

MĀORI PERSPECTIVES APPROACH

Overview

The "Options for Contaminants in Organic Waste" project established by the Ministry for the Environment is aimed at addressing the issue of contamination in organic waste streams. The project seeks to make a substantial positive impact on the development of robust, higher value end markets for processed products, thereby contributing to the financial sustainability of private sector organic waste processing investments.

A pivotal component of this project involves the deliberate integration of Māori principles, with a specific focus on contaminants. This report delineates the critical considerations that the project team must address to produce a comprehensive and substantial body of work that accurately represents the perspectives of Māori on the organic contaminants.

A literature review has been undertaken to identify key themes for Māori relating to waste. Key themes have been synthesised and organised according to their conceptual and practical relevance to organic contaminants.

The Māori principles have been summarised in illustrated design that incorporates the use of various tohu Māori. The design itself is underpinned by the master concept of whakapapa. Whakapapa has been utilised to consider the holistic perspectives of Māori toward contaminants as represented below, and weaves together all the various elements presented within the design. The concept of whakapapa ensures our considerations of Māori perspectives toward contaminants are not considered in isolation of the wider cultural context. At this preliminary stage, this is our whakapapa-centred approach toward Māori perspectives on organic contaminants.

This report describes the elements of the approach and provides a mechanism to consider contaminants and/or the various organics processes from a Māori perspective. Furthermore, the approach allows for better understanding and processing any input from Māori that will be engaged throughout this project.

Layer 3
Practice



Layer 2
Analysis



Layer 1
Context

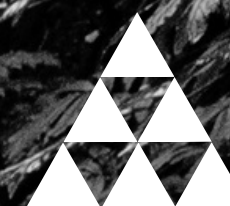


The components



Practice

This layer assesses the physical and metaphysical practices relating to organic contaminants. Moreover, it looks toward how relationships between Crown Partners and Tangata Whenua work under Te Tiriti given the considerations toward contextual understanding and mātauranga-led analysis.



Analysis

This is a mātauranga-led analysis of physical considerations such as food, to metaphysical concepts such as mana and mauri. This is where mātauranga unique to Māori and iwi would sit. Most likely this knowledge would be based on traditional customs and intergenerational knowledge. As such, this layer has been most informed by literature review and study. It is important to note the interplay between traditional customs and the modern context of the first layer.



Context

This layer refers to the unique positionality of Māori and the various historical, and contextual elements faced by Māori that inform their perspective on organic contaminants. This layer doesn't look at the unique knowledge base of Māori, but rather focuses on the circumstances that face Māori that may impede or influence how Māori implement their unique mātauranga. This is a necessary and pragmatic demographic assessment with respect to organic contaminants that contextualises the mātauranga-led analysis of the second layer.

Layer 1: Context



Māori context to inform Māori perspectives

Understanding Māori perspectives on organic contaminants requires a nuanced appreciation of both historical and contemporary factors, and the demographic context of Māori. Traditional Māori practices, deeply rooted in respect for the environment and the principle of mana, often contrast with contemporary practices influenced by commercial interests and consumerism. The shift from cultural leadership, which prioritised environmental stewardship and sustainable practices, to commercially incentivised decision making, often driven by profit, has significantly impacted Māori communities and their relationship with the environment.

The impacts of colonialism have further complicated this dynamic, as it has often led to a disruption of cultural identity and traditional practices. The introduction of new technologies, industries, and lifestyles, along with chemical contaminants that were not present during pre-colonial times, have posed new challenges for Māori communities. Although many benefits have arisen out of modern materials and processes, they have had a disproportionate impact on Māori as an indigenous people, as a colonised people, and as a people with cultural identity tied to the land.

These are the considerations that contextualise mātauranga-led analysis of organics contaminants, and is an essential preliminary step to ensure that mātauranga is considered holistically of the Māoti context. Though not fully explained within this project, the potential contextual considerations can include:

Contemporary practices vs. traditional practices:

Traditional Māori practices were deeply rooted in respect for the environment, with a focus on sustainable use of resources. Contemporary practices, influenced by modern societal norms and technologies, often diverge from these principles, potentially leading to increased organic contamination. Understanding this shift is crucial to addressing environmental challenges from a Māori perspective.

Commercial and financial prosperity

Cultural leadership within Māori communities traditionally emphasised the protection of the environment and the principle of mana. Commercial leadership, often driven by profit motives that may necessitate the financial well-being of communities or iwi, may be in a position that requires they prioritise short-term gains over long-term environmental health. Recognising these differing priorities can help in developing strategies that balance economic development with environmental stewardship.

