

MEMO

To Port of Tauranga Limited
From Peter Clough
Date 10 April 2026
Subject POTL Stella Passage Development Alignments with Māori Economy

1 Purpose

NZIER's economic assessment of the proposed Stella Passage Development describes benefits to New Zealand and the Bay of Plenty region (**BOP**) mainly in terms of trade enhancement by improving the accessibility and efficiency of international shipping services through the Port of Tauranga.¹ While expenditure on dredging, wharf extensions and upgrades along the Stella Passage will have some economic impact in stimulating business, these are likely to be dwarfed by improvements in trade for major commodity exporting industries that draw heavily from the primary sectors – agriculture, forestry, fishing and horticulture.

This memorandum examines the alignment between the gains to the economy from international shipping services as described in NZIER's economic assessment and industries that have high levels of Māori involvement, as inferred from reports such as 'Te Ōhanga Māori 2023', 'TDB Iwi Investment Report 2025' and other sources. Inferences on alignment are more qualitative than quantitative as the 'Māori economy' is interwoven with the aggregate economy, making precise linkages between them hard to discern.

2 How to measure economic benefit to Māori

The economic benefit to New Zealand at the national or regional levels consistent with the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 is conventionally focused on enhancing growth in the economy as depicted by Gross Domestic Product (**GDP**) and related measures such as incomes, exports and employment. Increasing GDP provides economic incomes in the form of employee compensation (wages and salaries), returns on fixed capital (the return being the financial wherewithal to maintain or improve productive capacity of plant and machinery) and an operating surplus (profit for business owners which can be reinvested or used for other purposes). Income enhancements increase the consumption opportunities for those who receive them, a primary indicator of economic well-being.

Economic benefit to Māori can therefore be inferred from consumption-enhancing measures such as:

- Income-deriving employment in economic enterprises, distinguished by sector and geographic location – a relatively simple measure obtained from national statistics;

¹ NZIER. 2025. Stella Passage Development – Economic Effects Assessment - Final. A report for Port of Tauranga Limited.
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- Income derived by Māori from investment in businesses enhanced by growth, which is not so readily apparent but can be inferred from tax and economic statistics; and
- Estimates of the Māori-owned economy embedded in, and interacting with, the wider New Zealand economy - bespoke estimates exist from which inferences can be drawn about the likely share of Māori in the benefits of growth.

3 How the project may impact on Māori employment

The premise of the NZIER economic assessment is that the Stella Passage Development will benefit trade movements for industries in which Māori have a disproportionately high involvement.

Table 1 shows employment across sectors across all of New Zealand, for Māori in New Zealand and for Māori in the BOP. Sectors have been chosen for having a higher share of Māori employment than for all New Zealand, a high share of Māori employment (but may be less than the all New Zealand average e.g. retailing, public administration and safety). Mining is included to complete coverage of primary sectors despite its low share of employment.

Table 1 Main sectors for Māori employment in New Zealand and Bay of Plenty

Employment in selected sectors significant for Māori employment compared to total New Zealand sector shares

Year ending March 2025	All New Zealand		Māori in New Zealand		Māori in Bay of Plenty	
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	140,542	5.1%	25,873	6.7%	3,924	9.3%
Mining	6,286	0.2%	1,265	0.3%	45	0.1%
Manufacturing	252,629	9.1%	39,433	10.2%	3,921	9.2%
Construction	281,088	10.1%	47,425	12.2%	4,595	10.8%
Retail trade	237,090	8.6%	30,985	8.0%	3,264	7.7%
Accommodation and food services	174,762	6.3%	22,871	5.9%	2,614	6.2%
Transport, postal and warehousing	114,002	4.1%	18,685	4.8%	2,332	5.5%
Administrative and support services	127,688	4.6%	19,691	5.1%	2,990	7.1%
Public admin & safety	166,057	6.0%	25,531	6.6%	2,046	4.8%
Education and training	218,353	7.9%	34,776	9.0%	4,195	9.9%
Health care and social assistance	303,473	11.0%	39,610	10.2%	4,538	10.7%
Arts and recreation services	55,342	2.0%	8,746	2.3%	1,135	2.7%
Other services	107,920	3.9%	15,755	4.1%	2,104	5.0%
Total	2,772,368	100%	387,487	100%	42,404	100%

