

## New reo kaumātua class proves it is never too late to learn



Loss of te reo Māori impacted earlier for Ngāti Raukawa and this meant an older age group were affected than in other iwi. This year, Te Wānanga o Raukawa launched a new te reo course for those kaumātua who want to improve their reo.

The original idea was raised by two well-known local kuia. Sonia Snowden and Margaret Davis raised the idea of a class especially for kaumātua at last year's opening of Te Ara a Tāwhaki, the new library and student facility at the Wānanga.

The rōpū comprises 27 students and the innovative course is especially designed for kaumātua. The rōpū study for two days a week over the next two years graduating at the end of 2020 with their diploma. The course is full immersion learning alongside the rest of the Heke Reo whānau. A series of kaupapa will provide a focus for study over the year, such as kai, kōrero i te kāinga me te marae, toi and waiata.

The main aim of the programme is to support kaumātua to fulfil their role on the marae thereby enriching their whānau, marae, hapū and iwi. They will also complete papers in iwi and hapū studies carrying out interviews with each other and learning the history of their marae.

“Having kaumātua who know and understand their role on the marae is essential,” says Sean Ogden, a Pūkenga Matua of Poutuarongo Reo (Bachelor of Te Reo Māori) at Te Wānanga o Raukawa.

The Wānanga has delivered hui rumaki reo and immersion programmes for over 35 years, a methodology that has proven successful in accelerated language learning

allowing those with little to no reo to build a level of confidence to speak te reo Māori within a year.

“I encourage all our kaumātua to come and learn,” says Miriama Kereama of Ngāti Parewahawaha and Ngāti Manomano.

“You’re never too old to learn, we learn every day. We will also be learning from each other and be able to see how other kaumātua are doing things at their marae. We can support each other.”

All of the qualifications at diploma level and above at Te Wānanga o Raukawa include iwi, hapū and reo studies. A new intake for the 2020 year is confirmed dependant on numbers. Visit [wananga.com](http://wananga.com) to find out more.

Original article and photos courtesy of Te Wānanga o Raukawa.