

NEWSLETTER

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Tiwaiwaka

Tiwaiwaka is a grassroots movement that has emerged as a response to the current crisis that faces the planet.



**KA ORA TE WHENUA,
KA ORA TE TANGATA.**
When the land is well, the people will be well.

More and more people are confronted with the effects of climate change. The series of natural disasters that have affected Aotearoa over the last few years are very much in the news. But what is not in the news are the little changes that people who are close to the earth are noticing; farmers, foresters, orchardists, people who live near the coast.

The Government is trying to counter these uncertainties by making the economy more resilient, as successive Governments have done for more than 150 years. Maximising and fine-tuning the

development of the country's resources is said to be the best way to ensure us our future. But will it? Can a disciplined economic policy avert the next tropical cyclone?

More and more people are realising that we are not going to find the solutions to the current issues we as a country face in the thinking that has created them. We need a new start, based on a different set of priorities.

That's where Tiwaiwaka fits.

The current paradigm that dominates the world is based on ownership and control: the planet is a resource to be managed for the benefit of those who have the power to assert their rights to control those resources. The human history over many millennia is one of struggles to compete for resources. Now we are confronted by the reality that those resources are rapidly running out.

What happens if you turn the paradigm around? We don't own the earth, we belong to it. The earth is not a resource, it's our home. We are part of the network of life, not the masters. We have rights, but only within the context of the rights of all living creatures, and of the planet itself.

That's what Tiwaiwaka is about.

The Tiwaiwaka Principles (cf. www.tiwaiwaka.nz) see this through a Māori lens, a way of highlighting an outlook found in almost every traditional culture.

The key point is that all life depends on the Earth, Papatūānuku, so caring for the Earth is always the

first priority; everything we do or decide to do must be measured against that.

A second point needs emphasising as we come to terms with the loss of biodiversity and its impacts. The key to biodiversity is not how many species there are, but how well they are connected. Life needs life to thrive. That's where "mauri" is important.

The mauri is found in the connections that enable life to thrive. A healthy forest is not one that has lots of big trees; a forest is a whanau, an extended family of a multitude of interconnected species, big and small, all needing each other to be well so that it can thrive. We need to focus on caring for those connections to better care for the different species.

What does this mean for TTT and forestry? Firstly we have to remember that the main purpose of trees isn't to grow timber or fruit, store carbon, or to beautify the landscape. Rather trees are there to cover the earth and keep it well. Healthy fully intact forests are one of the keys to combating climate change. That means the whole forest and especially the undergrowth and soils.



Tiwaiwaka hui

Photo: @GeoffReidNZ



That doesn't mean we can't harvest from our forests, or plant them to store carbon, produce fruit, etc., but we must do that in a way that doesn't negatively affect their role of caring for the Earth.

Tīwaiwaka has been growing steadily throughout Aotearoa and increasingly overseas. It is a collective of people committed to healing the mauri of the whenua.

"We bring together our gifts and abilities, networks throughout Aotearoa, many groups and individuals, all committed to realising this vision, each in our own way, regardless of culture, religion, beliefs, history....."

It works by sharing this vision and empowering more and more people to give it effect. We share a common voice that in time will embrace the whole of Aotearoa.

By following the Principles of Tīwaiwaka we have a way forward that gives us hope for the future. Keeping the whenua well is always the first priority. That is what will ensure our long-term future, especially for those generations that follow us.

Tīwaiwaka is most especially a message of hope. It is based on the fact that we really believe that if we all work together, guided by the Principles, we can successfully address the challenges that climate change brings. That means working together, not just with each other, but with the whole of the nature.

Ka ora te whenua ka ora te tangata.

When the earth is well, we are well.

Whenever you see a little Tīwaiwaka, a fantail, flutter by, remember this saying.



Photo: Pete McGregor

Tāne's Tree Trust returning to Fieldays 2026

Tāne's Tree Trust (TTT) will once again be attending the National Fieldays at Mystery Creek from 10–13 June 2026, joining the TUR Forestry Hub at site G80. The hub brings together organisations from across the forestry and wood processing sector to highlight the important role forestry plays in New Zealand's economy, environment, and rural communities.

The theme of the Forestry Hub this year is "Showcasing the Forestry and Wood Processing sector – highlighting how people, products and values provide significant economic and environmental benefits to New Zealand."

TTT's presence at the hub will focus on the role of planted native forests and restoration forestry, including practical information and resources for landowners interested in establishing and managing native trees. Visitors to the stand will be able to learn more about topics such as native forest establishment, long-term management of indigenous species, and the opportunities for integrating native forests into productive farming systems.

The Trust will also be sharing information from its ongoing work supporting landowners across New Zealand, including guidance on establishing native forests for biodiversity, future timber production, catchment protection, and carbon storage. Resources from the TTT Toolkit, case studies from demonstration sites, and information about current research programmes will be available.

Visitors are encouraged to stop by the TUR Forestry Hub at site G80 to meet the Tāne's Tree Trust team and discuss how trees, both native and exotic, can contribute to resilient and productive landscapes across New Zealand.

