

## Chairman's Report 2008 – Tahuri Whenua Inc. Soc.

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Tena koutou katoa

Ka nui te mihi ki a koutou mo te hui-a-tau o Tahuri Whenua.

It is my pleasure to present this chairman's report for our fifth AGM for Tahuri Whenua.

Before I begin my report I would like to acknowledge the passing of several of our members over the last year or so and also of Del Wihongi, Kaitiaki of the kumara and of Te Pu Hao Rangi Trust in South Auckland. Our members who have passed are Robert Tata of Te Awamutu, Mahinekura Reinfield of Parihaka, Whititera Kaihau of Tokoroa and Rangipo Metekingi of Putiki. Moe mai e nga rangatira, moe mai te moengaroa, haere, haere, haere.

We have completed another very positive year in terms of our development and consolidation within New Zealand society and one where we continue to gain wide acceptance of our kaupapa. A lot of passion and effort has been applied by members to getting the kaupapa out there and we have been very well accepted with almost 250 members now, including individuals, kaumatua, kuia, growers, supporters, schools, marae and trusts. Our membership continues to grow and there are many new members and faces this year. It seems that we get much stronger interest in the collective and membership processes when we spend time interacting through a kanohe kitea approach. This means that we have to give up considerable time to interact with our community of interest but ultimately those that become members have a similar passion and interest in Maori horticulture. I believe that all Maori, not just growers of specific crops, have something to contribute to our future generations and therefore can contribute to this collective. Essentially we are guaranteeing the succession of future generations into horticulture and land management.

Last year and again this year I want to note the remarkable amount of work that continues behind the scenes for this initiative that goes largely un-noticed, especially as each one of us has our usual commitments to jobs, whanau, marae, etc. We must also thank our kaumatua for their input and support throughout the year. They add a value to our activities which makes us unique in horticulture, educational and other related areas. During the last year the committee invited Aunty Piki Winitana from Waimarama to join the kaumatua roopu as an acknowledgement of her support for the roopu and I am pleased to say she accepted our invitation. The ultimate strength in the collective will be in the size and quality of the membership as this will ensure we are well positioned within the New Zealand horticulture sector and that we can continue to contribute positively to Maori development.

We have had a number of very successful hui and events related to our kaupapa in the last 12 months. The Tahuri Whenua hui-a-mahi at Te Tau Ihu, hosted by Richard Hunter and Danny Watson was enjoyed by all those that attended. This hui was sponsored by Wakatu Inc and I want to thank them again for their support. We have also been asked to help Omaka Marae at Blenheim set up gardens and Richard Hunter will look after this kaupapa. A regional hui at Tikitiki last November and the Organic festival hui in March hosted by Eco- aotearoa (East Coast organics roopu) at Tolaga Bay was well supported and a great day for all those who put it together. We also supported Hanui Lawrence and whanau with their International Year of the Potato hui held at Waipatu Marae in early July. The weather was one of the coldest days of the last winter, including snow on the road between Norsewood and Woodville. Tahuri Whenua was well represented, in each case through presentations and attendance of members. Other key events during the year have included a Matariki lecture on traditional horticultural practices held at the head office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Wellington and a couple of presentations to rural groups in Pahatua and Marton, one of them televised on Tararua TV. Some of you may also have seen the episode of Country Calendar on TV1 which focussed on the Atkins whanau at Tikapa, East Coast and which we had a minor part and also episodes of Rural Delivery (TV1) in April/May which focused on projects we re involved with. Aside from my own activities our committee and some members have also been out and about talking to functions and schools about the Tahuri Whenua kaupapa. Kia ora koutou.

In April we hosted a film crew from Los Angeles filming a travel programme called 'Under the Sun' where their host meets and visits food producers and environmentally friendly operators around the country. They were filming in both NZ and Australia for an upcoming episode. The director asked for a local guide while in NZ so we organised for John Puha from Tikitiki to take up the challenge. He represented us well and I understand the whole of the East Coast are aware of his experiences as a result. The film crew participated

in our harvest at Massey as well as the hangi we do on that day. The following Sunday we also arranged a kapa haka experience with our local champion team – Te Piringa – all this was filmed and I hope to receive a copy from the producers before the years end.

Over the last six months I have also had the privilege to make a couple of presentations on Maori horticulture and conservation at overseas conferences. The first was in June at Cusco in the Andes mountains in Peru at the International Congress of Ethnobiology and the second in July at the Potato Association of America (PAA) annual conference in Buffalo, New York State.

My first three days in Peru were spent in an area of Lima called La Molina, location of the state university *Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina* (La Molina National Agrarian University) and of the International Potato Centre (CIP). I was hosted here by an ex-patriot New Zealander Richard Gray and his partner Jacqueline Sawyer (ex World Health Organisation, Geneva and currently on a 12 month contract with the CIP in charge of funding responsibilities for the centre's worldwide research activities).

