

Rangatahi Futures

Tō tatou wāhi ki te ōhanga Our place in the economy

Introduction

Māori have always been active contributors to the economy. When they arrived in Aotearoa they brought with them the skills and knowledge of their ancestors, as well as their own resources such as kurī (native dog), kiore (Pacific rat) and kūmara. Tribes were mostly self-sufficient and made the most of the new resources and opportunities that were available to them to establish a good standard of living for their whānau and hapū in Aotearoa. They recognised the unique skills and resources that each tribal area had and traded pounamu (greenstone), obsidian and argillite to make the tools they needed to thrive.

When Europeans arrived Māori began trading food, flax and timber for European resources such as nails and clothing. Some Europeans relied very heavily on food supplied by the local tribe and would not have survived had it not been for the tribe's provisions. Māori owned whaling stations, flax mills and market gardens and traded vigorously with the Europeans during the early years. The card sorting activity in Ngā pakihi o mua Early enterprise provides some examples of the valuable skills Māori had and types of businesses they were involved in, which rangatahi may wish to explore further.

Māori businesses continue to make an important contribution to the New Zealand economy today in a diverse range of industries, including farming, fishing, forestry, energy supply, tourism and digital technology. The vision and values of many iwi and individual Māori businesses reflect their sense of connection and responsibility to the land, their iwi and community. Māori continue to make the most of the opportunities available to them in the New Zealand economy today.

Te ao ōhanga Māori Our place in the economy is intended to support rangatahi to identify career opportunities that are available to them in the business sector, and to reflect on the impact their chosen career may have on their own whānau, hapū, iwi and community. They are encouraged to take action to forge their own careers in whatever field they choose so they can find their place in Aotearoa New Zealand's economy.