

# **TE PŪRONGO Ā TAU A TE AKA KŌTUIA** June 2024 Annual Report

### **Table of Contents**

Te Aka Kōtuia - Kaitiaki and Community Nurseries	3
Summary of activity in the last year	3
Connected and shared nursery best practice	3
Strategy & 10 Year Action Plan	4
Biodiversity Data Collection	6
Data Collected- Summary sheet	6
Development of Māori-led best practice	8
Business plans	8
Seed banking	8
Biosecurity and general plant health	8
Education & Training -	9
Workshops on biosecurity & biodiversity	9
	9
New and aspirational nurseries	12
Resourcing and System improvements	13
Ngā Hau Māngere Ngahere Project - Kāinga Ora (Jenny Chilcott)	13
Seed Bank - Case studies from around Aotearoa (Sam Judd - Lottery funding)	13
Native Plant Nursery Guide - Urban Ngahere - Auckland Council (David Bowden)	13
Maungawhau Nursery Plan (Te Aka Kōtuia)	13
Puka Haumaru Koiora - Nursery Biosecurity Guide - (Te Aka Kōtuia)	13
Te Whakaoranga o te Puhinui - Seed to Seed - (Eke Pānuku, Healthy Waters)	13
Southern Seed Bank (Eke Pānuku, Healthy Waters)	13
Communications Activity	15
Expanded online presence:	15
Increased social media engagement and reach:	15
Increased PR activity:	15
Set up a regular community e-newsletter using Mailchimp platform:	15
Emerging needs, opportunities & recommendations	16
Appendix 1.	18
Te Aka Kōtuia Order of Outcomes Framework to support Strategy	18



## Te Aka Kōtuia – Kaitiaki and Community Nurseries

A partnership between Kaipātiki Project and Uru Whakaaro, comprised of native plant nursery specialists, across Tāmaki Makaurau who understand kaitiaki and community-centred approaches to restoration. We deliver on our vision and create the conditions for the long-term outcome through partnerships and programmes. Our founding partnership is with Auckland Council.

*"He rau ringa e oti ai With many hands, the job will be done"* 

### Summary of activity in the last year

Connected and shared nursery best practice

The lwi Hapu Community Nursery Network has developed a 10-year strategy and action plan. Formulation of this plan has led to the change of the name to Te Aka Kōtuia, representing the many layers of ngahere that weave together diverse, interconnected elements within the forest.

We have facilitated 12 tailored biosecurity & biodiversity focused workshops, led by ecologist, ethnobotanist Charmaine Bailie, covering diverse topics such as capacity building, production planning, seed bank establishment, and nursery design as well as the seed-to-seed workshops at the botanical gardens.

We have assisted four new and aspirational nurseries with capacity building and resource development. We have also connected with staff and volunteers at 13 nurseries over 26 nursery site visits, five being iwi-owned nurseries.

Our communications and engagement team have delivered on the annual communications plan to tell Te Aka Kōtuia stories. This includes promotion within the Auckland Region, newsletters and increased social media engagement and reach.

The biodiversity data collection survey serves as a resource for us to gain a picture of who's growing what and where across the region and helps us to share plants and knowledge. (A map of the nurseries in the Auckland region has been attached.)

Each of these elements has contributed to increasing capacity and capability of nurseries across Auckland, as well as building awareness, which has led to increased participation, output, quality and impact. Taken together, the programme creates a way to improve outcomes and sustain our local environments. We are now working on evaluating progress towards the 50-year outcome and what's now possible for the next 2 years.

# Strategy & 10 Year Action Plan



#### TE AKA KÕTUIA KAITIAKI & COMMUNITY NURSERIES

Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028

Te Aka Kōtuia is a collaboration comprised of native plant nursery specialists who understand kaitiaki and community-centred approaches to restoration.

#### MOEMOEAA // VISION

Diverse and complex ecosystems in the Auckland region are restored and sustained by kaitiaki and communities for their local places.

### KAUPAPA // SCOPE

Focused on supporting nurseries within the Auckland region while providing occasional targeted koha support to nurseries in other regions.

### MAHI // ROLE

Through facilitating networking, improving management and operations, and enriching native plant diversity, we support kaitiaki and local communities to meet their local ecological restoration aspirations and kaupapa.

