

MEDIA RELEASE

19 JUNE 2026

## Auckland Council recognised with award for partnership with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei

Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland Council has won Te Tohu Waka Hourua (the Double Canoe) – Buddle Findlay Award for Excellence in Māori–Council Partnerships at the 2026 LGFA Taituarā Local Government Excellence Awards.

The award celebrates meaningful and enduring partnerships with Māori and recognises initiatives that demonstrate a strong commitment to working together and applying Te Ao Māori and Te Tiriti principles. Entries may come from any area of council activity but must clearly show how partnerships have been built and sustained, and the outcomes achieved.

Auckland Council received the award for Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Reserves Board – Ko Te Pūkākī: 2040, a partnership that brings Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and Auckland Council together as equal partners in the stewardship of reserve whenua.

Grounded in tikanga, mātauranga Māori and a shared commitment to future generations, Ko Te Pūkākī: 2040 transforms long-term aspirations into practical action. Through clear governance, dedicated resourcing and iwi-led delivery, the partnership is restoring ecosystems, strengthening cultural connections and creating enduring pathways for whānau participation and leadership.

Over the next five years, the programme will see the planting of 66,000 native plants and weed control undertaken across more than 50 hectares, delivering tangible environmental outcomes while supporting cultural and community aspirations.

The judges praised the partnership as an authentic and effective example of Māori–council collaboration.

“This is a long-standing, authentic and effective partnership between local authorities and iwi that] embeds te Ao Māori and tikanga Māori into the planning and readily repeatable place-based investment and delivery across Tāmaki,” the judges said.

“This is an approach that can adapted to support partnerships of all types and in any area.”

The judges recognised the project for demonstrating how enduring partnerships, shared



decision-making and iwi-led delivery can create meaningful outcomes for people, place and the environment.

At the Awards evening Auckland Council also celebrated staff member Challen Wilson, Communications and Engagement Manager (Specialist Operations) who was selected for the AskYourTeam Overseas Manager Exchange to Victoria, Australia.

### **About the LGFA Taituarā Local Government Excellence Awards**

The LGFA Taituarā Local Government Excellence Awards showcase and celebrate outstanding programmes, projects, partnerships and initiatives from across New Zealand's local government sector. The awards recognise excellence, innovation and leadership that deliver positive outcomes for communities and create learnings that can be shared across the sector. The awards are hosted annually by Taituarā – Local Government Professionals Aotearoa.

[Download the full media pack](#)

For further information, please contact Sophie Prebble | Manager, Marketing and Communications [Sophie.prebble@taituara.org.nz](mailto:Sophie.prebble@taituara.org.nz)