

# COLLECTIVE IMPACT IN ACTION: #TĀTOU AS A CASE- STUDY

*Pep Tau and Rita Wakefield*

*Pep (Ngāti Kahu ki Whangaroa) is the Kaiārahi for #tātou, a Collective Impact initiative based at Whānau Centre, West Auckland. Here she talks about her role as a Kaiarahi and the experiences of the whānau that have been part of the #tātou journey. Alongside Pep, Noel Edmonds (Ngāpuhi) and Rita Wakefield (Ngāti Āwherika (Africa)) are part of the #tātou team.*

# #tātou

*ourselves • our whānau • our community*  
*Navigating your way to a healthy lifestyle*

## The #tātou Journey

We set off with a vision: to reduce obesity. #tātou was created in the absence of any long-term, whānau-centric health and wellbeing initiatives that worked directly with whānau in the area. We began with a target of 240 individuals for our caseload. It was such a grey area initially, we didn't know what it would be and what it would evolve into. We saw that there was a great demand for the service and very quickly we had to take in a huge influx of whānau. The criteria were simple:

- if you lived in the West Auckland area and were wanting or needing to make lifestyle changes
- ideally with a BMI >30
- managing a long-term condition i.e. diabetes, Cardio Vascular Disease (CVD).

However, we would take anyone that needed support, ending with well over 240 whānau. We worked one-on-one with whānau, we held events and we organised initiatives over the years we ran our programme. At times it felt like we were pushed to our limits, but the stories, the successes and the relationships we built with whānau have been some of the most rewarding experiences of our lives. Our tagline is "ourselves, our whānau, and our community". Here is our story.



*#tātou retreat hui, raranga workshop*

## #tātou in Action

#tātou works with whānau long term – over one to two years. We can help get whānau started with a health plan by doing some initial assessments, including a health assessment and a self-assessment to help whānau see where it is they are sitting. This is also used to help identify a starting point, or an area of focus for whānau – it can be very useful for whānau who are not as vocal about what they are wanting to do.

We do planning with them, which includes putting in place goals that will be followed up – the good thing about #tātou is that whānau can access us whenever they need, as often or as little as needed. The idea is to get whānau started and on their way. Through planning we can identify where the support is needed and help connect them up to services to help support their health plan and provide them with the right tools in order to be successful in managing their health independently.

*“I’m a body. Sometimes you forget that when you’re stuck in your head. I should probably look after it.”*



*#tātou retreat hui.*

## Case Study – The Impact of #tātou

A highlight for me as a kaiarahi was one of the workshops we ran called Hautapu Hauora. It was a two-day wānanga which aimed to challenge whānau to look at their health in a more in-depth way, I suppose, holistically. It wasn't until a follow-up session that I realised the actual sustainable results and outcomes for whānau that were going to be long lasting.

Some of the amazing things that happened included at least three of our whānau having job opportunities present themselves, a stand-out one being one of our kaimahi who was attending to help out. He was interested in the mahi but sceptical about what sorts of things were going to happen over the weekend. Over the course of the weekend he opened up to the holistic approaches that were delivered by the facilitators and expressed how much of an impact it made on his mindset.

When we had our debrief some weeks after the retreat he came to us to discuss how he could use our #tātou assessment to see where he was at and help him track his progress. He had smoked for ten years regularly, he wasn't aware of his alcohol consumption and we discussed how he could lower it for the benefit of his health. He noted he didn't do any exercise at the time we assessed him and he said that his knowledge of healthy food choices was poor. After meeting with him we checked in with him every couple of weeks. When we had our catch up with whānau from the retreat he had completely turned around his health. He had been smoke-free for two months, worked with a personal trainer once a week and trained five times throughout his week. He had made more conscious decisions on his food choices and limited his alcohol intake to fortnightly. When we discussed further to see how he had made these changes he credited it to the wellness retreat saying:

*"I needed that retreat more than I ever knew. I had let my body deteriorate over years unconsciously, never thinking there was a problem. When I came to the retreat I had it in my head that I was just there to help, as I got more involved I realised I needed just as much help as the whānau we worked with. The wellness retreat was a reset on everything. Some things didn't fit with me as much as others but overall the knowledge I gained changed my whole idea on health".*

These are the long-lasting impacts that #tātou aim to achieve and this is why it's a highlight for me. It also inspires me to want to be able to provide another one of these for our new whānau, we are currently looking at ways to make this happen.



## Reflection

I don't think that #tātou has 'changed' me as a person but I have definitely grown, constantly being challenged and able to be creative and innovative about the way that we work with whānau – doing something like walking and talking rather than sitting in a meeting room is just one example of how we can choose to meet with whānau.

I've been pushed in ways I've never been pushed before and I've grown in confidence and independence. I feel that the placement of #tātou kaiarahi in the Social Innovation Hub has helped because with #tātou being a pilot programme it has needed the awhi and tautoko of the wider Wai-Atamai team to help nurture it. Having access to the research team, data analysts and graphic designers has been very beneficial.

We have definitely had an impact on health within the workplace inadvertently by running health initiatives. We saw changes within the Wai-Atamai office and within the wider Waipareira space in the choices of food people would provide for shared kai. I remember when we first started, the standard for a hui or a mihi whakatau was always cakes, pastry and processed foods. Over the time we've worked with whānau – particularly whānau in the workplace in our cohort – we've seen a change in thinking when it comes to healthy eating. Whānau we work with have acted as a sort of role model for kaimahi around them. They have been examples of positive change and that has been infectious around the workplace.

The difference that #tātou has made within the community is the relationships that we have established and continue to grow for the benefit of the whānau we are all working with. One of the highlights of being able to work within the community has been to take back what whānau have said that their priorities are, and/or where the lack of support is, and then try and create something with our partners. Most recently, Green Prescription Harbour Sport has worked collaboratively with #tātou to provide free exercise sessions for our whānau.

Over time we have stayed true to this idea that collectively as a community we can make an impact. We have been encouraged at many different occasions that we simply work better when whānau are at the centre of everything – we as a community work with each other's strengths to work better and make a difference. #tātou has created space for kaimahi and support workers to work more collaboratively for the benefit of our whānau, through sharing of data, follow ups on shared whānau and creating services and workshops for whānau as well.