### TIKANGA // VALUES

Elevating aspirations of mana whenua Appropriate and respectful processes Duty of care towards people and nature Learning, sharing & fun Professional /Open-source information



URUWHA

Facilitate and broker connections between nurseries across the Auckland region so they can

support each other.

Improve management and operations

Develop nursery capability in management and operations to enable them to meet their own goals. Grow the rest of the forest Develop capacity and capability in native plant nurseries for sourcing and

growing the full complexity of plant ecosystems.

Te Aka Kōtuia Annual Report 2023-2024

Auckland

Supported by

#### Commentary

The concept for developing a programme to support kaitiaki and community native plant nurseries was developed through a partnership between Kaipātiki Project and Uru Whakaaro. The partnership comprises native plant nursery specialists who understand kaitiaki and community-centred approaches to restoration. We share the vision of kaitiaki and communities restoring diverse and complex ecosystems in the Auckland region. Together, we create the conditions for this long-term outcome through facilitating networking, improving management and operations, and enriching native plant diversity. Our founding partnership is with Auckland Council.

Developing a strategy for supporting kaitiaki and community plant nurseries aimed to underpin the initiative with a clear logic framework. We began with an assessment to understand the unique ecological, cultural, and community-based requirements of the nurseries across our region, drawing on the work of the first few years of nursery engagement and delivery, and previous annual reports, to ensure the strategy would be culturally responsive and ecologically impactful. Previous surveys and workshops had been conducted to gather input on the types of plants needed compared with those currently being grown, the people and volunteer roles and gaps, the best practices for cultivation, biosecurity, and the desired outcomes for the nurseries themselves.

With a clear understanding of the needs and goals, we worked with Strategist Annette Lees to facilitate a process to create the strategy focused on enabling capacity building, skills and resource sharing, and biosecurity practices among the nurseries, as well as through partnership with key players such as Auckland Council and NZ Plant Producers Institute. Training programmes developed to equip nurseries with skills in plant propagation, nursery management, sustainable practices, and biosecurity measures are key to building capability and capacity across the region. These programmes are designed to be accessible and inclusive, incorporating traditional knowledge, modern horticultural techniques, and biosecurity best practices. Biosecurity training included the identification and management of potential threats, quarantine procedures for new plant materials, and regular monitoring for signs of pest or disease outbreaks. Additionally, the strategy includes the facilitation of shared development of a seed library, tools, knowledge, and biosecurity resources between nurseries. This aims to strengthen the network's resilience, enabling nurseries to support one another and adapt to challenges such as climate change, endangered plants, pest management, and biosecurity threats.

To ensure the long-term success and sustainability of the kaitiaki and community plant nurseries, Te Aka Kōtuia Strategy has an accompanying Order of Outcomes to complete the logic model, incorporating monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management. Regular meetings and reporting mechanisms track progress, share successes, and identify areas needing improvement. This iterative approach allows for continuous learning and adjustment of practices based on real-world outcomes. Moreover, partnerships with government agencies, non-profits, and educational institutions are being fostered to provide additional support, funding, expertise, and biosecurity guidance. By integrating community engagement, traditional knowledge, scientific research, and biosecurity measures, the strategy aims to create the conditions to underpin a robust network capable of enhancing biodiversity, supporting cultural practices, and fostering community cohesion while contributing to safeguarding the region's biodiversity from biosecurity threats, and enhancing it to support diverse and complex ecosystems that can support environmental resilience for intergenerational challenges.

# **Biodiversity Data Collection**

The decision-making for what species are being grown is based on individual nursery choice, what is being requested by project plans or clients. Along with each nursery having a small cluster of experimental species 'having-a-go corner'. To get a picture of what biodiversity is being selected for across the region, who's growing what and where, all <u>nurseries</u> were asked via direct emails, facebook and newsletters for their annual growing lists including which ecological districts planting material comes from. This helps us share the potential supply of plants and knowledge across the region.

From the responses received we know individual nurseries are growing between **15** to **96** native species with the collective total being **164** species grown across the Auckland Region.