At the CIP I was hosted as an official visitor and looked after by Dr David Tay, Divisional Leader of their genetics team and the person responsible for the centre's gene-bank and herbarium which holds plant material for up to 3000 distinct varieties of potato and some other root crops including sweetpotato and cannalily. Dr Tay has asked me to consider a return to the centre to spend some time (around 8 weeks) with their work at the gene-bank and other programmes. To date the centre has not undertaken any collaboration with New Zealand and their staff have expressed a keen interest to look at including the old New Zealand potato cultivars or Maori Potatoes in the resource and thus determine their relationship to cultivars already acknowledged within their system. This facility works closely with the indigenous communities of the Andes through the *Asociación Andes* in the repatriation of old cultivars of potatoes and also with food resourcing projects worldwide including neighbouring centres of origin for specific potato cultivars in Bolivia, Chile and Colombia.

From Lima I travelled to Cusco in the Andes Mountains and the centre of origin of both the potato and Quechua people who are accorded the role of guardians of these root crops. At Cusco I was participating in the 11<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Ethnobiology which included giving a presentation on traditional Maori management systems at a landscape level and the role of crops such as the Maori potato (taewa) in the utility of the landscape. This presentation was well received and the abstract and powerpoint components are available on the congress website [www.icecusco.net](http://www.icecusco.net). As well, I was also asked to participate in their *indigenous forum on food sovereignty and livelihoods* as the only Pacific presenter at the congress and an extension of the presentation itself. The congress itself will publish a book on the topic of the whole conference (five streams ran simultaneously) and also issue a declaration to the world communities on the outcomes of presentations and forum. I have been asked by the organisers to consider writing a chapter for the next book published under the congress which I have tentatively agreed to undertake.

As part of the congress we spent a day on a field trip to the 'Potato Park', *Le Parque de la Papa*, a 10000ha region at 3600m above sea level and supporting 5 unique communities who perpetuate the original varieties of potatoes according to their traditions and with the assistance of groups such as the International Potato Centre and the *Asociación Andes*. This was a very enlightening trip and an opportunity to see and experience first-hand, many of the traditions they apply to the crop and the aspirations they hold for its future alongside their roles as keepers of the potatoes and other related crops such as the sweetpotato. I also undertook a second field trip to a neighbouring region to the 'potato park' which was at a lower altitude (3000m asl) and got the opportunity to see their corn harvests being dried and managed for storage and distribution. We also visited a native establishment where natural medicines are processed for sale.

On the second trip, the first few days were spent at Ithaca, Upstate New York; location of Cornell University as one of my students is now studying towards his Masters in dairy production at Cornell under a Fulbright Scholarship. Cornell was also the host of the conference and I had the opportunity to meet key staff involved with the horticultural and potato research interests there.

This was followed by a two day period at Mansfield University in Pennsylvania. Mansfield University is a small university of 3400 students located at a rural campus in north-central Pennsylvania. The university

was founded in 1857 and Dr Steven Stein from Mansfield visited Massey University earlier in 2008 and helped with our hangi in April and he hosted myself and my student for the two days. After leaving Mansfield I flew from Syracuse (near Ithaca) on the Sunday to LaGuardia Airport in New York City. My connecting flight to Buffalo was initially delayed and then cancelled at 7pm due to thunderstorms restricting the arrival of incoming flights. The airlines were not very forthcoming in organising alternative flights or accommodation and so I had to contact our NZ travel agents to organise travel to reach Buffalo by midday the next day as my presentation was that afternoon. By 11pm we had sorted a connection through Rochester then Buffalo leaving at 6am and as no accommodation was arranged I had to sleep on the floor at the terminal with a number of other travellers. The 6am on Monday flight flew on-time and I made a connection to Buffalo arriving at the conference by 11.30am.

The PAA conference had started the previous evening (when I should have been there if the original flights had worked) and ran over 5 days with 600 participants. My presentation was made on the Monday afternoon to a full audience and was well received. As part of the conference we also had a full day field trip to a selection of properties and enterprises of interest including a mixed dairy/potato operation (1500ha), a cooperative production/packhouse operation and sites of a number of Cornell trials for new potato cultivars and agronomy practices.

The 'spud in a bucket' project which we trialed last year has taken on a life of its own. Te Puni Kokiri funded a KMR or Kapohia nga rawa position through their Whanganui office) for 4 months up to 30 June 2008 to help pull together the logistics of the project for this year. Kirsty Tatere, a qualified teacher, took up the role and has been working on a number of objectives since that time, continuing in an unpaid capacity since the end of June to see the project happen for this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for this work and the outcomes she has achieved for us so far. Thanks also to TPK for their foresight in assisting us.

The project objectives aligned to the position when it was established.

- ***Objective 1 – Implement coordination framework for project***

At present we have Tahuri Whenua representatives in most of the areas of New Zealand where the project is taking place. In the areas where there are none present we have sourced other contacts to co-ordinate. The regional co-ordinators will provide support to schools during planning and harvesting. It is our goal to have clusters of schools harvest their potatoes together. This will be possible depending on numbers and areas that the planting could be done together as well. Our primary focus areas for the project in 2008/9 will be Te Tai Rawhiti, Hawke's Bay, Manawatu, Rangitikei, Eastern Bay of Plenty, Oamaru and Murihiku and the occasional individual schools such as Cashmere School in Wellington. There are also a few volunteer coordinators in various places e.g. Dunedin and Kurow who can take charge of the project in their area.

