

The background features a watercolor illustration of green leaves and gold dots. The leaves are in various shades of green, with some having visible veins. The gold dots are small and scattered, with a larger cluster in the top left and a smaller one in the bottom right. The overall style is soft and artistic.

Annual Report

Āwhitu Peninsula Landcare Inc
2023

*A rejuvenated Āwhitu where native
wildlife flourishes in healthy
ecosystems, cherished and supported
by the people.*

Committee Report

Landcare is growing from strength to strength. With new projects and increased funding, we have been able to strengthen our organisational structure. We have appointed a manager; formalised our operational teams (with Te Korowai team under the leadership of Nicky Reynolds and the Pest Control team led by Sam Whitley); and we are further developing our partnership with Ngāti Te Ata.

As you'll read, we've expanded our activities to include controlling pest plants, complementing our revegetation and pest control mahi. Our teams continue to exceed plant production targets and we're progressing well with keeping predator numbers under control.

Whilst this year the committee was without a convenor, we were fortunate to secure the service of Alison Brown as Interim Manager, until we could appoint a permanent manager. We were delighted to welcome Sarah Mansell in January 2023, who has been working alongside Alison in a part-time capacity and will shortly be moving to full-time.

Alison will be finishing in her role at the end of June. She has made an enormous contribution to the organisation over the years, as both convenor and this year as interim manager, leading the organisation into its new phase. The committee would like to thank and acknowledge Alison for the tremendous work that she has contributed to Landcare.

The committee would also like to thank the staff, volunteers, Ngāti Te Ata, participants of our projects and all the community, for the great work we are doing together to preserve and enhance the biodiversity of our beautiful peninsula. And, of course, we thank our funders, without whom none of our achievements would be possible.

The year ahead is looking exciting, with plans for more community events and opportunities to learn more about caring for our wonderful environment. We encourage and welcome your participation and involvement in any of our various, rewarding activities.

He waka eke noa! We are all in this together! Now is a great time to join us in our fulfilling work.

Barbara Wilkinson
On behalf of the Landcare Committee



Committee members Anna McNaughton, Jude Bosworth, Sally Clegg, Alison Brown and Brian Hamilton (left to right). Not pictured: Ailsa Carroll, Barbara Wilkinson, Debby Bradley and Jane Patterson.

Managers Report

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tatou katoa.

It has been my pleasure to be part of Āwhitu Peninsula Landcare from January. I was excited to join the team - I'm a child of Waiuku, long-time conservationist and am very enthusiastic about birds - and Āwhitu has blown my expectations out of the water.

Āwhitu seems full to bursting of incredible people - from the vibrant personalities at Landcare and Coastcare, to the warm leaders and supporters from Ngāti Te Ata, to the hardworking community pest trappers, to the landowners committed to restoring native ecosystems, to the businesses happy to lend a hand.

Behind this amazing community are a group of funders who share our vision of a restored Āwhitu. They provide the resources to enable us, the knowledge to guide us, and from time to time they muck in with us to get the job done.

With a support network like this, it feels as though anything is possible. That we can restore native ecosystems, reintroduce lost species, and protect those that remain. That we can give back to our community. That we can move forward in partnership with Ngāti Te Ata for the benefit of all.

As I look to the future, I stand tall on the shoulders of giants. To all those who have gone before, those who have welcomed me in, and those who are on their way to help: ngā mihi maioha. Thank you.

*Toitū te marae a Tane-Mahuta, toitū te marae a Tangaroa,
toitū te tangata.*

If the land is well and the sea is well, the people will thrive.

Sarah Mansell
Manager



Eco-sourced native plants growing in the Āwhitu Peninsula Landcare nursery.



The covered propagation area, generously funded by MPI.



Windbreak surrounds the nursery, providing shelter from extreme events like Cyclone Gabrielle.

Te Korowai o Papatūānuku

The goal of Te Korowai o Papatūānuku is to grow 250,000 eco-sourced native plants for sites of ecological and cultural significance. Āwhitu Landcare have partnered with Ngāti Te Ata Waiohū and Auckland Council to achieve this, and we are funded by the Ministry for Primary Industries. The project also relies on the efforts of volunteers and local community members.

Number of Plants Propagated

In winter of 2022, we delivered nearly 90,000 plants to 31 sites across the Āwhitu Peninsula, including over 17,000 to local marae and pā sites. 72,000 plants went to landowner projects in biodiversity focus areas, taking landowners an estimated 3,200 hours to plant and maintain.

The trees begin to leave the nursery in autumn, with propagation beginning as early as December the previous year. We have since grown another 103,000 native plants which will go to 43 sites in winter 2023.