The Ecological Districts (ED) plant material was selected from and replanted in were:

Tāmaki ED x5, Otamatea ED x1 , Aawhitu ED x2, Inner Gulf Islands ED x 2, Manukau ED x1, Hunua ED x1 and Waitakere ED x1

Data Collected- Summary sheet



Mānuka (Leptospermum scoparium)



Harakeke (*Phormium tenax*)



Whau (Entelea arborescens)



Koromiko (Hebe stricta)





Para (Marattia salicina)

# Development of Māori-led best practice

Supporting leadership of iwi and hapū nurseries to share Māori led best practice: Resource nursery leadership best practices in line with their own tikanga and kawa/processes, co-designed with them to meet their needs. Activities undertaken were:

#### **Business plans**

Over the last year we have worked with several iwi nursery enterprises to support the development of business plans involving the collaboration between iwi and community. This allows for foundation nurseries within the area of interest to supply plants, and associated services, education and employment while involving the community through volunteering and community education.

#### Seed banking

This involved a review of current practice for two iwi nurseries including; harvest protocols, and definition of tikanga and processes associated with harvest. Alongside this the processing, storage and management of stock incorporating maramataka guidance in data collection and seed stock rotation.

#### Biosecurity and general plant health

Supporting the understanding of the difference between good practice design and biosecurity management including the identification of physical nursery good practice; movement of materials and activity within the nursery.

Nurseries involved included Pourewa, Makaurau Marae, Te Tauroa, and a collective of South Auckland mana whenua nursery practitioners.



Mana whenua nurseries hui for South & East Tāmaki Makaurau; held in December 2023 at the Auckland Botanic Gardens

# Education & Training -

# Workshops on biosecurity & biodiversity

### The goal is to increase the biosecurity and biodiversity outcomes for the Te Aka Kōtuia:

Align best practice, facilitate disbursement of information and coordinate feedback from nursery network community – goal of ensuring knowledge of best practice/ NZPPI performance standards and identifying pathways to achievement - identifying ways to support those who need it. Practical approaches for small-scale and school nurseries.

### **Biosecurity Workshop Summary:**

1) Ngau Te Ringaringa - Nursery layout and biosecurity prevention/mitigation

2) Te Tauroa Nursery - Plant pass self-auditing record keeping and mitigation improvement plan.
3) Ngau Te Ringa Ringa - Plant pass self-auditing record keeping and mitigation improvement plan.

4) Kaipātiki Project Nursery September - Training sessions for nursery intern, nursery staff, and key volunteers - Plant pass self-auditing record keeping and mitigation improvement plan.
5) Botanical Gardens Plant Pass - Myrtle Rust Workshop

### **Biodiversity Workshop Summary:**

**6) Te Tauroa Nursery** - Planting day prep, training Plant identification, plant growing conditions species mixes, grading and quality control, how to prepare plants to leave the nursery

7) Botanic Gardens - Puhinui Seed to Seed - Activation

8) Te Tauroa Nursery - Production planning new manager and staff, systems and processes.

9) Coastal habitats - In situ plant propagation sea walls,

10) Botanical Gardens - Puhinui Seed to Seed Activation.

11) Te Ara Tukutuku - Two day Seed collection workshop.



Seed harvesting workshop, held in Le Roy's Bush 2024 (Image left)

Seed to seed workshop, held at Auckland Botanic Gardens 2023 (Image right)

# Site-Specific Nursery Support

**Site-specific assessments of systems, risks and needs:** The goal is to provide site specific assessments to determine the risks and needs of individual nurseries within Te Aka Kōtuia and provide support and specialist advice.

Nursery	Summary of visit	
<u>Restoring Takarunga</u> <u>Hauraki (RTH)</u>	Hosted a short hui with RTH staff and volunteers , assisting with the moving of plants to their new nursery and hand back Zane Catterall from the Uru internship program.	
Kaipātiki Project	Multiple visits- prepare resources and intern study. Visits by project teams for Te Ara Tukutuku.	
<u>Maungawhau</u> <u>Nursery</u>	Preparation of planting material working bee clean up and measuring up for Maungawhau Nursery Plan meeting with Tūpuna Maunga Authority and Friends of Maungawhau.	
<u>Ngau Te Ringaringa</u>	Multiple visits during construction, working bees, advice on process, layout and stock management including plant pass requirements.	
Ecomatters Nursery*	Short visit to record and gain inspiration from their infrastructure in such a small space.	
<u>Whau River</u> Catchment Trust	We are assisting and advising with maximising nursery holding space and infrastructure. Conversations about biosecurity needs and signage options in and around the nursery/ potting area.	
<u>Ngā ringa o Te</u> <u>Auaunga (Oakley</u> <u>Creek Nursery)</u>	Seeing how a small nursery layout works in a school space. meeting with key coordinators and volunteers during a morning working bee.	
<u>Shakespear Open</u> Sanctuary (SOSSI)	Visit during a volunteer working bee to see exemplary systems and processes and connect with coordinators and volunteers.	
<u>Te Arai Nursery</u>	Visit during their annual open day to look at all aspects of nursery working areas, and mini workshop demonstrations.	
<u>Ātiu Creek Regional</u> <u>Park</u>	Visit to meet coordinators, hear the kaupapa and history of the nursery, see their set-up and look at nursery systems. Gave assistance with propagation and hardstand with a few issues present.	
<u>Awhitu Peninsula</u> Landcare Nursery	Visit undertaken as part of participation in Community Seed Workshop - exchange of ideas and processes leading to good practice.	
Te Tauroa Nursery	Multiple visits to assist with potting on, grading and nursery layout, infrastructure, and volunteer working bees.	
Tapora Land and Coast Care Group	Visited during the first week of site works/construction.	



