles outlined by Moana Jackson (2013). These principles include: The **Ethic of Prior Thought**, which include careful planning. The **Ethic of Moral or Right Choice**, which highlights consideration of ethical implications. The **Ethic of Imagination**, which focuses on both the positive and negative impacts of research. **The Ethic of Change**, which reminds the researcher to be mindful of change. **The Ethic of Time** reminds me that quality comes from time. Jackson also emphasizes **The Ethic of Power**, highlighting the power dynamics of the relationship in interviews. **The Ethic of Courage**, which calls for challenging assumptions, and asking questions. **The Ethic of Honesty** requires transparency. **The Ethic of Modesty**, acknowledging research limitations. Finally, **The Ethic of Celebration**, encourages celebrating knowledge

The National Oral History Association has its own guiding rules. It is deemed essential to inform the interviewee about the purpose and procedures of oral history. The interviewee should also be made aware of key issues such as copyright, ownership, and privacy legislation in addition to how the interview materials and related content that the interviews are used for. To ensure quality results, ensuring that the interview is recorded on quality devices to the highest possible standard. Informative dialogue should be encouraged, this is done through proper research informing dialogue. Each interview must be treated as a confidential conversation, with a maintained limited access. Recordings and accompanying materials will be archived in the University of Waikato for research purposes, adhering to any conditions set by the interviewee. And to respect all agreements made with the person or group.

The Participants

Please provide the following information about your intended participants:

8. **Broadly, who will your participants be**? (Indicate the broad target population: e.g. approx. 30 young adults (20-25 years old) men and women from Waikato rural communities). *Offer estimates if exact numbers are uncertain. Do not include individuals' names.*

I am hoping to engage a wide range of ages, from 18 to 80 covering three generations with whakapapa Māori. The participant group will be small with 5 – 10 people participating in interviews and/or tipi haere.

9. **(a) How will you recruit participants?** *Summarise your process as a list of actions, in chronological order (no more than 200 words)*

First, I will send an email inviting participants to contribute to the research. The email will include an information sheet outlining the project and their right to decline or participate. This email template is under appendices.

In the email I will introduce the research and invite them to participate in the research. I will give participants time to go over the information sheet and make an informed decision, allowing them to remove themselves from the research.

Prior to the to the interview and tipi haere, I will email participants the question outline and themes that I wish to discuss in the interview. This allows participants to discuss stories or narratives that are important to them, as well as giving participants an opportunity to remove themselves from the research. I will then contact participants who agree to be interviewed to organise a time and place that is convenient.

I will provide them with a summary of my research, as well as consent forms and list of suggested questions. (See appendix 1)

Once these steps are completed, I will begin the interview process.

I will remind all people that they are able to remove themselves from the research up to one month after their interview or tipi haere.

10. **How will you inform them about the project and their involvement in it?** Summarise your process. Link to relevant attached appendices (e.g. *recruitment emails, posts, posters, information sheets...)*

Participants will be fully informed through an information sheet that will be sent to them via email and again before interviews or tipi haere. The information sheet and consent forms will be discussed in depth and participants will be reminded of their rights to either accept or refuse to participate

11. **Are the participants vulnerable?** ***Yes***

(a) In what ways are they vulnerable? Outline

Elders could be classed as vulnerable because of age and will be encouraged to bring a support person if desired or needed. Rangatahi or youth could also be classed as vulnerable because of age and they are also welcome to bring a support person.

Participants around kai may trigger intense emotions around mahinga kai, food insecurity, cultural trauma, and eating disorders. For support a participant is welcome to bring a support person into the interview.

(b) Why do you need to involve them in your research? Outline

The research requires a range of ages that can span over generations. My hypothesis is that the decline of mahinga kai is directly related to changes within the last 50 years, therefore interviewing a wide range of ages allows me to better trace the possible impacts into the present day.