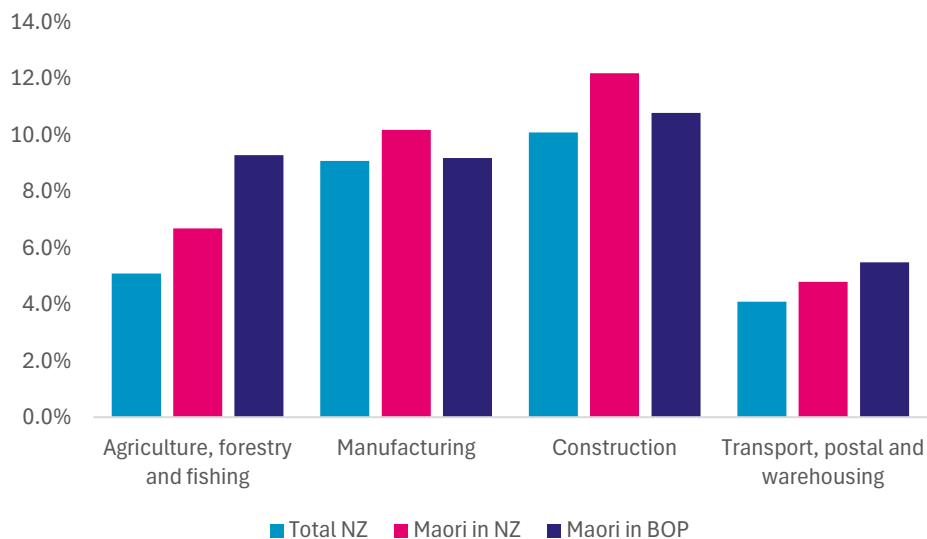
Source: NZIER, drawing on data from Infometrics: <https://regions.infometrics.co.nz/new-zealand/ethnicity/labour-market/structure?compare=auckland,wellington-city,nelson-city,bay-of-plenty-regionðnicity=maori>

Table 1 shows that Māori have a higher share of employment in the primary sectors than all New Zealand, both nationwide and even more so, in the BOP. Māori also have higher than

national average shares of employment in Construction, Transport, Administrative and support services and Education and Training. Among the primary industries, relatively few Māori are employed in Mining, although they account for 18% of total national employment in Mining, close to the Māori share of total national population. Each of the other sectors in the table employ more Māori than mining, but they all account for less than 18% of total employment in each of these sectors.

Using data from Table 1, Figure 1 compares the significance of four key sectors to Māori nationwide and in the BOP: the combined Primary sector of agriculture, forestry and fishing; Manufacturing (which includes some primary sector product processing, such as dairy products and sawn timber); Construction; and Transport, postal and warehousing (which includes some activities at the Port of Tauranga).

Figure 1 National and regional employment shares in selected industries



Source: NZIER, drawing on data from Infometrics

Figure 1 shows that all the selected sectors account for a higher proportion of employment for Māori nationwide than for total employment in New Zealand as a whole. It also shows that the four sectors account for a higher proportion of employment for Māori in the BOP than for total employment in New Zealand, but that construction and manufacturing employ smaller proportions of Māori in the region than they do for Māori employment across all New Zealand. The combined primary sector of agriculture, forestry and fishing and the transport, postal and warehousing sector have a higher share of Māori employment at the regional level than they do at national level, and significantly higher than those sectors' shares of total employment across New Zealand.

Port of Tauranga Limited is well located to handle future trade in industries expected to grow, such as dairy products, forest products and horticulture. This expected growth will require expansion of shipping capacity. The Māori workforce in primary sector industries will share in that growth, through improved security in those industries and potentially higher incomes drawn from them as production volumes increase (enabled by the expansion of trade) in future.



4 What of the impacts through the Māori economy?

We have reviewed available data on selected Māori Collectives including iwi authorities and trusts that manage traditional iwi land-holdings and Treaty Settlement proceeds (referred to as Māori Collectives) and broader measures of economic activity attributable to Māori.

TDB Iwi Investment Report 2025² is an assessment of the performance of Māori Collectives. It is confined to looking at 10 iwi collective entities and focuses on financial performance measures such as assets and net worth, return on invested capital and net assets per member. It has a narrower focus than the Māori Economy reports referred to below (no coverage of self-employed and private businesses) and it does not cover any iwi businesses in Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty area. It does mention that Ngāti Awa in the Eastern Bay of Plenty has 45% of its assets in primary industries, and that Waikato-Tainui have only 3% in primary industries, but it adds little to the understanding of Māori interest in primary sector activities that could benefit from the Stella Passage Development.