The impacts of colonialism on cultural identity:

The impacts of colonialism on Māori are well researched. It has impacted cultural identity and language, disrupted the transmission of traditional intergenerational practices and introduced new ways of interacting with the environment. This disruption can lead to increased environmental degradation, including organic contamination. Acknowledging the impacts of colonialism is essential to understanding Māori perspectives on environmental issues and the context from which Māori are operating within.

The role of consumerism in shaping behaviour:

Consumerism, a byproduct of modern society, has influenced behaviour, often promoting consumption patterns that lead to increased pollution and environmental degradation. Understanding this influence is important when considering Māori perspectives on organic contaminants, as it highlights the tension between modern lifestyles and traditional values of environmental respect and sustainability.

Cognitive dissonance and awareness of issues:

There can be a cognitive dissonance within individuals who are aware of the environmental issues associated with modern practices but feel compelled or constrained by societal norms to participate in these practices. This dissonance is an important factor to consider when addressing organic contamination from a Māori perspective. Both education and awareness campaigns are key to address these issues.

Chemical contaminants that weren't present during pre-colonial times:

The introduction of chemical contaminants that were not present during pre-colonial times presents new challenges for Māori communities. These contaminants, often a result of industrial processes and modern agricultural practices, can significantly impact the health of the land and water, affecting the mauri, or life force, of these elements. The implementation of the WAMPOC approach allows for consideration of new materials that were never encountered during pre-colonial times.

Layer 2: Analysis

The Analysis layer is represented by a series of niho taniwha. This outlines the "matauranga-led" approach to understanding Māori perspectives on contaminants.

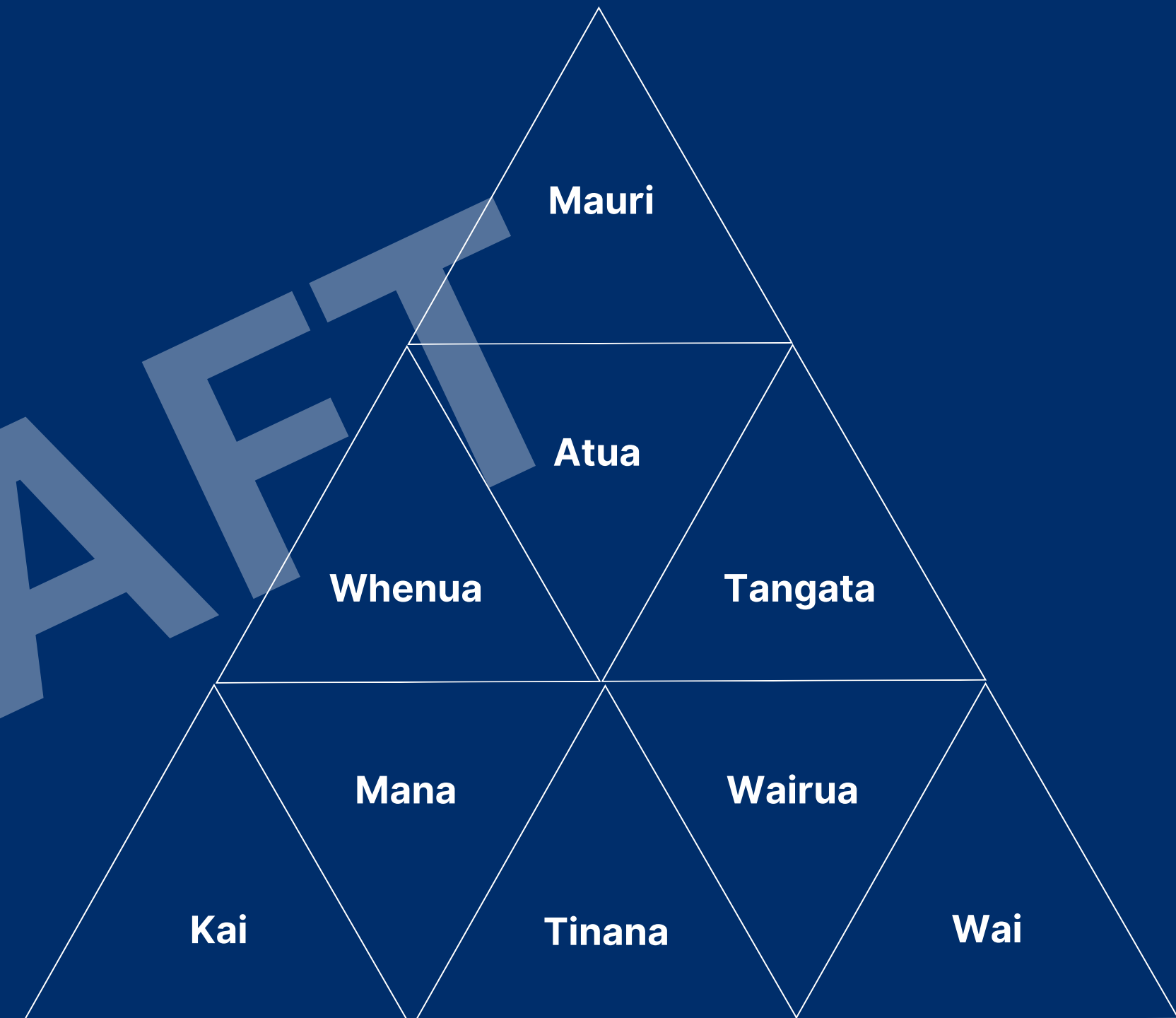
The highest level refers to mauri, the primary consideration from a mātauranga-led perspective. Should the organic contaminant degrade and negatively impact the mauri of its surroundings, this is cause for concern. Mauri is the primary consideration as it is present in all things in the Māori world, and must be maintained for thriving ecosystems and people.

