

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

He Kura: the dawn promise of a healthier, thriving Te Hiku lights up for Matāriki

“I can already feel the love in this room.”

A visually moved Native Sports Performance Director Rawinia Everitt paid tribute to the many people who designed, created and came together as one last week (*Editors: Korekore Hahani, 27 February 2024*) to celebrate the opening of He Kura, Kaitāia’s newest kaupapa Māori hauora and oranga space.

He Kura is the dream of Native Sports Performance and Whitirau Cross101, a collaboration of tāngata toa on a mission to build the health, wellbeing and connections of whānau across Te Hiku o Te Ika.

The hub will serve as a space from which to craft sustainable, healthy futures for the hāpori from a mātauranga Māori foundation base, says Rawinia.

“We wanted this to be a place where anything is possible. We wanted to show that you can pursue your dreams from home. Everything you need is right here and you don’t have to go away to achieve them,” she says.

Native Sports Performance was born out of a vision that Rawinia – a former NZ Rugby Union and Netball representative – has long nurtured to fill a gap in the community, providing pathways for young people and whānau wanting to pursue and excel in sport in the Far North.

What began as an initiative to lend her own expertise to help build leaders in sports and physical activity has evolved rapidly into a multi-faceted movement manned by a team of experts offering everything from cabin-building via the Fire Project to waka ama training, from kuta harvesting to ongoing health and fitness challenges.

And that is just the beginning for an initiative that has largely grown with minimal funding, off the good will of a group of like-minded people with shared whakapapa to Te Hiku.

“What makes Natives different is that we operate a people-centred model. We do what our people want to do. Our people provide the feedback, in terms of what they’re needing or the barriers they’re facing. And we design our programmes and initiatives around that feedback,” she says.

He Kura is a multi-functional, fit-for-purpose building that has been fitted out by a team of mostly wāhine building apprentices over a five-week building blitz.

The results are a series of multi-use spaces that can be serve a range of purposes, from sewing classes and carpentry, to wānanga workshops and fitness and training facilities.

These will include the rangatahi-focused programmes and activities that will be rolled out over the next 12 months under the Taikorihī locality.

Taikorihī is one of 12 localities set up nationwide under the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act to lead out health reforms in the area geographically bound by the Iwi boundaries of Ngāti Kuri, Te Aupōuri, Ngāi Takoto, Te Rarawa and Ngāti Kahu.

Native Sports Performance and Whitirau Crossfit100 are collaborating under the prototype to provide a set of programmes and activities targeting the health and wellbeing of Te Hiku taitamariki.

He Kura will serve as its base and some of the planned kaupapa include sports clinics and workshops, community sports leagues, cross-fit sessions, one-on-one mentoring and sports camps.

Rawinia says a key focus will be in the revitalisation and restoration of traditional knowledge and practices in the hearts and minds of young people.

“They’re our future. They’re going to be making decisions on behalf of who we leave behind. We have a duty to help shape, mentor them and get something right for them so they can lead in multiple spaces. If we don’t have an inclusive environment where our rangatahi feel like they have a voice right now, then how do we expect them to lead in the future?”

He Kura is located at 24 Commerce Street, Kaitiāia. For more information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/nativesportsp>.

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About the Taikorihī Locality

The Taikorihī Locality is the vehicle for change in Te Hiku ō Te Ika, set up under the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 health reforms.

Taikorihī is a population health initiative that aims to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all Te Hiku ō Te Ika whānau, focusing on Māori, Pacific peoples and people who experience disability.

The Taikorihī Locality area extends from north Hokianga over to Mangonui, north to Te Rerenga Wairua and includes approximately 25,000 people living in its borders.

Taikorihī is supported by Te Whatu Ora under the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022.

For more information on Taikorihī and the Pae Ora health reforms taking place in Te Hiku, visit www.taikorihī.co.nz.