Te Auaunga (Oakley Creek) Nursery



Makaurau Marae Nursery



Shakespear Open Sanctuary Society (SOSSI)



Ātiu Regional Park Nursery



Awhitu Peninsula Landcare Nursery



Maungawhau Nursery

# New and aspirational nurseries

Aspirational and new nurseries site visits were completed, and specialist advice provided.

### Summary of visits:

Te Mara o Te Kotuku Ngati Tamaoho	Te Mara o Te Kotuku is a new nursery for Ngati Tamaoho. Set up to grow native plants for projects across their rohe. Supporting staff with Seed to Seed workshops and Mana Whenua Hui,			
Tiriwa Nursery	Collaboration between Whau River Trust, Ecomatters, Community Waitakere and Te Kawerau a Maki. Uru Whakaaro had undertaken feasibility meetings to input into a business case over a series of months in 2023.			
Te Ara Tukutuku	Te Ara Tukutuku - Toi Wahanga and the Mana Whenua working group to scope out the purpose and function of a Mana Whenua / community nursery. Work included contributing to the design, function, people elements and costing a business case for establishing a terrestrial nursery.			
Tapora Land and Coast Care Group	This nursery has been an aspiration for a few years and with funding available and post flood clean ups We're assisting them with their new nursery build. Assistance includes advisory and site visits. The nursery will have a purpose-built fernery for the establishment of taonga - a rare species.			
Te Awakarihi (Ngai Tai ki Tāmaki mainland nursery)	Support with scoping of potential sites and assistance with procurement - potential markets.			

# **Resourcing and System improvements**

**Improving systems, processes and infrastructure:** Develop resources to assist nurseries to improve their system and processes and build capability. This year has been a collaborative process across programmes.

# Clarification of associated programmes and the identification of support elements within, as they relate to Te Aka Kotūia

#### Ngā Hau Māngere Ngahere Project - Kāinga Ora (Jenny Chilcott)

Southern Nursery Network support for the Maangere Ngahere Project. Specifically for the Mangere - Otahuhu area connecting projects with nursery supply Ongoing - current funding completed in June 2024.

#### Seed Bank - Case studies from around Aotearoa (Sam Judd - Lottery funding)

Outlining troubleshooting and seed bank systems in place via workshops. Pourewa and Makaurau Marae Nursery with others being outside the Auckland region e.g Waitangi Catchment - workshop time for setting up what a seed bank requires. 2 days of funding available per entity. Funding completed in June 2024.

#### Native Plant Nursery Guide - Urban Ngahere - Auckland Council (David Bowden)

Generic nursery guide for those starting or expanding existing nurseries. This guide will help with planning and assessment of nursery practices.

Through Te Aka Kōtuia, information requests have helped feed into what information was needed to inform Native Plant Nursery Guide. (Draft completed for discussion - full circulation by June 2024).