Trustee highlight: Rob McGowan

Tāne's Tree Trust grew out of a conversation between Warwick Silvester and myself in 1999. Warwick was a Professor at Waikato University, and I was a continuing education officer for the University's Centre for Continuing Education. There were actually a lot of people waiting to bring back the focus to native trees, and it seemed that Warwick knew them all! All we did was to provide the spark to get things moving. TTT was the result of that.

I have a very different background to Warwick. I grew up mostly in Whanganui and for many years I was a Catholic priest, working with Māori communities, initially on the Whanganui River, and then in Hawke's Bay and the Bay of Plenty. When I came back to Whanganui in 1974 as a young priest, I already was passionate about the bush. That was the way I had been brought up. The River people took me in hand and helped me to see the bush in a different way. The forest was not just a place with lots of trees and plants, many of them very useful, but a whānau, a family, a place in which I belonged. That was the foundation of my knowledge and understanding of Aotearoa's natural world.

My main focus over the last 35 years has been helping keep alive the knowledge and practice of rongoā Māori, traditional Māori medicine, as Māori understand it. Rongoā is much more than plant medicine. It's about healing the connections that make a person who they are, their personal mana, integrity, and all the things they need to be well. Being healthy isn't just about the absence of symptoms; it's about everything that makes us who we are, including where we belong.



Loneliness can be a state of ill health, and can lead to all sorts of things that makes us unwell; diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. The major cause for so many of the issues that today trouble Māori stems directly from loss of connection to the whenua, their ancestral land, the foundation of their identity, and of the many things that make them who they are, their language and culture.

It has always been a mystery to me why rongoā Māori has not been incorporated into the NZ health system. It has much to offer, and now when so many people struggle to access even basic medical needs, it could make a considerable contribution. Like in so many of the places I have worked, as a priest, an educator, and in conservation, there remains a great reluctance from mainstream New Zealand to accept what Māori have to offer.

After I resigned from the ministry I first worked in a nursery, then for several years for the Tauranga Moana Māori Trust Board. During that time I was first a member and then chair of the BOP Conservation Board. I began working at Waikato University in 1991. I left there in 2003 to work for Nga Whenua Rahui, the Māori equivalent to the Queen Elizabeth Trust. I worked with many different iwi throughout the country, helping to support them in caring for their whenua and retaining and re-establishing the mātauranga (traditional knowledge)

that belonged there. The work enabled me to travel all over the country and to many places most people have never heard of. It involved many aspects of biodiversity management, from site assessment, developing restoration plans, establishing native plant nurseries, working with regional and district councils, and most of all working with the people on the ground who were making things happen. Most of the land in the North Island that is of high biodiversity value still in private ownership is owned by Māori. However they lack the resources to care for it. Most of the land is uneconomic, so almost everybody has had to move away to find homes and work. NWR was set up to support the landowners in caring for the biodiversity on their lands, and to help reconnect them back to their whenua.

Now that I have "retired", working with rongoā and promoting Tiwaiwaka take up most of my time. In many ways Tiwaiwaka brings together almost everything I've been involved with. We need to reconnect to the whenua for our own health, and the health of the planet that is our home.

It's worth noting that the most important traditional rongoā is water, clean healthy water. That water comes from a healthy landscape, and especially healthy forests. The water we drink needs forests to be well, as do all the plants we use as rongoā. That's why TTT is so important to me. Tane's Tree trust is about healing the whenua, bringing back the trees and forest that keep the land well. Ka ora te whenua, ka ora te tangata.

DONATIONS: A note from the Treasurer - all members should be aware that all donations (but not subscriptions), are eligible for a 33.33% tax rebate on your income tax. If required, we can send you a receipt of donation for you to submit to IRD with your tax return.

Help Create a Living Legacy: Support Tāne's Tree Trust



Aotearoa New Zealand was once heavily forested, but most of our native forest (ngahere) has been lost, leaving our land vulnerable.

Our ngahere is our most powerful life-support system - purifying our water, sequestering carbon dioxide and producing the oxygen we breathe, protecting our land and unique biodiversity, and providing resilience against the impacts of climate change.

At [Tāne's Tree Trust](#), we are dedicated to weaving native forests back into our landscape, to complement rather than compete with current land uses.

[We bridge knowledge gaps](#) and champion best practices to help New Zealanders successfully establish and sustainably manage our [natural heritage for centuries](#) to come.

How You Can Help

Whether through a one-off donation or a lasting gift in your will, your support will help ensure our ngahere thrives for future generations:

- **Donate Today:** Your contribution will support [current research projects](#) and workshops that help New Zealanders to successfully establish and sustainably manage native forest. You can [make a donation via our website](#).

- **Leave a Bequest:** A gift in your will creates a permanent legacy. Bequests are simple to set up and can take many forms - a [fixed sum, a percentage of your estate, or specific assets](#). Whether large or small, these gifts provide the long-term stability needed to protect our land in perpetuity.

Your generosity helps shape a resilient, vibrant Aotearoa. Together, we can leave a living heritage that will flourish long after we are gone.

For a confidential discussion about making a donation or leaving a bequest, or to learn more about our projects, please email us at office@tanestrees.org.nz



Photos from the recent field day at [Cassie's Farm & Woolshed](#). The field day was part of the NZFFA Conference 'Small Forests - Big Future'.

Photos: Jacqui Aimers