(c) How will you protect them from harm? Outline

Through informed consent. Explaining how Māori knowledge will be used, and who has access to it, and how participants can withdraw at any stage leading up to the interview and one month after the interview. Maintaining confidentiality by anonymising data whenever possible. Participants will be informed about how their data will be stored and used. The inclusion of a support person will also protect participants from any harm.

12. Will you select participants on the basis of:

Ethnicity:	Yes	Iwi:	Yes
Culture:	No	Disability:	No
Gender	No	Ethical belief:	No
Religion	No	Sexuality:	No

If yes to any of the above:

(a) State how you will inform participants about the selection criteria.

I will inform each person about the selection criteria both in person and in an email. This will be done in the initial invitation email and will explain why they were selected.

(b) Are your participants likely to come from a particular ethnic group or other distinct population even if you are not selecting them on that basis? If so, please discuss the implication of this for your research.

Participants will hold whakapapa Māori and will have lived or worked in the Waikato region.
My research is focused on Māori and their connection to mahinga kai, awa and whenua. To allow this relationship to be a key focus ethnicity must be considered. The large age range is chosen because it allows a large scope of narratives and time with a small number of interviewees. This will allow me to look at the full range of my time scale.

(c) What cultural and other competencies do you have to work with your selected participant group (e.g. language, membership, professional training)?

I will be looking into members of my own hapu and therefore have membership to these groups. I also have cultural guidance from my supervisor.

13. Do you have any type of relationship with your participants already (e.g. employer/employee, supervisor/worker, personal relationship)? Yes

I am both a researcher and a member of hapū. Therefore, this will help me connect to my participants and provided an intimate understanding of hapū relationships with people and place. This positionality will also allow for communication to flow due to preexisting relationships.

Coercion or Undue Influence
Whereby participants with a close relationship to me, might feel pressured to participate or reluctant to express dissenting views. I am mindful of power dynamics and ensure participation is entirely voluntary.

Confidentiality and Objectivity:
Some close relationships could make it difficult to maintain complete objectivity during data collection and analysis. I will be transparent about my relationship with participants and take steps to mitigate bias (e.g., , i.e. adhering to ethical boundaries and supervisor support).

Confidentiality Breaches:
Informal conversations or shared knowledge outside the research context could lead to unintentional breaches of confidentiality. Clear outlined data handling procedures to obtain consent for specific uses of information shall be on hand.

14. Will participants receive any form of compensation or incentive for participation? (See guidelines on compensation, and note that reimbursement for travel expenses can be stated, but does not need justification*)* Yes

If yes, what will they receive? (e.g. vouchers, prizes, shared refreshments, course credits etc.) Outline

Yes, they will receive a koha for their work and sharing of knowledge. This will be being the form of gift cards, for petrol. These are at the value of $50.

Consent

Please provide the following information about consent processes:

15. How will you gain informed consent from your participants? Outline methods for this consent process

(a) **Who will gain consent from participants?** *Note that where dual roles exist (Q.13 above), coercion to participate may be avoided by asking a third party to undertake the informed consent process.* The main investigator will gain consent from the participants parents and gain participant assent.

I, Reese, the researcher will gain permission for interviews both through emails and in person.

Due to whakapapa relationships with some of my participants I will remain mindful of power dynamics and manage this accordingly.

Coercion or Undue Influence:
Whereby participants with a close relationship to me, might feel pressured to participate or reluctant to express dissenting views

Confidentiality and Objectivity:
Some close relationships could make it difficult to maintain complete objectivity during data collection and analysis. I will be transparent about my relationship with participants and take steps to mitigate bias (e.g., involving a neutral third party in data analysis, i.e. supervisors).

Confidentiality Breaches:
Informal conversations or shared knowledge outside the research context could lead to unintentional breaches of confidentiality. Clear outlined data handling procedures to obtain consent for specific uses of information shall be on hand.

(b) **At what point do participants give their consent?** *NB: Ensure you attach a copy of participant consent forms. If you intend to seek oral consent, include a procedure sheet to describe the process by which consent will be negotiated.*

Participants will fill out the consent form prior to being interviewed and/or partaking in the tipi haere. Consent forms will be sent via emails and available at the interview and tipi haere. Participants can remove themselves from the research without question one month after the date of the interview and/or tipi haere.