Since the beginning of Te Korowai in 2020, we have grown over 230,000 plants for the restoration of the Āwhitu Peninsula; over 90% of our 4-year target. We expect that number to be over 300,000 by the end of 2024.

Plant Species

Each year, we propagate seeds from 10-15 different native species, representative of our local ecosystems: coastal dune; forest remnant; waterways, wetlands and catchments.

We are dependent on the species that are available in our ecological area each season. Our local contractor, Sharplin Tree Services, continues to harvest most of the seeds for us. We also make use of a seed bank we established in 2021.

The plants we propagated in the highest numbers were kānuka, mānuka, ti kouka, harakeke, toetoe, koromiko, whau, umbrella sedge, and wetland grasses.

We also propagated a variety of enrichment species, including kauri, kōwhai, totara, wharangi and nikau.

For the first time since the beginning of the Te Korowai project, we have been able to harvest kahikatea seed. We expect these plants will be ready for wetland sites in 2025.

Site Visits

15 of our planting sites for 2023 are new to the program. Our nursery team arranged site visits for these in order to establish a planting plan.

Ngāti Te Ata representatives accompanied Landcare on these site visits to identify and protect the many wāhi tapu that exist on private land throughout the peninsula.

We are extremely fortunate to have guidance from the kaitiaki and kaumātua of Ngāti Te Ata.

Plant Survival

After the extreme rain of Auckland Anniversary weekend, and with Cyclone Gabrielle just weeks later, Āwhitu experienced wide-spread slips. Five established Te Korowai sites were severely impacted with some 11,000 trees lost.

Despite this, the average survival rate for the 2022 plantings was 76% (compared with 79% for 2021).

Training and Development

Five staff members have been studying towards a Certificate in Horticulture or Environmental Management, with three finishing mid-2023. The knowledge and skills they have gained are invaluable to the Te Korowai project.

We welcomed an intern from Ngāti Te Ata to the team for the last quarter of 2022. Though her time with Landcare was brief, we valued her contributions.

Community Engagement

In July, we ran a seed sowing workshop for the community. We contribute to the care of the Matakawau Domain and the edible gardens at Āwhitu District School.

We have a presence at the local market days in Pollok and Matakawau (often alongside Āwhitu Coastcare), and have had three schools visit our nursery.

Te Rōpū Paihere o Āwhitu

Thanks to our governance group, Te Rōpū Paihere o Āwhitu, for their guidance of the Te Korowai project. Te Rōpū includes representatives of Ngāti Te Ata and Auckland Council.

Rōhutu

Intensive monitoring of Āwhitu's rōhutu population by Scion indicated that the plants were unable to reproduce in the wild due to the effects of myrtle rust. With the support of Ngāti Te Ata and Auckland Council, and with guidance from Scion and Plant and Food Research, Āwhitu Landcare have been contributing to research to prevent local extinction.

In September 2022, Āwhitu Landcare began work to protect rōhutu plants (*Lophomyrtus obcordata*) from myrtle rust.

Our nursery team, as well as an intern with a particular focus on rōhutu, have undertaken a regular fungal spray schedule to protect 27 trial plants.

As a direct result of their efforts, the plants have been able to fruit - a critical step in protecting this species. It is expected that half of this seed will be sent to the Auckland Botanic Gardens, and half will be propagated by our nursery team at a satellite site (to protect the nursery from myrtle rust).

A significant amount of cutting material has also been taken which is to be used for research purposes.

This work has made a considerable contribution to the nationwide research being carried out on myrtle rust. We hope to continue this collective work into the future.

We are grateful for the expert guidance of Auckland Council, Plant and Food Research and Scion. We also thank Lighthouse Station for supporting us to access the rōhutu.



Left: Rōhutu plants at Manukau Heads, Āwhitu. Right: a close up of rōhutu flowers (Simon Walls, NZPCN).

Pest Plants

Controlling invasive plants is an integral part of the restoration of Āwhitu. With funding from Auckland Council and Goldman Sachs Gives, Landcare has begun to ramp up our work in this area.

In November 2022, Auckland Council contracted Landcare to contribute to their pest-plant buffer programme. In particular, they wanted us to help remove the climbing asparagus found around Āwhitu Regional Park.

Working in partnership with Sharplin Tree Services, we began to engage with the households within the buffer area, to find out if they had climbing asparagus and if they were interested in us removing it.

Where the weed was present and the owners were happy for us to proceed, Sharplin Tree Services have sprayed the invasive plants.

We see this mahi as a starting point in a broader weed control program.

In the coming year, we intend to undertake more engagement with the local community on pest plants, including running some workshops on the identification and control of invasive weeds.