Cascading down the niho taniwha, the next consideration is that of atua; followed by whenua & tangata. These considerations provide more granularity should a definitive position on mauri be undefined or uncertain. These considerations open dialogue for how an organic contaminant and/or remediation or mitigation process can be explored in the context of Māori deities personified within the natural world.

Following this tier, there is mana & wairua. Mana can carry over to a "mana motuhake" discussion focussed on people, as well as *te mana o te taiao* - the mana of the environment. Wairua has connotations of spirituality and the metaphysical processes that are culturally important and symbolic to Māori, including tapu, karakia and various rituals that ensure cultural safety.

Lastly, we have the most tangible of considerations; food, water and the human body. Contaminated food and water is a contamination of the body, and an inhibitor of one's ability to sustain oneself. Therefore, this is the most apparent indicator of the impact of organic contaminants. Further, the human body, and fluids and matter from the body, are also considered. The management of the human body involved important rituals for cultural safety and health purposes.

This is the primary process of analysing organic contaminants and developing "matauranga-led" innovations of mitigation and/or remediation.



Layer 3: Practice

The partnership between Tangata Whenua and Crown partners plays a pivotal role in establishing and supporting practices that manage organic contaminants in a culturally appropriate manner for Māori and in accordance with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. This partnership is not merely a legal or political obligation, but a critical element in the successful and sustainable management of environmental challenges.

Te Ao Māori provides unique insights into environmental stewardship, emphasising the interconnectedness of all things and the importance of maintaining the mauri of the environment. However, the implementation of these insights requires a respectful and inclusive engagement process with Māori and iwi. This process must acknowledge the unique context and challenges faced by iwi, including resource limitations and time constraints.

Furthermore, the engagement process should be high quality, ensuring that the proposed solutions are practical, market-tested, and respectful of Māori values and practices. This necessitates the development of contact protocols that ensure a consistent and professional approach, including briefing stakeholders about the project's purposes, managing engagement, and accurately recording information.

Through this partnership, there must be recognition of power dynamics. These must be considered and retrospectively balanced to allowing for the establishment and support of practices that not only manage organic contaminants but also respect and uphold the Māori relationship with the environment. This approach ensures that the management of organic contaminants aligns with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, fostering a more sustainable and harmonious relationship between humans and the natural world.