(c) If vulnerable, are your participants able to give informed consent? Yes

Vulnerable participants are able to bring support people to the interview and tipi haere. Time will be taken to ensure the participants understand fully the project and their rights. I will go through the

information sheet and consent forms in detail before the participant signs them. Verbal agreement can also be given and will be audio recorded before interviews and tipi haere

16. **Except for participants who are anonymous to the researcher, participants have the right to withdraw entirely or in part from the research. Please explain how and by when participants are able to withdraw:** (*e.g. three weeks after data collection, or receipt of a transcript*) and ensure this is consistent with what is included in the Participant Information Sheet (see appendix 6) and Participant Consent Form (see appendix 1).

    Participants can withdraw from the research up to one month after the interview/tipi haere takes place. They can do this via an email or a phone call. I will email participants to confirm they have been withdrawn from the research. All recordings and transcripts will be destroyed.

17. Data collection activities may be planned for off-campus locations. Please list all non UoW locations where you will engage in data collection.

    (a) If you need consent or permission from any organisation, community representative, and/or anyone other than the individual participants Please list the required permissions, consents, and/or approvals in chronological/process order.

    N/A

    (b) How and when will you gain these permissions, consents and/or approvals? *Ensure you attach any statements, letters, or emails of permission or approval that have been secured in advance of your application to the Human Research Ethics Committee.*

    N/A

Research design

18 (a) Please outline what you intend your participants to do *e.g. semi-structured interviews of 12 ALPSS academic staff members about their experiences of xxx e.g. anonymous online survey of all University of Waikato staff members about xxx ...*

One semi-structured interview for each of the of 5 – 10 participants and one tipi hare. Participants choose whether they partake in either an interview or tipi haere or both.

NB: *Attach to the end of the application as part of a single pdf, all research instruments that you intend to use to collect data. (e.g. interview schedules, questionnaire/survey items). Indicate whether the research instruments are drafts or final versions. Later final versions of research instrument versions must be lodged with the committee prior to data collection.*

18. (b) How will participants benefit from their involvement in the research?

Opportunity to share experiences, acknowledgement and/or co-authorship in publications, access to reports, and knowledge advancement, for example research outputs, hui and wānanga. The capacity to share aspirations and knowledge is also beneficial. Participants will also have access to the broader knowledge of changing food sovereignty within the Waikato. Sense of Achievement and Empowerment - being part of a project that contributes to a positive environmental solution can be very rewarding. Participants will gain a sense of accomplishment from knowing their involvement contributes to understanding of mahinga kai and taonga species

19. (a) **Could participants be harmed in your research? *Yes*** *If yes, please outline all potential harms to*

your participants with brief commentary. Use the table to help you be succinct:

FORESEEN HARMS	LIKELIHOOD OF HARM OCCURRING	HOW YOU INTEND TO MINIMISE THE RISKS	DESCRIBE IN SOME DETAIL WHAT YOU WILL DO IF A PARTICIPANT IS HARMED
1. Mental	**High likelihood** Interviews may bring up complex feelings about a range of topics such as poverty, kai insecurity, eating disorders, and histories of colonisation.	These topics may not be avoided, so creating a space that is welcoming and safe allowing them to express these subjects. Allowing a support person to be present in the interviews, to support with these	I will offer support throughout the interview and contact after the interview. The interviewee is also allowed to have a support person as well as being able to refuse and remove any answers to questions.
2. physical	**Low likelihood.** Activities may involve uneven terrain, or exposure wildlife (insects, allergies). Minor cuts, scrapes, or insect bites are possibilities being outside on Tipi Haere (Ringham, 2023), but these can be mitigated with proper safety precautions	Conduct a thorough risk assessment to identify potential hazards and develop plans to minimize them.	Once the immediate situation is under control, assess the severity of the harm. This will determine the next steps I need to take. Minor injuries like scrapes or insect bites might require basic first aid, while more serious injuries will require professional medical attention. Required to have mobile devices charged and on hand to be able to communicate with emergency services, or a vehicle to be able to transport injured people. Provide first aid or medical attention as needed. The researcher, Reese also has a first aid certification.
3. Psychological	Low to moderate likelihood: stress or anxiety could arise if tasks are physically demanding. May trigger conversations about eating disorders as conversations are around kai.	Putting people in safe spaces, not requiring them to do any labour at all. Allowing us to change locations when issues arise. Allowing the person to remove this from the recording. Also allowing them to stop the conversation or change direction. Offer participants extended breaks or flexibility to take extra breaks. Explain the right to withdraw from the research at any time and ensure an easy process for them to do so.	Prioritize the participant's wellbeing. -Calmly assess the situation and determine the severity of the psychological harm. -Are they experiencing anxiety, panic, emotional distress, or something more serious? Provide Support: Offer immediate support to the participant. This might involve a quiet space to relax, a calming conversation, or simply offering my presence. If they need more support, consider contacting a mental health professional. Ask Do they want to continue with the research, take a break, or withdraw
4. **Data leaks**	**Moderate**	Provide a clear and concise	**Containment and**

	Likelihood: Data collected from participants needs to be anonymised and stored securely. Clearly explain data collection methods and how their information will be used. Obtain informed consent that outlines how privacy will be protected.	informed consent document that explains potential risks and how they will be mitigated. Storing in a separate hard drive, separate from classes	**Assessment:** First, act quickly to contain the privacy breach. Determine the extent of the harm. Was it a minor disclosure or a more serious privacy violation? This will guide my next steps. **Communication with Participant(s):** Inform the participant about the privacy breach as soon as possible. Explain what happened, how it occurred, and the steps you will taking to address it. Be honest and transparent in my communication. **Apologize and Offer Support**: Sincerely apologize for the breach and the harm caused to the participant's privacy. Offer them support and resources to mitigate any potential consequences. **Document the Incident:** Create a detailed record of the incident. Include the date, time, a description of the privacy breach, the information compromised, and the steps taken to contain it. **Post incident:** Report and follow-up. Investigate and review. Take some corrective actions. Update documentation and procedures.

19. (b) Could concerns arise regarding the health and wellbeing of anyone participating in your project? Yes

    Interviews shall be no longer than one hour. If interviews go over one hour, there shall be appropriate breaks taken for food and refreshments.

20. How will you analyse participant data?
    Will your research involve comparing one group to another**? No**

21. Does your research involve any deception of participants? No

22. **Will the true identity of the researcher(s) be concealed from participants at any time during the research? (Such research is called 'covert research'.) No**

Cultural safety

Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato, the University of Waikato, through its official *Charter,* has an explicit commitment to partnership with Māori, to kaupapa and tikanga Māori, and to the interests of New Zealand-born and Island-born Pacific people.

Through the *Ethical Conduct and Human Research and Related Activities Regulations*, researchers are required to respect the **cultural, social** and **language preferences** and **sensitivities** of participants. When applying for ethical approval, researchers should demonstrate an awareness of social and cultural difference, consult advisors regarding the appropriate conduct of their research, and present the outcome of consultation in their ethics application.

Two resources important to refer to when undertaking research at the University of Waikato are:

- *Te Ara Tika – Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics*
- *Pacific Health Research Guidelines*

23. Does the research project have particular relevance or potential implications for Māori, or for other social and cultural groups? Yes

    If yes, then please provide the following information about your consultation processes, Use the table to outline relevant information:

ITEMS TO ADDRESS	**DETAILS**
List the relevant stakeholders (*i.e. groups to consult)*:	Mana whenua Hapū Iwi University of Waikato
Identify outcomes of your consultation *to date (e.g. describe advice taken on appropriate procedures and approaches to research, decisions made about appropriate ways to return research findings*):	Through consultation with my supervisor I have identified suitable methodologies for engaging with participants, analysis and returning findings. Participants will be sent a summary of the research at their request.
Do you have at least one cultural advisor for this project? Provide their name(s) and specific role(s):	Yes Dr. Sandi Ringham