Goldman Sachs Gives has generously contributed to the costs of this community engagement.



The Manukau Heads, overlooking Huia. Access has been disrupted by a major slip.

Predator Control

Controlling introduced pest animals is a crucial part of conservation in any area of Aotearoa New Zealand, and Āwhitu is no exception. Invasive mammals threaten our remnant forest and native animals. With support and funding from Auckland Council and the Department of Conservation, we have continued our efforts to reduce the impact of these invasive animals on the Āwhitu Peninsula.

Invasive predator control has been a focus of Landcare for many years. We are extremely grateful for the ongoing support of Auckland Council, who are longtime funders of this mahi.

Landcare staff manage a trap and bait network, but we are also reliant on the efforts of the community to help keep pest predator numbers down.

Possum Control

In many ways, possums are a logical priority for pest control: they browse intensely enough to kill mature trees; they predate native chicks and eggs; they can spread diseases to farms; and they breed slowly, which makes it easier to have a larger and longer impact on possum populations than on other pests.

As such, possums continue to be the predominant focus of our pest control.

We have managed a network of 70 possum traps, some of which are moved to new locations to target areas of high possum density. Over the year, these traps removed over 100 possums. We removed another 90 possums through shooting.

Additionally, we have 48 bait runs. Each month, we have used an average of 80kg of Brodifacoum to supply our bait stations. It is likely that this toxin is removing many more possums than trapping or shooting.

Possum Monitoring

One method of monitoring possum numbers is called Residual Trap Catch (RTC). A new series of traplines is established, and the number of possums caught is expressed as a percentage of the number of traps set.



Two possums on a trail camera around a Landcare bait station

Independent monitoring done by Qualmons in early 2023 showed an overall result of 7.59% RTC, with the northern peninsula as low as 4.46% and the southern as high as 10.95%.

Our target is an RTC of 5% or less.

Barrier Project

To prevent reinvasion of possums from the south, Landcare have been establishing a 'barrier' network below Pollok using smart technology.

We installed 25 Tāwhiti live-capture traps, as well as a solar gateway to provide the connectivity for these traps to 'talk' to Trap.NZ. The cages have proven to be very effective, removing over 130 pest animals in the first six months.

In the coming year, we will be adding 60 possum kill traps to the barrier.

Mustelid Control

We also manage a network of 70 mustelid traps. Over the year, these caught 230 pest animals, including 30 mustelids (stoats, ferrets and weasels). Although these traps do not target rats, they caught over 150.

Community Pest Control

The local community undertake a significant amount of pest control mahi on the peninsula, which Landcare supports through the provision of bait, traps and advice.

Over the year, we helped over 260 residents to manage over 1500 bait stations and 300 traps (focusing on rats, possums and mustelids).

Community traps removed over 300 pest animals from the peninsula. Not all trappers are active on Trap.NZ, so the real figure could be much higher.

Te Ara Hikoi

We have partnered with the Jobs For Nature team at Te Ara Hikoi to increase our pest control capacity. Their kaitiaki team have picked up work in several biodiversity focus areas, enabling us to increase our efforts elsewhere.

Infrastructure

With significant increases to our projects and resourcing, we identified a need for more capacity to successfully manage our work and to keep building on the incredible foundation that has been set. Foundation North have joined as a new supporter and funder of Āwhitu Landcare to help us build the capacity and structure that we need.

Management

We have been fortunate to have a skilled and proactive Committee that has contributed to both the leadership and operations of Landcare. However, with the recent increase to the number of projects and the amount of work being delivered, it was identified that a manager role was needed.

In late 2022, when Foundation North agreed to fund us, Alison Brown stepped down as Convener to coordinate our various projects and ensure they work together to achieve our intended outcomes. In January 2023, the Committee appointed Sarah Mansell to the manager role.

Landcare is very grateful to Alison for establishing this new role, and for the extensive handover process she has undertaken to ensure the transition to a new manager goes smoothly.

The manager role will lead the development of a refreshed organizational strategy with a focus on our desired outcomes and financial sustainability, as well as support the delivery of our many projects.



Alison Brown (left) and Sarah Mansell (right).

Kaitiakitanga

Ngāti Te Ata have been a key partner of Landcare for many years. The Te Korowai project formalised our relationship in some areas, particularly around site visits and governance (see page 4 for more information). We wanted to build on the foundation that had been set and further integrate mātauranga Māori into our practice through a kaitiaki plan and role.

By early 2023, Ngāti Te Ata had developed a draft kaitiaki plan and shared that with Landcare for discussion. We are now in the process of workshoping through this together, with a focus on our shared environmental outcomes and how we can collaborate to achieve these.

This plan will also guide the work of the kaitiaki role.