- ***Objective 2 –preparation of sponsorship package for potential sponsors***

Key sponsors include the following:

PGG Wrightsons –keen to sponsor all schools from the East Coast region down to Hawke's Bay.

Fruit Fed Ltd – Manawatu/Horowhenua region has agreed to sponsor the project in 2009 – they are also happy to be a rendezvous point for schools to collect materials. Massey University and Agriculture NZ (Oamaru)– both have provided sponsorship. Jim O'Gorman in Kakanui is coordinating the North Otago Schools. Some of the local health providers have also been in discussions with Kirsty re their availability to assist with the project.

A full sponsorship package – letter, supporting information etc. – has been developed for distribution to potential sponsors. Please contact the committee if you would like one. We would like to begin to approach potential sponsors for the 2009/2010. This is essential to ensure we can provide enough resources to enable all willing schools the chance to take part.

- ***Objective 3 –preparation of curriculum documents to Ministry of Education***

This will be used as a support document to teachers as they will want to develop their own learning model through the inquiry process. Using inquiry learning necessitates teachers coming up with rich questions to underpin the Spud in a Bucket project. Teachers share these 'rich questions' with their classes. They break down the rich questions into a series of smaller 'action questions' and use these to scaffold their lesson planning. Assessment material for the project is also being worked on.

- ***Objective 4 – Create and design an interactive website for the schools and programme***

The website is nearly ready to be uploaded to the internet and will continually be updated by Kirsty as information comes in from participating schools. The website will be independent of that for Tahuri

Whenua but linked across appropriately. Participating schools will get an access code to ensure only those involved in the project get access. Students will have material to read and view and also be able to upload comments, photos and interactive exchanges with other schools.

- ***Objective 5 – organise completion of promotional design and expressions of interest process***

The deadline for returning these was the end of May.

We have over 3000 children registered to take part in the programme this year. These children come from 50 schools and kohanga located around New Zealand. This shows there is a huge interest out there in schools to get their children involved in this type of learning. Expressions of interest are now being received for the 2009 year.

I would like to give a brief update on some of the projects we have been associated with. In 2005 we committed as a partner to a project between Crop & Food Ltd (CFR) and Te Pu Hao Rangi Trust targeting the commercialisation of kumara. The project is still progressing, albeit slowly, especially after the passing of Del Wihongi who was instrumental in the project and we are now waiting for Crop & Food to let us know when Tahuri Whenua can be involved as the interface between these kumara varieties and their maintenance. There is an opportunity here to take the kumara concept further and look to establish a kaitiaki process whereby some of these old varieties can be grown as parent stock year by year.

Currently I am still progressing at how we can establish a trial ground for our Maori crops within the Massey University site. My objective here is that we create something that is long-term and strategic. I am looking at an area of around 1ha (tentatively approved) which can be accessed directly from the road and designed to have a rotational layout and be functional as an interactive mara which we can take manuhiri to and which will have a public profile under the collectives watchful eye. The idea has been approved in principle by Massey University and I hope that it can be ready to start this time next year.

We have also been aligned to couple of projects as representing the Maori interests in the projects. The first is a couple of minor projects with the Bioprotection centre at Lincoln University which target crop production systems and we have a new project on indoor kamokamo production as well as a kumara manual being written. I am the project manager for these ones and it is funding from this centre that is sponsoring today's hui. The second is the Best of Both Worlds hui under Crop & Food CRI in Hastings. We are coordinating the inclusion of growers from Ngati Kahungunu and Rangitikei alongside Ngati Porou. Huub Kerckhoffs is the project manager and he will talk about it at this hui soon.

Just recently Uncles Jim and Peter at Bulls have participated with me in the creation of a DVD resource by Deanne Thomas to contribute to Kura Kaupapa curriculum aligned to science and technology. The taewa project was the subject of the DVD and it will be completed soon in readiness for the schools to use.

In closing, my personal thanks go again to all the committee members for their input to our roopu. A very important thanks also to those committee members standing down this year; Simon Walsh (known by us as Simon North) as he has gone to work overseas in Korea for a period of time and Marie Russell who will continue to assist in an informal way – Nga mihi atu ki a korua. Thankyou also to Simon Lambert and Shelley Bath for getting the newsletters together. We should also congratulate Simon Lambert for completing his doctorate at Lincoln University and graduating earlier this year. Lastly, an important acknowledgement to Massey University as my employer for allowing me the time and resources in working for the collective at no cost to our group. They have funded considerable time, travel, hui, and other resources for myself and Marie Russell (our treasurer) without hesitation and I would not have been able to undertake my role as chairman the way I have without their support in this way

No reira, ka nui te mihi ki a koutou,  
tena koutou, tena koutou, tena ano tatou katoa.  
Nick Roskruge, Chairman, Tahuri Whenua Inc. Soc.  
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