24. **Outline how you will show respect and sensitivity towards participants** (*such as: inviting their support persons to be present during interviews; using interpreters if you are not fluent in the participant's language; being vouched for by elders; using appropriate gestures and greetings; dressing appropriately; participating in cultural ceremonies or rituals...)*:

On Marae, or land owned by Māori, I will follow tiikanga and kawa (protocols). I will engage in active listening and communicating in line with marae kawa.

During interviews, practice whakawhanaungatanga (establishing relationships) and provide Mātaritanga (Māori knowledges). It is important that I do not profess to be the knowledge expert, be humble.
Be respectful of the time allowed for by the participants. People are volunteering their time, so I will need to work around their busy schedules.

Before Research:
Develop recruitment materials that are inclusive and accessible to a diverse range of potential participants. Consider language, cultural sensitivity, and accessibility needs.

Create a clear and concise informed consent document (see appendix 5 and 6) that explains the research project in plain language. Highlight the potential benefits and risks of participation, and ensure participants

understand their right to withdraw at any time.

During Research:
Maintain respectful communication with participants throughout the research process. Use clear and concise language, actively listen to their concerns, and address any questions they may have.
Be mindful of cultural backgrounds and sensitivities when interacting with participants. Adapt my communication style and approach if necessary. Ensure informed consent regarding data collection and storage. Anonymise data whenever possible and store it securely. Reassurance to participants that their privacy will be protected.

After the Research:
Provide participants with a debriefing session after they complete the research activities. Summarize the research findings and answer any questions they may have.
Offer participants the opportunity to learn about the research findings. Providing summaries in accessible formats or holding presentations.
Express my gratitude to participants for their time and contribution to my research project and offer a koha.

25. How will participants' identities (and their communities and/or organisations where relevant) be represented in the research?

Is it important to maintain the confidentiality of participants (and their communities/organisations where relevant) in the research reporting?	**Yes**
If yes, outline how you intend preserving confidentiality:	Only I, the researcher, will have access to these interviews. I will give participants the choice of selecting a pseudonym to use or using their own name. I will store all interviews on an external hard drive. As well as storing them online on the university servers. All of which are password protected that only I know.

26. In addition to the researcher(s) listed on this application, who else will see information that participants provide?

Will anyone else see participants' data?	Yes Dr Sam Iti Prendergast and Dr Sandi Ringham
Outline why they need to see it:	As supervisors they may hold other perspectives on the interviews, or information that I may have overlooked.
Will any shared information be linked to participants' names?	No, their names are not necessary to my research, other names can be used in replacement.

Will data/names be anonymised before sharing? *It may be appropriate to ask additional parties (e.g. student researchers, transcribers) to sign a confidentiality agreement. Attach the confidentiality agreement that you intend to use.*	**Explain here:** Yes, I have offered an option to become anonymous. But this may not the case for each person, as each person is able to choose based on their level of comfort.

27. Transcription of interviews

(a) If the interviews are being transcribed, who will be undertaking this work and are there

implications for confidentiality?

- I will be transcribing all interviews.

(b) Will participants have the opportunity to view their transcripts and if so, describe this process.

- Yes, they will have time to review and remove anything from the interview once the transcript has been completed. Participants will have one month to omit or add any information.

How and where will the data be stored and protected during the research project?

How:	Data will be stored on a separate hard drive or USB. The recording will be removed from my phone and stored on an external hard drive, which is backed up to my personal cloud server, with two-factor authentication. All data will be protected with a password only I know.
Where:	All other research information pertaining to the research project will be stored in the same space. This will be uploaded to a University of Waikato storage repository also

Research Reporting

28. Identify all the anticipated research outputs for the project

Thesis	Yes
Conference papers	Yes
Journal articles	Yes
Book chapters	No
Media releases	No
Teaching and learning materials	No
Other	No
Sharing outcomes with participants	
Outline how you provide participants with this information:	I will provide participants with a summary of my research.