"The Māori Economy", or **Te Ōhanga Māori**, refers to the economic activities, assets, and enterprises owned or operated by Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand. Reports produced by BERL (Business and Economic Research Limited) for MBIE attempt to identify a fuller extent of Māori-attributable economic activity than is given by employment statistics alone. The reports examine both the level of activity and the value of asset bases in the Māori economy.³

Te Puni Kōkiri (Ministry of Māori Development) in collaboration with Stats NZ, produces the *Te Matapaeroa* reports⁴, to enumerate a range of transactions within and between Māori businesses. It defines private Māori businesses by their ownership structure, economic activity, and, in more recent versions, the self-identification of the owner.

The BERL Māori Economy reports develop this definition to go further in dividing Māori enterprises into three categories – Māori Collectives, private Māori employer companies (referred to as Māori Employers) and self-employed individuals with minimal employees (referred to as Māori Self-employed). The latest BERL Māori Economy report covers changes between the 2018 and 2023 censuses.⁵

Figure 2 below shows the variation in ownership of different types of primary sector asset. Māori Collectives have high involvement in sheep and beef farming, kiwifruit and fishing. Dairy, forestry, other agriculture and horticulture have a proportionately larger presence of Māori Employers, reflecting greater capital tied up in such enterprises. Māori Self-employed have assets predominantly in sheep-beef, dairy and forestry, but at a much smaller value scale than the Māori Employer-businesses.

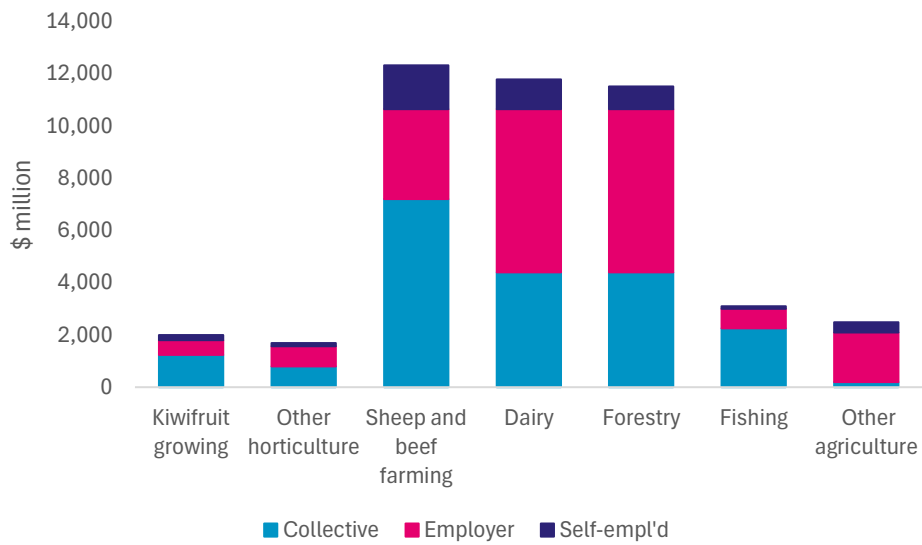
² TDB Advisory Ltd., 'Iwi Investment Report 2025' downloaded from <https://www.tdb.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/TDB-Iwi-Investment-Report-2025.pdf>

³ The latest of these reports prepared by BERL for MBIE is 'Te Ōhanga Māori – The Māori Economy 2023 report'. This report along with earlier versions are available at <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/economic-growth/te-ohanga-maori-the-maori-economy/te-ohanga-maori-the-maori-economy-reports>

⁴ Descriptions of the data collection methodology and datasets are available at <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/nga-putea-me-nga-ratonga/maori-enterprise/te-matapaeroa>

⁵ A dashboard of comparison indicators is available at <https://www.berl.co.nz/te-ohanga-maori>