Community Programme

The grant from Foundation North also covers an annual programme of community education, with workshops and resources to empower community hubs.

Development of this programme is underway.

Communications

The final part of our infrastructure programme is an upgrade of our website and communications, with support from a professional to develop a strategy and begin its implementation.

During the year, we connected with a communications professional, who has developed an action plan to address our priorities. We have since formalised an agreement and are looking forward to making significant improvements to our communications in the coming year.

Āwhitu Coastcare

Āwhitu Coastcare is a community-led organisation, whose aim is to encourage education and protection of Āwhitu's dynamic coastline. Coastcare and Landcare work closely together to achieve our shared environmental goals.

Āwhitu Coastcare have continued to organise critical environmental work on the peninsula, including the minding of dotterel nests, restorative dune plantings and coastal rubbish surveys.

Landcare have indirectly supported this work through our arrangement with Coastcare. We umbrella the organisation, providing financial administration and access to office resources.

A representative of Āwhitu Coastcare holds a seat on the Landcare committee, ensuring that Coastcare has a voice at a governance level. This year, Anna McNaughton has held this role, in which she has made a valuable contribution towards both organisations.

We look forward to collaborating with Coastcare on more environmental projects in the coming year.



Coastal back-dune with regenerating cover, following restorative work by Coastcare.

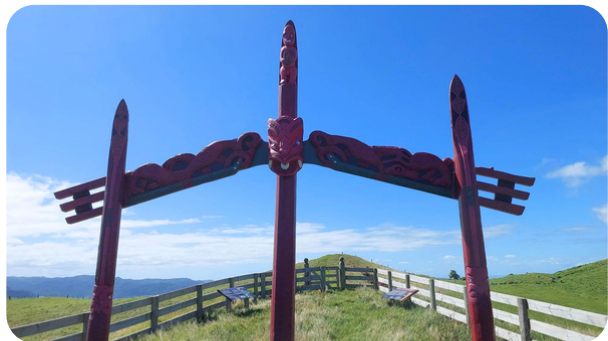
Cultural Site Mapping

In June 2022, the Franklin Local Board provided funding for Landcare and Ngāti Te Ata to map historic Ngāti Te Ata sites using GIS software.

George Flavell (Ngāti Te Ata Waiohū) has dedicated more than 30 years to identifying and protecting significant cultural sites on the Āwhitu Peninsula, and was recently awarded the Queen's Service Medal for his work.

Jude Bosworth, a Landcare Committee member, offered to help George to geolocate these sites using GIS mapping software. With support from the Franklin Local Board, George and Jude have been able to work together to establish a GIS database of these important places.

It has been a pleasure to contribute to George's work.



The tohu at Mahaniani, carved by George Flavell and his whānau, representing the whakapapa of Ngāti Te Ata.

Treasurer's Report

Financial Performance

As with last year, the bulk of our income and activity (almost 59%) is related to the MPI-funded Te Korowai o Papatūānuku initiative.

28% is related to grants from Auckland Council covering a number of areas of work in pest animal and pest plant control.

In addition, in August 2022 a new funding stream from Foundation North was approved. This funding will cover operating and program costs, capacity and capability-building including funding for a kaitiaki role with Ngāti Te Ata. Within this financial year we received \$236,000.

The surplus for the year of \$50,000 compares with the previous year of \$39,000.

Unspent conditional grant funding is recognised as a liability and does not contribute to that surplus.

Profit and Loss as of 31 March, 2023.

Revenue	\$610,822
Expenses	\$560,719
Surplus	\$50,103

Financial Position

At 31 March 2023, our cash balance totaled \$876,000; a significant increase from the \$463,000 on hand at the end of March 2022.

The significant cash balances continue as project roll out lags behind receipt of funding.

Net assets have increased by \$50,000, in line with profit for the year.

Āwhitu Landcare has regular contact with our funders, who have provided us with flexibility where needed.

Total accumulated funds at 31 March 2023 stood at \$244,400.

Balance Sheet as of 31 March, 2023.

Assets	\$987,054
Liabilities	\$742,648
Accumulated Funds	\$244,406

Debby Bradley
Treasurer, Landcare Committee

A full copy of the financial statements are available on request.

Thanks to our Partners, Funders and Supporters

As well as our members, volunteers, employees and committee members.

Ngāti Te Ata Waiohū

Āwhitu Coastcare

Te Ara Hiko

Scion

Plant and Food Research

Lighthouse Station

Sharplin Tree Services

Pollok Hall

Ministry For Primary Industries

Auckland Council

Foundation North

Franklin Local Board

Goldman Sachs Gives

Coca-Cola

Waiuku College

Āwhitu District School