29. **Research data must be stored for a minimum of 5 years after the completion of a research project. Where and how will you store your data after the project has been completed?** NB: *Supervisors are responsible for storing research data on behalf of their students*.

Where you will store it	University of Waikato servers, on an external USB
How you will store it	To the supervisor's archive and on an external USB
Archiving after 5 years: Where? Under what conditions?	To the University of Waikato Servers. Paper records shall be scanned and stored as a singular pdf file, to store to the University server, as part of electronic file storage.

Choosing to destroy data after 5 years. Outline how this will be done safely	Paper records will be destroyed after five years following the creation of electronic copies and storage to the University servers. The paper records shall be shredded.

Legal Issues

30. Ownership of Human Research Data

It is usual to state that participants own the data that they provide, and that the researcher will use the data for the specified purposes, with the consent of participants. Please explain any variation from this arrangement.

31. Copyright

The researcher's ownership of scholarly publications and other forms of research outputs is governed by the University of Waikato's Intellectual Property Rights Policy. Crucially the policy states in Clause 8 that, *"the University recognises and endorses the traditional academic freedom of staff to publish research and scholarly documents and to produce creative and artistic works without restriction; the University does not assert ownership of copyright of such works (e.g. books, journal articles, conference papers, art works and musical recordings) unless specified in clauses 12- 18 of [the] policy."* Please explain any variation from this policy.

(a) Is any intellectual property related to this project subject to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi?

The WAI262 claim report ''states that indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control and protect their traditional knowledge and expressions of that knowledge, as well as their flora and fauna they have a cultural link to." (Ahu, T. et al. 2017) Information that will be discussed in interviews will come under development of cultural heritage, being part of medicines, sciences, knowledge of flora and fauna as well as traditional knowledges and therefore is subject to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

List any references here (there should be no more than 5)

Ringham, Sandra Lee. *"Te Karanga Tūturu o Maieke: Ngāti Kuri Women's Taiao Geographies."*

The University of Waikato, 2023.

Moana, Jackson "He manawa whenua, e kore e mimiti Indigenous centred knowledge-unlimited potential.". Paper presented at, *He Manawa Whenua: Indigenous Research Conference* 2013. Claudelands, Hamilton, New Zealand. 2013.

https://www.waikato.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/321904/HMW-Conference-Proceedings-Inaugural-Issue_FINAL.pdf

Duston, Neve. ""Get outside your comfort zone: reflections of New Zealand historians"." (2019). Parsons,

Meg, Karen Fisher, and Roa Petra Crease. *Decolonising blue spaces in the Anthropocene:*

Freshwater management in Aotearoa New Zealand. Springer Nature, 2021.

Ahu, T., Amy Whetu, and J. Whetu. "Mātauranga Māori and New Zealand's intellectual property regime—challenges and opportunities since Wai 262." (2017).

Appendix 1:

History Programme
School of Social Sciences
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Reese Clarke-Dearing
Phone 0224098446
Email: reeseclarkedearing@gmail.com

Research title: The impact of settler industrial agriculture on Mahinga kai in repo throughout the Waikato, from the 1980s to the present day.

Researcher: Reese Clarke, University of Waikato History Masters Program.

Please complete the following checklist, tick the appropriate box for each point	Yes	No
I Agree to be interviewed		
I agree to participate in the tipi haere		
I agree to have my interview audio/video recorded.		
I wish to receive a copy of the interview.		
I wish to receive a summary of the findings.		

Would you like to receive a summary of the research findings? YES | NO (Please circle your choice)

I have discussed the representation of my identity in the research, and I would like to be known as:

_____

_____

I agree to take part in this research. I understand my rights as a participant in this research and that my identity will remain confidential and my anonymity guaranteed unless I state otherwise. I have had adequate opportunity to discuss the above information, and I satisfied with the with the answer that you have provided.