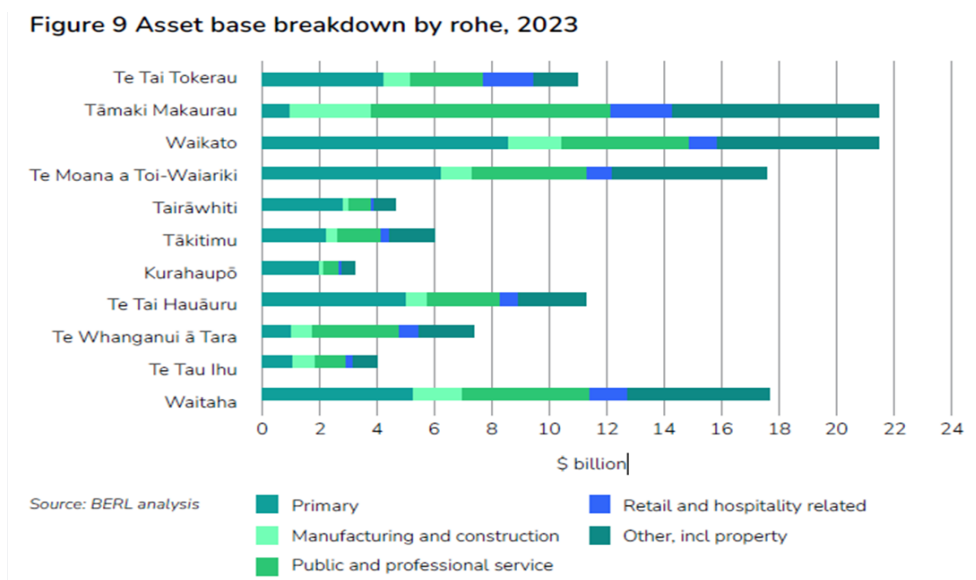
Figure 2 Variations in Māori asset base by type of ownership entity



Source: NZIER, drawing from Te Ohanga Māori Report 2023(MBIE/BERL 2024)

Figure 3 shows the variation in mix of asset base across regions. The highest values of primary sector assets are in the Waikato region (\$8.3 billion) and Te Moana a Toi-Waiariki/BOP (\$6.1 billion). This indicates that the Māori businesses and collectives in the BOP and Waikato regions closest to the Port of Tauranga are heavily invested in primary sector enterprises, and can be expected to benefit from the efficiency gains from improvements in POTL’s capacity.

Figure 3 Variations in Māori asset base by region of ownership entities



Source: Te Ohanga Māori Report 2023(MBIE/BERL 2024)

Table 2 shows the proportion of Māori assets in the primary sector, across regions.

Table 2 Shares of Māori primary sector asset holdings across regions/ rohe

Rohe / region	Primary sector asset share
Te Tai Tokerau (Northland)	47%
Tamaki Makauru (Auckland)	5%
Waikato	47%
Te Moana a Toi-Waiariki (BOP)	42%
Tairāwhiti (Gisborne)	73%
Te Tai Hauāuru (Taranaki-Whanganui-Manawatu)	61%
Kuraupō (Wairarapa/Southern HB)	87%
Takitimu (HB)	61%
Te Whanganui ā Tara (Wellington)	43%
Te Tau Ihu (TOSI)	22%
Waitaha (ROSI)	34%

Source: Te Ohanga Māori Report 2023(MBIE/BERL 2024)

The Waikato and BOP regions do not have the largest shares of their assets in primary sector activities, but as indicated in Figure 3 above, they have the largest value of such primary sector assets and a diversified mix of other assets. The values of these primary sector assets depends on the ability to import inputs and export outputs efficiently. The project will enable the freight capacity that is expected to be necessary for these industries to achieve their potential growth.

5 Conclusion

As of 2025, the Māori workforce is growing rapidly, with over 329,000 employed. While employment is growing most in sectors like education, health care, hospitality, and retail, primary sectors that will benefit from POTL’s wharf expansion continue to be significant sources of Māori employment and business activity.

The extension of the Sulphur Point wharf and upgrade of the Mount Maunganui wharf as part of the Stella Passage project are specifically designed to increase the capacity of wharves and improve their accessibility for larger vessels that are likely to be prevalent on international shipping routes to New Zealand in future. This will reduce the costs and increase the opportunities for growth in economic activities involving exports and imports.

Māori enterprise retains a strong presence in export-focused industries like agriculture and manufacturing. This is evident in:

- Employment data show the proportion of the workforce in 2025 employed in primary industries is higher for Māori than for the total population across New Zealand, and higher for Māori in the BOP than for Māori across all New Zealand.

- The 'Te Ōhanga Māori 2023' Māori Economy report shows the asset base for Māori owned businesses nationwide amounted to \$129 billion in 2023, of which \$39.9 billion (32%) was in primary sector industries, the shares of which in declining order of size were in Sheep and Beef (31%), Dairy (30%), Forestry (16%), Fishing (8%), Kiwifruit (5%), Other Agriculture (6%) and other Horticulture (4%)
- The 'Te Ōhanga Māori 2023' Māori Economy report identifies the largest of these primary asset holdings to be in Waikato (over \$8 billion) and BOP (over \$6 billion).

These Māori asset-holding businesses in the BOP and Waikato stand to benefit from improved capacity at the Port of Tauranga, which may support increased income from future growth for employees and business owners that can support further consumption and investment.

