

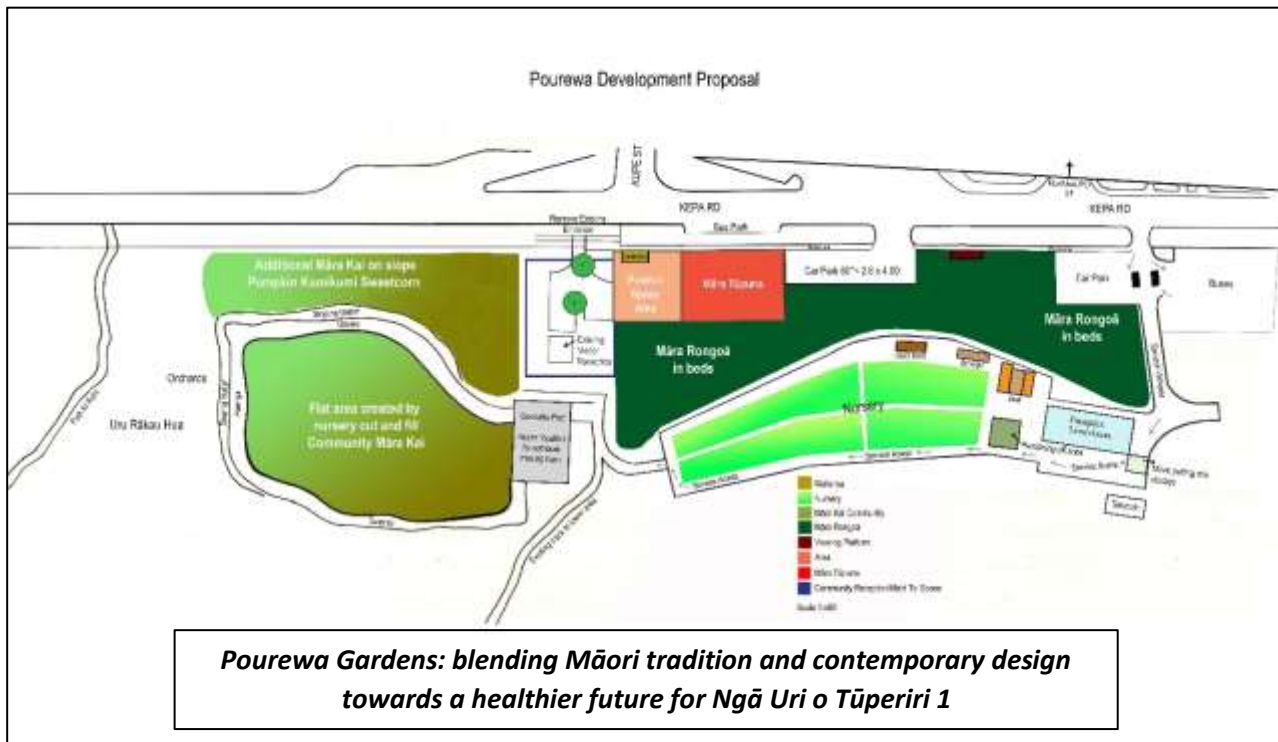
Pourewa Creek Recreation Reserve

This reserve, 33.625 hectares of land beside Pourewa Estuary was returned to Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei in 2012 by the Crown as part of the Waitangi Tribunal Treaty settlement. The area is now co-governed by the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Trust and Auckland Council through Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Reserves Board.



Auckland Council 2017 GeoMap

After St Heliers Bay Pony Club lease expired in 2018, the Ōkahu Rākau Native Bush Care and Nursery relocated from the Whenua Rangatira with the establishment of the Pourewa Reserve. This very impressive nursery is now growing up to 400,000 native plants.



Pourewa Gardens: blending Māori tradition and contemporary design towards a healthier future for Ngā Uri o Tūperiri 1



View over nursery area July 2021

Ngā Kite Hauora Nō
Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei
These gardens provide for native
plant restoration, propagation
and education.

In addition, there is continuing
research into Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei
Tāmaki Plant Collection.

Aligned with the gardens, there will
be a

dedicated space for rongoā preparation.

Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei are developing this whole area
as a public space with many local iwi members being
involved the implementation process.²



Shade houses July 2021



Potting tables July 2021

[Rongoā is traditional
Māori medicine –
a system of healing that
was passed on orally].

At this stage (July 2021)
significant progress has been made
with the nursery development
as shown in these pictures.

The nursery team has grown
a wide range of native plants
from locally sourced seed for
supply to local organisations
and the reforestation of
Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei land areas.