#### Maungawhau Nursery Plan (Te Aka Kōtuia)

Has been developed using the Native plant Nursery Guide as a template. (Draft completed for consultation May 2024)

#### Puka Haumaru Koiora - Nursery Biosecurity Guide - (Te Aka Kōtuia)

- Biosecurity printed booklet and online version to aid with pest management / plant health planning. Contents aligned with the requirements of plant pass for those nurseries undertaking this process.
- Kaipātiki Project Nursery Pest Management Plan (in progress)
- Consideration of Group leadership as part of Plant Pass To be investigated

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### Te Whakaoranga o te Puhinui - Seed to Seed - (Eke Pānuku, Healthy Waters)

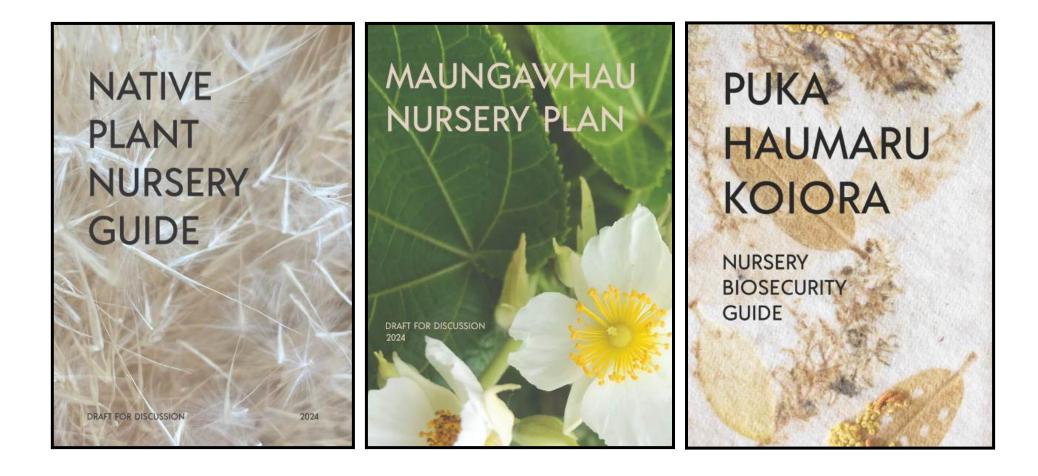
Workshops at Botanical Gardens included: Empowered Communities Waananga, Plant Identification & Seed Harvesting Waananga 3 Part Series.

### Southern Seed Bank (Eke Pānuku, Healthy Waters)

Compilation of all seeds required across southern projects, specifically Puhinui Catchment programmes- Te Aka Rata and Hayman Park

Collection, treatment and storage of seeds and disbursement to nurseries.

Database of what seed has been collected, from where, when, by who and permissions for harvest.



# **Communications Activity**

This section outlines our activity to enhance internal and external communication. Key initiatives included regular engagement with nurseries to share uplifting stories and increase event participation, increased public awareness of the initiative and the use of the Tiaki Tāmaki Makaurau platform to map the nurseries.

### Expanded online presence:

- Te Aka Kōtuia is now available on three different platforms: the Kaipātiki Project website, Te Aka Kōtuia Facebook, Tiaki Tāmaki Makaurau platform.
- Te Aka Kōtuia map is available in PDF form to showcase the geographic spread of the nurseries across Tāmaki Makaurau. The nurseries are also listed in the Tiaki Tāmaki Makaurau directory for ease of search and improved opportunity to make connections.

### Increased social media engagement and reach:

- The Te Aka Kōtuia Facebook page keeps current nurseries up-to-date on activities and events. With 703 followers, it also serves to communicate with and inspire potential nurseries, friends of the nurseries, and others in the industry. Regular updates share knowledge and inspiration across the nurseries.
- The Facebook page has seen a significant increase in engagements, rising from 200 to 4,350 over the past year, with consistent sharing and notifications throughout the year.

### **Increased PR activity:**

- We shared good-news stories about Te Aka Kōtuia with regional news publications, across social media and in our e-newsletter.
- The stories have been picked up by three publications, with another story about seed banking in development.
- The stories were about a community nursery getting Moths & Butterflies Accreditation, and the refresh of Te Aka Kōtuia's strategy and its impact on cultivating collaboration for ecological restoration among Auckland's 39+ native plant nurseries.

### Set up a regular community e-newsletter using Mailchimp platform:

- We have established a quarterly newsletter going to 59 subscribers. Featuring the new Te Aka Kōtuia logo and branding, the newsletter aims to build brand familiarity, as well as inform, update and inspire. We have standardised the content sections to ensure consistent and valuable information, including topics such as pest management, biosecurity, health and safety issues, events and inspiring nursery stories.
- Our recent e-newsletter had a 61% open rate with a 10.2% click rate.
- The e-newsletter subscriber list is primarily for the core nurseries and those affiliated with them and our Facebook page is for communicating our efforts to a wider audience

Te Aka Kotūia acknowledges Auckland Council support in all Communications.

