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NGĀPUHI RUNANGA & TE PUNI KŌKIRI PARTNERSHIP BEARS FRUIT FOR WHĀNAU

On Friday 22 June, over 100 fruit trees will be delivered to Ngāpuhi whānau living in the rural mid-north.

This planting and food supply initiative is part of the Rural Regeneration programme and partnership between the Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi and Te Puni Kōkiri to provide practical help and support to vulnerable Ngāpuhi whānau living in the rural areas of the Hokianga, Horeke, Otatau, Waima and Tautoro.

Established in January 2017, the programme has already helped 20 whānau and their homes in dire need of urgent and essential repairs, and created opportunities to help them address immediate health and social needs.

Some of the assistance provided to whānau has included:

- Repairing leaking roofs
- Remediating inadequate clean water supply
- Upgrading electrical to be safe & compliant
- Installing sewerage system and flush toilets
- Replacing failed septic tanks
- Installing hot water systems.

Some of the 'wrap around services' of the programme encourages the development of initiatives to help whānau sustain themselves, and the productive use of their plots of land.

Ngāpuhi Rūnanga Housing Coordinator Kara George says *“many of these whānau located in deep rural situations remember when their tūpuna (ancestors), kaumātua and kuia (elders) grew a variety of food that augmented their living situation. The community thrived because the gardens thrived”*.

The 'supermarket mentality' has seen an erosion of the pride and practice in growing food and living off the land. The urban drift of 60's and 70's has also played a part in the abandonment of the land. However, in recent years, descendants have returned, repopulating the old homes and rejuvenating the lands, marae and communities.

Discussion and feedback with whānau provided strong support for the planting of fruit trees around their houses where they can be easily maintained. They suggested that citrus varieties such as oranges, lemons, mandarins, feijoas, plums and apple would best serve their needs.

More than 200 fruit trees have been delivered so far, with another 200 being delivered over the coming weeks.

Ngāpuhi Rūnanga CEO, Lorraine Toki says, *"many whānau used to have fruit trees surrounding their whare and small garden plots. An opportunity presented itself to partner with Te Puni Kōkiri and help bring back some of the traditional food practices, to provide healthy sustainable kai options"*.

Whānau who have received urgent home repairs and fruit trees, have noticed a tremendous lift in their lifestyle approaches and whānau spirits, especially amongst kaumātua and kuia - in being able to demonstrate and realise the practices of awahi (support), manaaki (care) and tiaki (guardianship).

As one kuia from Utukura was heard to say to her mokopuna (grandchild) on a recent visit:

"Mā te Atua e manaaki i a mātou i ngā wā katoa- mā tātou e tiaki i a tātou anō, i te wā e ora ai tātou!"

Let God take care of us all of the time – whilst we take care of ourselves for the time we are here!"

The next delivery of fruit trees to whānau living in Taheke and Otua is scheduled for Friday 22 June, weather dependent.

Ends.

Enquiries and interview requests:

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