Signature of participant _____Date _____

Signature of researcher _____Date _____

Appendix 2: information slip

Your details (for my records)

Name:

Age:

18-24	☐	45-49	☐
25-29	☐	50-54	☐
30-34	☐	55-59	☐
35-39	☐	60-64	☐
40-44	☐	65 and over	☐

Address: _____

_____

_____

Phone number:

Home _____ **Mobile:** _____

Email:

_____

Gender:

_____

Iwi affiliation:

_____

Ethnicity:

_____

Occupation:

_____

If you have any questions at any point during this research, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and for being an important part of this research.

Participants can withdraw from the research project within 30 days after the interview by:
Contacting me by phone: 0224098446
Emailing me on: reeseclarkedearing@gmail.com
Or face to face communication.

Appendix 3: Interview schedule

History Programme
School of Social Sciences
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Reese Clarke-Dearing
Phone + 0224098446
Email : reeseclarkedearing@gmail.com

Research summary and information sheet

Appendix 3: Interview schedule.

This project explores how mahinga kai (food collection) has been changed over time in the Waipā. Māori have had a changing connection to their whenua because of a number of factors including industrial farming, displacement, government systems and environmental changes. This research combines history and environmental planning to try and create an understanding of a small part of this change and investigates the cultural effects on multiple generations.

Researcher

For the past five years I have been studying history at the university of Waikato. This year I have taken on my masters, wanting to look into the changing landscape that I grew up in. Over the past few years, I have worked with toki in Auckland Museum Collections and presented in Wellington about the current state of lake Ngāroto. I am passionate about the environment and want to support a narrative that centers Māori and our connection to the environment. This research has been approved by the University of Waikato ethics board.

This research has been conducted alongside Dr Sandi Ringham and Dr Sam Iti Prendergast who will be supporting the researcher throughout this process.

Time allocation Maximum one hour.

The research will employ semi-structured interviews, fostering a conversational flow that prioritises participants' voices and perspectives. While a pre-defined list of questions serves as a guide, the ultimate direction of the discussion will be steered by the participants themselves (using the Māori term "kōrero" to emphasise participant-led dialogue).

Kai

- Can you tell me what does kai mean to you as a person? This can be both interpersonal, and cultural.
- What do you think encourages you or stops you from partaking in growing, harvesting, or hunting your own kai?
- How has private ownership of whenua affected your connection to kai or whenua?
- Have you felt or noticed the decline of tuna (eels) and kākahi (freshwater mussels)? If yes how?
- Would you like to see a resurgence of mahinga kai in the Waipā? How would you like to see this happen?

Environment

- How do you think about your environment? How does the poor water quality of the local rivers and lakes make you feel?
- Do you think the way you interacted with the rivers and lakes changed over time? If yes, how? If no, why do you think that is?

- Have you noticed a change in the quality of the whenua and water over time?
- Do you have any experience or memories connected with tuna (eels) and kākahi (freshwater mussels)?
- Do you have any memories with the collection of tuna (eels) and kākahi (freshwater mussels)?
- How have supermarkets changed the way you collect and buy food?
- Do you think your diet has changed over your lifetime because of the health and access to wild kai?
- Do you think the government has supported the growth participation in mahinga kai? If no, how? If yes how?

Appendix 5: Email Invitation

Kia Ora,
I wish to invite you to participate in the impact of settler industrial agriculture on Mahinga kai in repo (wetlands) throughout the Waikato, from the 1980s to the present day.

This research investigates the changing experience of Mana Whenua and mahinga kai. This includes identifying personal and external boundaries to mahinga kai.

Thank you for your interest in being interviewed.
We are excited to move forward with the interview process. Here are your next steps:

To Participate in the Interview:
Please confirm your availability for an interview by [date] at [time]. You can reply to this email with your preferred date and time from the following options: [List available dates and times].
We will then send you a formal interview invitation with more details. This invitation may include information on what to expect during the interview, how to prepare, and the interview format (e.g., phone, video call, in-person).

