



# Te Awa Kairangi Māori Growers Hui Summary Sheet

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On the 27 October 2021 a group of thirteen local Māori growers gathered at Papawhakaritorito Whānau Food Farm in Kaitoke for a hui convened by Jessica Hutchings and Lani Rotzler-Purewa. This hui was supported by a Todd Foundation donation to explore Māori food growing kaupapa in Te Awa Kairangi . The aim of the hui was to discuss how we can grow and strengthen a network of kaimahi dedicated to nurturing our relationship with Te Ao Turoa, Papatūānuku, and Hine-ahu-one. A diverse set of expertise and experiences embellished our kōrero as a rōpū. Below we provide a snapshot of these discussions and possible future activities.





## SCENE SETTING KŌRERO

Our rōpū included local food growers connected to Orogomai marae, Common Unity, Piri-noa in the Wairarapa, Kaitoke as well as Fiji. Reo experts involved in developing māra reo domains also attended, as well as artists, designers, educators, researchers and a representative of Kore Hiakai. Our first round of discussions raised the following issues:

- how to make time to do work that is fueling and creative? How to live by the maramataka, and how to make more time to cultivate mahi toi and māra kai?
- Hapori reo work over the last 7 years at Hikoikoi Pā demonstrates the importance of the reciprocal nature of learning te reo Māori and māra kai practices. Reo domains are an important part of making sure our reo rangatira is not restricted to classroom settings and the māra has much to teach us about how to use te reo. We need to gently build our capacity for reo māra so we can

harness the healing powers of Papatūānuku. Soil remediation practices and reo learning could go hand in hand. Reo, pūrākau and māra kai – these are all rongoa.

- Our food space is in crisis, particularly in our COVID-present and we need strategies to increase our capacity for self sustainability. Currently our supermarkets hold all the power. Connecting with organisations such as Kore Hiakai could provide support across an 18 month – 2 year period. Having longer-terms goals are useful as plans weave the peoples.

- We don't often hear about the alternative kai growing strategies that exist that serve to heal land and peoples, but this is an important thing to know about. GMO concerns need to be aired and we need to know the whakapapa of our soils and the pūrākau that exist about our soils so we can ensure we grow kai that is healthy. Current composting practices make invisible the whakapapa of the materials we then use to grow kai. Currently, people are not used to asking this question of our soils and food growing practices.





## SCENE SETTING CONT.

- We need accessible communication through graphic design to make our people aware of the soil-food web and our role in nurturing these connections. Sunflowers can help process toxins. What other actions can we take, on a daily basis, to heal our soils?
- Turning to the whenua and regenerative kai growing practices has enabled an escape from the Māori rat race where you have to jump kaupapa to put out fires at the same time as ignite them. Everything is possible when the relationship between te ao turoa and tangata is the foundation. Our connection to Tangaroa also enables us to strengthen our connections to Papatūānuku. We could grow food that cuts out the middle-man, selling direct to whānau. Māori lease agreements could be a good mechanism for challenging the use of synthetics on Māori land.

- Hua Parakore is a “by Māori, for Māori” framework for thinking about māra kai and could be a good pathway towards decolonising growing (and eating) practices. Ko te kai te rongoa, ko te rongoa te kai. Growing the Hua Parakore in Te Awa Kairangi could be a good first step to strengthening our networks.

- Any māra kai network needs to include and be driven by our rangatahi. We need to provide employment and leadership opportunities for rangatahi and elevate the importance and mana of māra kai mahi.