**Crown
Partners**

**Tangata
Whenua**

**Physical &
metaphysical
practices**

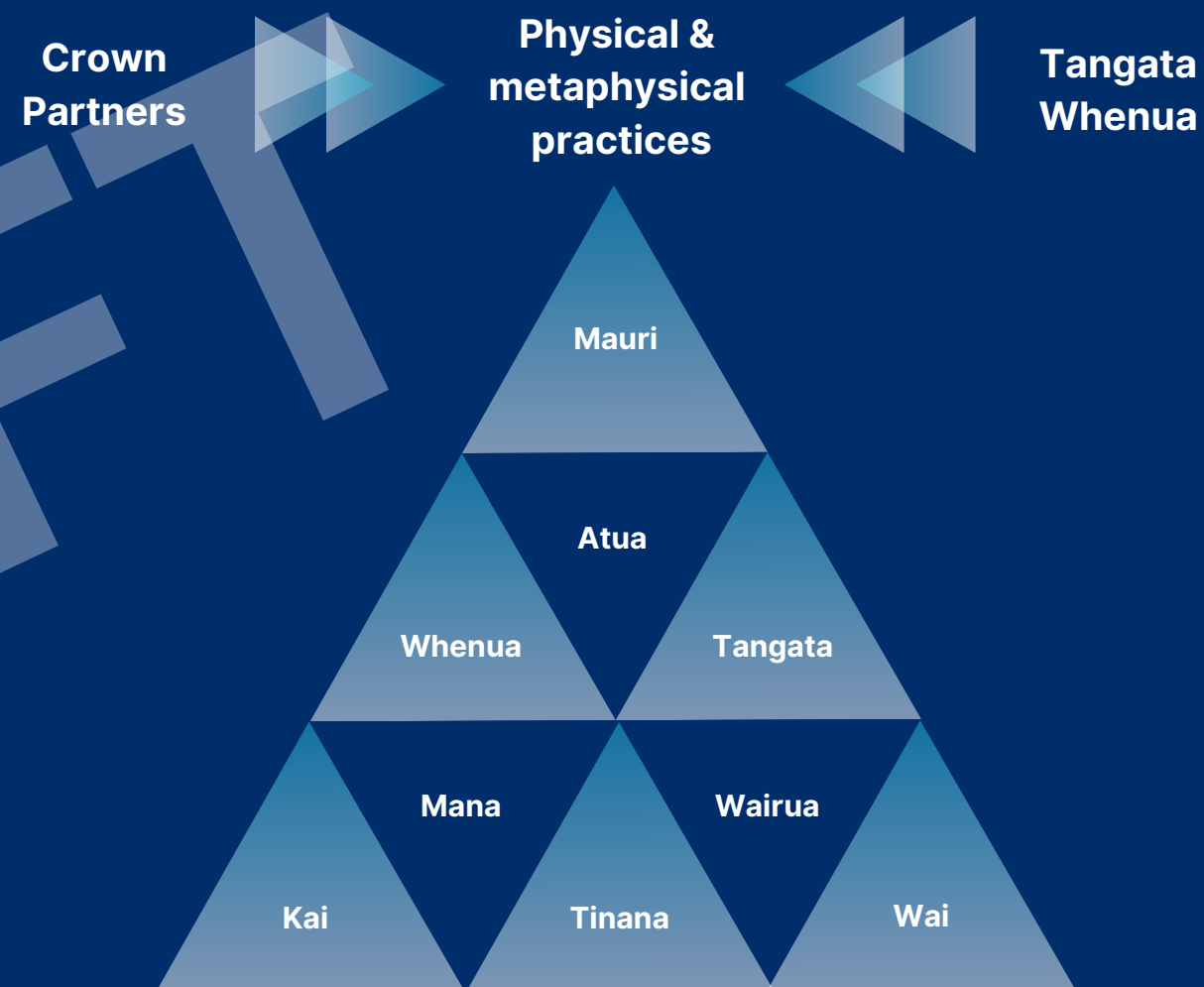
Conclusions

We believe that the **Whakapapa-driven Approach for Māori perspectives on Organic Contaminants (WAMPOC)** will provide a robust foundation to guide the future engagement work with Māori, as well as provide the wider project team with a practical approach to considering the nuances of their work with respect to potential Māori considerations.

The WAMPOC is the underpinning project model that allows for effective and thorough preliminary analysis of Māori principles and perspectives of organic contaminants. When applied to the wider project workstream, we believe it will add immense value in guiding discussion both internally and externally of the project.

Future work will involve integrating the WAMPOC within the wider project workstreams through regular team discussions to ensure that our project outputs align with the matauranga-led pillars of the WAMPOC. Furthermore, our engagements with Māori will lead with the preliminary assessments made through our WAMPOC assessment of the identified priority organic contaminants of the project.

Whakapapa-driven approach for Māori perspectives on organic contaminants (WAMPOC)



Contemporary | Commercial | Colonialism | Consumerism | Cognitive | Chemical