Preparing potted natives to for planting (July 2021)

Overview of Māra Kai Garden

Story and pictures by Jan Power (Eastern Bays Songbird Project Publicity Officer) May 2021³



***“Restore a forest, feed the people, teach the children
Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei’s vision already taking shape”***

Driving along busy Kapa Rd, concentrating on the traffic, it would be easy to miss something remarkable taking shape just over the fence. It is the genesis of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei’s ecological restoration project that in years to come will cover most of the 33 hectares of Pourewa Valley in native forest running down to Pourewa Stream.

Already a large vegetable garden has been established on the sunny north-west slope near the road. The produce is feeding the whānau of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei as well as being donated to food banks and other needy causes.

The iwi’s long-term vision is to restore the valley’s original forest cover with native trees grown in their own nursery on site. Planting dates in the gardens and the nursery are influenced by phases of the moon according to Māori world view and tikanga. They currently employ 16 kaimahi (workers) from Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Whai Maia Ltd, who plant and manage the gardens and nursery.

Their target — a million native trees from a seedbank with a local (Ōrākei) whakapapa — sounds ambitious, but already, a motivated team of young workers under Wendy Watts (Nursery Team Lead) has raised 400,000 small but sturdy seedlings in the sheltered, enclosed nursery is adjacent to the eco pods fitted with solar panels and compostable toilets.

A hundred or so metres along the road is the extensive māra kai (food garden) which, although established only in October 2020, is already flourishing as New Zealand’s first ethno-organic garden.



Rob Small, Māra Kai Curator



**Etienne Neho, Kaimahi,
Māra Kai**



**Wendy Watts,
Nursery Team Lead**

“No Round-up or tanalised timber here,”

says Rob Small (Curator, Māra Kai)
as he shows visitors the flourishing vegetable crops
ranging from kumara and puha to herbs and artichokes.

Privet was choking Pourewa Stream at the bottom of the valley ... it has been pulled out and is being used as a mulch for growing mushrooms; 1.2 tonnes are expected to be harvested this year.

Possoms that had established themselves in the valley, devouring the tender leaves, buds, flowers and fruit of native trees, have been largely knocked back by a vigorous trapping programme with help from the Eastern Bays Songbird Project (Manu Tī Oriori) and volunteers.

The iwi has formed alliances with community groups — including Ōrākei Local Board and Eastern Bays Songbird Programme — that have complementary aims to restore environments and nurture native flora and fauna.

Visitors and volunteers are welcome to visit the nursery and gardens. Children, the future kaitiaki of the land, are especially encouraged to take part in workshops learning how to care for land, water, plants and trees, as well as discovering how various parts of the trees are traditionally used. It is an open invitation — not just confined to neighbouring schools. One lucky class from South Auckland even stayed the night on the marae.

Grand Concept Plans

There are grand concept plans to develop the whole area that are set out on the **Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Visual Framework website**

https://ngatiwhatuaorakei.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2018-12-03-Ōrākei-Visual-Framework_Print-Small-LowQ.pdf

Whilst Pourewa is Māori owned, it has a strong focus on community involvement.

These exciting concepts as they develop over time will make the whole Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei area into an even more important place for Auckland, New Zealand and international visitors.

Māori indigenous culture that cares for the land and the whole environment is vital value for the future of New Zealand.

Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei are to be congratulated on their vision and community spirit to welcome all people on to their home area.

They do this following a century of strife and anguish during which they became effectively landless as an iwi until the Waitangi Tribunal hearings recognised the injustice they had suffered.



History of Land Purchases

The land was purchased by the Crown in ten blocks from Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei in the period 1913 to 1924 when it was passed to Department of Lands and Survey to administer. In 1942 State housing commenced in Ōrākei.

Various schemes for housing along the south side of Kepa Road opposite Kupe Street were investigated, but only the area in Brenton Place with St Joseph's Catholic school and surrounding area was considered suitable for subdivision. Other areas were considered too unstable for housing purposes.⁴

St Heliers Bay Pony Club took up the lease of the whole area in 1963 on the understanding that the land could be required for other purposes in the future. In 1987 when the Department of Lands and Survey was disestablished, the Department of Conservation became responsible.

The Pony Club lease continued until 2018, well after Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei had the land returned to them as part of their Treaty settlement.

The Pourewa Creek Recreational Reserve Management Plan, August 2016 sets out the objectives and plans for implementation.⁵

References

Pourewa Creek Recreation Reserve

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Auckland Council archives team have provided information about the history of Lands and Survey and Department and the Department of Conservation involvement in the land.