

# SIMSON PARK MŌ ĀPŌPŌ

## Ngā rangatira o nāianeī

Rangatahi of Moerewa take charge in reimagining Simson Park and shaping their communities' future with determination, one where their voices resonate in every corner of their cherished community.

Healthy Families Far North have been working alongside the Far North District Council (FNDC) to collapse the distance between decision-makers and those affected by proposed changes.

In 2023, the Whangaroa/Bay of Islands Community Board decided that Simson Park would be the first park off the rank inside their ward to have a Reserve Management Plan renewed. Reserve Management Plans determine the activities that can happen and guide the day-to-day and long-term decisions that councils make on particular reserve areas. They are often described as a contract between the council and community, and are created together to ensure a good balance between community needs and the protection of the environment.

Far North District Council wanted to engage the community differently in the development of the Simson Park Reserve Management Plan. With the support of our team at Healthy Families and local leaders from Moerewa, a local rangatahi group was formed - 'Te rōpū rangatahi o Simson Park'.

Over the course of three months, this group of rangatahi, aged between 12 and 16, took the lead in engaging with their community. They interviewed key people, hosted rangatahi and tamariki play and kōrero sessions, and held a workshop with the different sporting codes. The rangatahi spent time understanding from their community four key questions:

- How do people currently use Simson Park?
- What do people love about Simson Park?
- What is hōhā about Simson Park?
- What could the future of Simson Park look like?

The insights and findings from their mahi were then used by the rangatahi to reimagine the Simson Park of tomorrow in a concept planning exercise. This work has helped to inform FNDC as they continue the formal engagement process and the development of the reserve management plan.

Te Rōpū Rangatahi o Simson Park learnt new skills, gained new confidence and deepened their sense of connection and belonging to Simson park and to their town of Moerewa. We thank the rangatahi, their whānau and their community for enabling and supporting these rangatira o nāianeī.

Empowering rangatahi to take the lead in designing locally driven solutions for their hāpori not only shifts power dynamics but also returns the process of community engagement to the hands of the community itself. Across our mahi, Healthy Families Far North are seeing the opportunity to centre rangatahi in the design and decision-making processes for these open spaces, as a clear line of sight to health prevention. Healthy Families Far North are privileged to work alongside the Moerewa community and Far North District Council in this kaupapa and they look forward to exploring the next phases of this mahi.

## WHAT WE HEARD



## OPPORTUNITIES

How we use it and want to keep using it

### Sports

We love sports in our community, and Simson Park brings that to life. Not just for our community, but for many whānau from across Tai Tokerau.

### Fun and Recreation

Simson Park supports our community to have fun with our friends and family, keep fit beyond sports.

### A space for community

This place is so important to us all, it brings us together and helps our community thrive.

### How we manage and manaaki

The way the space looks and feels directly reflects our manaakitanga.

### Fixing stuff and making it fit for purpose

The basics are what make this space work, it's important that they are fit for purpose. It's what our kids deserve.