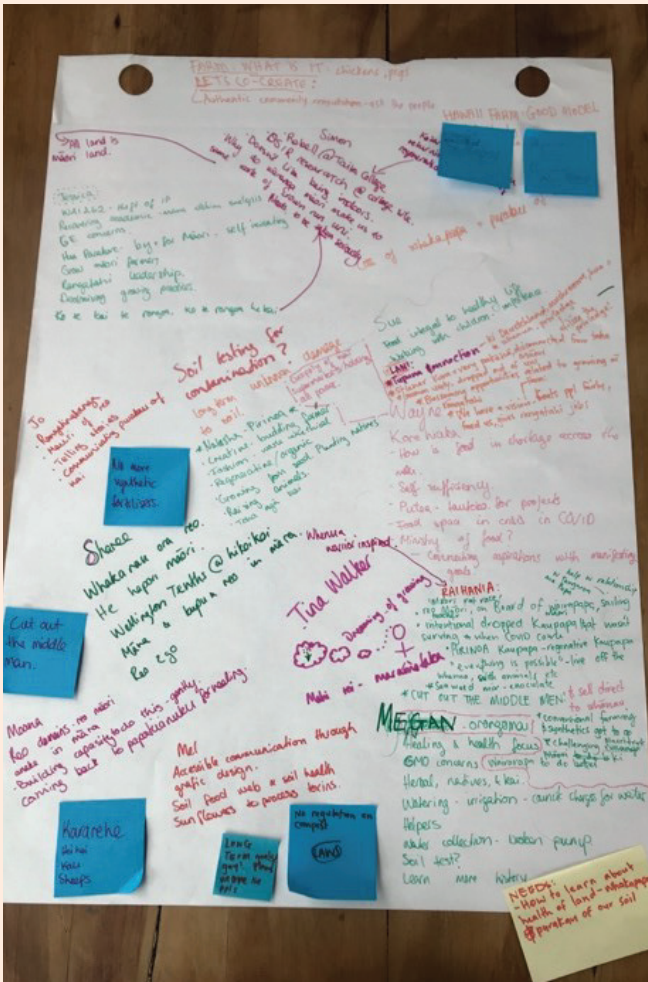
- Te Ataarangi was first started in Te Awa Kairangi. There are two faces to Te Awa Kairangi – the radicals and the conservatives. Marginal lands (curb sides) could be taken over to grow kai. We could teach our children to harness the available kai that is around them (possums).

# FEED THE WHĀNAU

The question of a name for the ropū arose and led to a discussion of how to express the vision of our ropū in one breath. Also, how would we establish our tikanga as a ropū, knowing that we needed to broaden the scope of people present to include our kaumatua and more rangatahi. We decided that we should establish the kaupapa first, then from that come the tikanga. “Feed the Whanau” struck a chord with us all. When abbreviated to FTW it may not be the most obvious fit for a ropū dedicated to improving the world, even if it captures the imagination of our rangatahi (a potential bonus).

*By “Feed the Whanau” we mean to be a ropū who help instigate, initiate and inspire flaxroots-led kai and soil growing practices that enhance the wellbeing of tangata, whenua, awa and moana. As a ropū, we hope to feed our whānau and communities the rongoa, the mātauranga, te reo and the right information, to help grow more Māori māra kai mahi.*

A next step towards building a network of Māori growers (and advocates) is to host a Friday night-Saturday noho to wananga our tikanga and enjoy kai kōrero from guest speakers. Raumati is a good time for connecting with whanau and the Tangaroa phase of the maramataka is a good time to gather. We discussed outreach opportunities that connect with Māori teachers and the local Buddhist temple. We also discussed the importance of leaving behind some resources as a ropū, the first of which is this Summary Sheet.



## MOEMOEĀ

In our afternoon session we discussed possible ropū activities and what next steps to take. We returned to the question of compost and the lack of regulation around this. If Hine-Ahu-One were accrued the same form of personhood status as Te Urewera and Te Awa Tipua, then we would have the legal precedent to advocate for compost regulation and land use. Tests of commercial compost have found pesticide residues and microplastics, impacting on soil health. We also returned to the topic of soil testing and the question of how to test for soil in ways that align with Hua Parakore principles. The idea of wānanga to develop these ideas and others, including Hua Parakore/Reo Māori domains; kai, seed and cutting swaps; maramataka and pūrākau learnings; karakia and waiata mo te māra.