

MARANGA AKE AI

A NEW PATH FOR PREDATOR FREE 2050 THROUGH A WHAKAPAPA-BASED APPROACH

In mid-2023, Te Tira Whakamātaki and Te Rōpū Kaitiakitanga, set out to develop a Māori-led predator free strategy. By weaving wisdom from Māori conservation, pest eradication, and environmental experts, thought leaders, and kaitiaki together, the team has worked to create a strategy that reimagines the Predator Free 2050 system in ways that align with Māori views and approaches.

Why a Māori Strategy? After conversations with Māori communities, it became clear that the existing predator-free strategy was insufficient. Largely because it focuses on eradication as the only option, but also because it doesn't address the funding inconsistencies experienced by Māori. What was wanted instead was an approach that honours the mana of tangata whenua, reflecting their views and priorities around caring for the land. Māori also wanted to see sustainable funding and support for Māori-led conservation efforts, especially post Jobs for Nature funding.

Development of the strategy: During the development of the strategy, a wānanga was held to explore the story of the possum. Aboriginal representatives from Boon Wurrung, Gunnai, Gunditjmarra, and Wonnarua nations attended and shared stories about their cultural connections to and uses of the possum. This powerful exchange reframed the possum as a living being with its own whakapapa and mauri, reminding attendees that they are more than just pests brought to Aotearoa, without permission or consent from Aboriginal or Māori peoples, for their fur.



Re-storying the possum significantly influenced the development of Maranga Ake Ai

This wānanga significantly shifted attendees' perceptions of the possum, altering their thinking around the current predator free approach and its focus on eradication.

As a result, this strategy is about more than eliminating predators - it is about restoring balance, revitalising cultural practices, and ensuring positive outcomes for the whenua, our environment and future generations.

The Strategy: At its heart, Maranga Ake Ai offers a whakapapa-based approach to pest management that not only protects biodiversity but also addresses disparities between Māori and Crown objectives in conservation.

It envisions a future where Māori are empowered to lead conservation efforts, ensuring their sovereignty and cultural identity are strengthened alongside environmental restoration.

Maranga Ake Ai is a call to rise to the challenge of creating a future where both the environment and people thrive.

It recognises the cultural imperative for whānau, hapū and iwi to fulfil their responsibilities as kaitiaki while reclaiming tino rangatiratanga over their lands and resources.

The Three Whakapapa Inspired Pou (Pillars) of Maranga Ake Ai

Pou Tuatahi - Tīpuna: Te Tiriti O Waitangi is the foundation for tino rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga, genuine partnership and success in PF2050.

Pou Tuarua - Haukāinga: Re-storying conservation is the approach that will put our relationship with te taiao first and place values at the heart of our PF2050 efforts.

Pou Tuatoru - Mokopuna: Decisions and systems that consider the past and benefit future generations are at the forefront of PF2050.

Maranga Ake Ai calls on the Department of Conservation to fully acknowledge the role of whānau, hapū and iwi as equal partners in caring for Aotearoa's unique flora and fauna. It seeks a commitment to reimagine the Predator Free 2050 system, recognising the rights of Māori to manage their lands in line with their values and whakapapa.

Together, through Maranga Ake Ai, we can rise to meet the challenge of protecting our taiao in a way that preserves the mauri of the land for future generations. This is just the beginning: Maranga Ake Ai guides us towards a future where our taonga species roam freely, where the voices of our mokopuna echo with the knowledge of the land, and where our cultural identity is woven into the very fabric of conservation.

By grounding environmental management in whakapapa and tino rangatiratanga, we not only protect biodiversity but also ensure the long-term wellbeing of our people and our lands.

**Keep an eye out for Maranga Ake Ai.
Coming soon!**