To Decline the Interview:
If you are unable to participate in the interview process at this time, please let us know as soon as possible. We appreciate you informing us of your decision.
No further action is required if you are not interested in participating in the interview process.
Thank you again for your interest in being interviewed. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

If you wish to reach out with any questions please contact, Reese Clarke by responding through this email, or contact me on 022 409 8446

Ngā Mihi.
Reese Clarke-Dearing

Appendix 6: Information sheet

History Programme
Te Kura Toi, School of Arts
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Researcher: Reese Clarke-Dearing
Phone 0224098446
Email: reeseclarkedearing@gmail.com

Research title: The impact of settler industrial agriculture on Mahinga kai in repo throughout the Waikato, from the 1980s to the present day.

About the research

This research project focuses on exploring mana whenua connection to Mahinga Kai, creating a historic account of the changing connection through generations. To achieve this, we are seeking participants that are willing to share emotions, opinions, and experience about kai and Mahinga Kai. We believe this approach will provide valuable insight into people's experiences and how social environments have impacted relationships to Mahinga kai. This research aims to investigate into generational changes to kai, understanding long term impacts of settler colonisation on kai systems. I aim to cover both social boundaries as well as physical boundaries. This research also aims to look at taonga species such as Tuna (eels) and kākahi (freshwater mussels) to understand how these impacts have jointly affected to better understand the whole narrative. This research is important because of the focus on kai sovereignty with taonga species, this is an aspect that has changed with the appropriation of whenua, awa and taonga, resulting in permanent changes to access to mahinga kai. This change has led to health inequalities and distance from culture.

What Will You Be Asked to Do?

You are invited to participate in Semi-structured interviews and/or Tipi Haere, a mobile wānanga where we will discuss:

- Acknowledging boundaries that face people in mahinga kai due to changing social and environmental factors.
- To think about how environment and mahinga kai connect.
- To learn peoples personal experience with mahinga kai.

The interviews will be one hour.

What are the expected outcomes

The expected outcome is to have a collection of interviews that has a collection of intergenerational experiences of mahinga kai. As with each generation the experience with kai is changing due to the ever-changing cultural space. This research aims to allow personal relationships to the whenua to come to the foreground.

To be able to identify the changes of mahinga kai over the generations, to have broader image of why there is a decline in traditional mahinga kai. Personal experiences are key to these findings.

This Research aims to

- To learn about mahinga kai's place in the Waikato.
- To understand how the decline in Taonga species has been noticed by local Mana Whenua.
- To exchange Māori knowledge.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Your participation is confidential. Your name and identifying information will not be included in any reports or publications. We will anonymise all data before analysis.

Data Storage and Access

Interview recordings and notes will be stored securely on password-protected University servers for five years. Only the research team will have access. After five years, the data will be de-identified

and archived for long-term research purposes.

Your rights as a participant

Right to be Informed: You have the right to be informed about the interview process, including the purpose of the interview, the types of questions that may be asked, and how your information will be used.

Right to Consent: You have the right to choose whether to participate in the interview. Your decision will not affect your application in any way.

Right to Withdraw: You have the right to withdraw from the interview process at any time, even after the interview has begun.

Right to Decline to Answer Questions: You have the right to decline to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with.

If you have any questions about the interview process or your rights, please do not hesitate to ask.

Contact information.

Having trouble? We are here to help!

If you've encountered an issue with any interviews, or issues have arisen because of the research engagement, such as physical, psychological, social, or privacy issues, you can contact the following people.

Researcher – Reese Clarke-Dearing

Mobile: 0224098446
Email: reeseclarkedearing@gmail.com

Superviser

Sandi Ringham
Phone: +64 7 838 4428
Email: sandi.ringham@waikato.ac.nz

Contact

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Reese Clarke at reeseclarkedearing@gmai.com or +0224098446 or:
Dr Sandi Ringham, sandi.ringham@waikato.ac.nz

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