### Emerging needs, opportunities & recommendations

**Facilitate Nursery Network -** Opportunity to expand the audience and grow engagement with Te Aka Kōtuia through:

- Targeted communications to engage a wider audience of nursery volunteers through Te Aka Kōtuia newsletters, social media, resources, events and activities.
- Schedule and promote Biosecurity and Biodiversity Workshops with a combination of 'open to the public' and 'tailored invite only'.
- Organise nursery visits with invites to staff/volunteers from other nurseries to join a 'peer to peer' experience, knowledge sharing session.
- Facilitate the Te Aka Kōtuia Network Hui open to all kaitiaki and community nurseries
- Facilitate the Mana Whenua Nurseries Hui, as requested, to foster collaboration across iwi, hāpu, kaitiaki nurseries
- Wider engagement with school native plant nurseries including Trees For Survival, opportunity to develop resources to grow capacity and capabilities in schools

#### Improve Management and Operations -

- Consider approaches to increase registration and implementation of Plant Pass
  - Auckland Council investigating group scheme, waiver of registration costs, introducing grants for plant pass nurseries to help bring operations up to Plant Pass standard
  - Auckland Council recommending peer to peer/ whakawhanaungatanga eg connecting with Plant Pass certified nurseries outside Auckland
  - $\circ$   $\,$  Te Aka Kōtuia support nurseries through resources and visits
- Launch the newly developed native plant nursery resources to the network. Native Plant Nursery Guide and Puka Haumaru Koiora/Nursery Biosecurity Guide
- Build capability for nurseries to develop their own Nursery Plan and/or Biosecurity Plan based on above guides/templates
- Support Māori led-approach to best practice biosecurity and biodiversity operations through programme of individual visits, facilitating collaboration across iwi nurseries, and support emerging initiatives

### Grow the Rest of the Forest -

- Nursery Plant Species Lists Design improved engagement for collection of data from nurseries to have a clear picture of what is being grown where, from which ecological district, and where these plants end up.
- Te Aka Kōtuia Nurseries Map Keep updated annually on shared platforms
- Seed Bank Continue to support the establishment of Seed Bank, and facilitate Seed to Seed Workshops.

Plant Pass - Myrtle rust hui held in February 2024 at the Auckland Botanic Gardens.



# Appendix 1. *Te Aka Kōtuia Order of Outcomes Framework* to support Strategy

#### Moemoeaa | Long term outcome (to 2070)

Diverse and complex ecosystems in the Auckland region are restored and sustained by kaitiaki and communities for their local places.

	-	<u> </u>	
Medium term outcome (to 2028)	•	Nurseries have the management and operational skills to meet their own goals.	Nurseries have significantly increased the diversity of native species being propagated in the region, with rare and difficult-to-grow plants now widely available.
*If we make sure those things happen, nurseries will			
		↑	

Te mahi   Short term (to 2025) Immediate priorities	and their native plants are defined, found and connected.	<ol> <li>Determine essential training needs of kaitiaki and community nurseries</li> <li>Document the existing training resources available</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Document which nurseries and growing what plants, from where.</li> <li>Designing training to improve knowledge of local ecological districts and their plant diversity</li> </ol>
*In order to create the conditions for the Medium and Long-term outcomes, we will make sure these things happen		3. Design and deliver bespoke training initiatives to address stated needs.	<ol> <li>Connect nurseries to mātauranga, ecological and landscape expertise to develop propagation and planting knowledge</li> <li>Develop seed-to-seed programme that provides seed source and support to gain permission to access seed sources.</li> </ol>

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Enabling essentials *We need these things in place to deliver on	place and being implemented.	Effective, diligent <b>governance</b> is advancing the programme.	Te Aka Kōtuia outcomes and	operations team is	are diverse and income is sufficient to achieve desired	
above						

Pou/ workstreams	1. Facilitate nursery network	2. Improve management and operations	3. Grow the rest of the forest
<b>Our role</b> Through facilitating networking, improving management and operations, and enriching native plant diversity, we support kaitiaki and local communities to meet their local ecological restoration aspirations and kaupapa.	Auckland region so they can support each other.	Develop nursery capability in management and operations to enable them to meet their own goals.	sourcing and growing the full complexity of plant ecosystems.