

THE AHUWHENUA TROPHY TE KAWERONGO

JULY 2023

»» Māori horticultures big night

There were jubilant scenes as Wi Pere Trust based near Gisborne was declared the winner of this year's Ahuwhenua Trophy for the top Māori horticultural enterprise. This is the second time in a row that Wi Pere has won this prestigious trophy – last year they won it for their sheep and beef operation.

The announcement was made by the Minister for Māori Development, the Hon Willie Jackson at the Ahuwhenua Trophy awards dinner held in the Tauranga, and attended by over 900 people. Guests included, Associate Agriculture Minister, Hon Jo Luxton, Sir Tumu and Lady Susan Te Heuheu, representatives of the Kiingitanga, along with diplomats, other representatives of central and local government, agribusiness leaders and whānau from all the finalists. Wi Pere whānau came on stage to join in the celebrations, where Trudy Meredith, trustee and granddaughter of Wi Pere, the founder of the trust received the coveted Ahuwhenua Trophy.

Minister Jackson congratulated all the finalists and winners in both the Ahuwhenua Trophy competition and the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower Award. He told the gathering that these awards are always an incredibly special occasion which sees whānau come together and have a great evening, relishing the chance to celebrate history in a very special way. He says the achievements of Māori have long been underrated and while there are many other problems in the country, it seems quite ironic that the Māori economy is going through the roof and is worth up to \$80 billion.

Trudy Meredith says winning the Ahuwhenua Trophy was absolutely wonderful. She says her legs were shaking when she went on stage to receive the trophy and says her ancestor Wi Pere, would have been amazed at the Trust winning the Ahuwhenua Trophy for the second year in a row. She says it has been an extraordinarily strong competition and all the competitors have learned so much from each other.

"I thought we had gaps in our business where Ngāi Tukairangi and MIL-Whiritoa Orchards had many strengths – so everybody's taken lessons back from each other," she said.

AHUWHENUA TROPHY
EXCELLENCE IN
MĀORI HORTICULTURE
AWARD
2023



Trudy Meredith says she was delighted to learn about the level of support they had in the district. She says their win is important and means a lot for the people of Tairāwhiti because of what it has gone through.

Nukuhia Hadfield, Chair of the Ahuwhenua Trophy Management Committee, said it has been a difficult year for most growers and farmers in the primary sector, but especially hard for all the finalists in the competition. She said a combination and accumulation of events such as frosts, floods and other unseasonal conditions created major problems for all the entrants. She says despite this adversity, all the finalists remained in the competition and put together exceptionally good field days to showcase their respective orchards.

"I would not like to have been a judge in these circumstances, but certainly full praise to Wi Pere Trust for being judged the winner. I have seen their property and they are very worthy winners. But having said that, all the finalists have once again demonstrated the strength and excellence of Māori horticulture," she said.



L-R: Dave Samuels, Secretary for Māori Development; Kingi Smiler, Wi Pere Trust; Hon Willie Jackson, Minister for Māori Development; Trudy Meredith, Wi Pere Trust; and Hon Jo Luxton, Associate Minister of Agriculture.

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WINNER OF AHUWHENUA YOUNG MĀORI GROWER IN LOVE WITH KAUPAPA



*Grace Rehu, winner
of the Ahuwhenua
Young Māori Grower
Award 2023.*

The winner of the 2023 Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower is Grace Rehu, Rangitāne, Taranaki.

Grace Rehu, 21, is a Leading Hand for Turners and Growers in Puketapu, Hawke's Bay. The announcement was made by Te Hāmua Nikora, Pou Tikanga, Te Tumu Paeroa at the recent Ahuwhenua Trophy awards dinner.

The other finalists in the competition are:

Alix Te Kere, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Tu, Ngāti Maru, and Ngāti Maniapoto. Alix, 30, is the Health and Safety Advisor for Rockit Management Services.

Erica Henare, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Maniapoto. Erica, 27, is the Pip fruit and Kiwifruit Manager at Kono.

Grace Rehu says being part of the competition was an amazing experience and opportunity, she said she could never have done it without the support of the two other finalists by her side. She admits she was pushed into entering the competition without really knowing what was involved. But Grace says as her participation in the competition evolved, she fell in love with the kaupapa and kept on going.

Aaron Hunt, one of the judges, says the industry is in good hands with these three wāhine toa. As part of the judging process the finalists attended an intensive three-day study tour designed to provide a range of insights, inspiration, and experiences across the horticultural sector. This included a trip to Zespri, a visit to Matakana Island to see Whai Orchard, a kiwifruit operation, Opure ra Trust an avocado orchard, and a berry orchard which is a joint venture with five Māori Trusts.

"All three finalists are amazing. The growth in them over the course of the judging programme was phenomenal. They were all taken out of their comfort zone over the course of the study tour, but all of them took in absolutely everything."

He said Grace demonstrated the three values of the judging criteria: Manaakitanga – looking after others, Whānaungatanga – engagement, and Mana Motuhake – being authentic, and she was well supported by the other two finalists, her partner, her whānau and her employer throughout her Ahuwhenua journey. Although Grace is only 21, clearly age is not a barrier to her maturity.

Ahuwhenua Trophy book launched and on sale now!

Another awards dinner highlight was the launch of a book about the history of the Ahuwhenua Trophy tracing its 90-year history. This is the revised edition of the book published 10 years ago and updates how the competition has evolved since then.

There are new chapters that cover the competition from 2014 to 2021, the origins of modern Māori horticulture from 1840-1860 and the disposition of Māori lands from 1858 to 1912. During the period up to the 1860's Māori were by far the major growers and suppliers of both local and export produce in Aotearoa.

Today Māori land is less than 6% of New Zealand. This is the result of the systemic and serial nature of Crown Māori land acquisition policy from 1860 to 1920.

These chapters provide a clear context of the instigation by



Ta Apirana Ngata of his Māori development schemes in 1929 and the launch of the Ahuwhenua Competition in 1933.

The Ahuwhenua Competition in no small measure has contributed to the strengthening and immeasurable transformation of the Māori economy.

The book itself is an amazing historical record of the growth and development of Māori agriculture, but it also provides fascinating insights into the overall history of the New Zealand primary sector.

Every company should have a copy available in their office, and it makes the perfect gift for visiting dignitaries and guests.

We encourage sponsors and supporters of Ahuwhenua to buy this wonderful taonga and to share with clients.

\$65.00 plus postage

Visit the Ahuwhenua website or scan the QR code to place your order.

www.ahuwhenuatrophy.maori.nz



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Field days highlight finalists' excellence

MIL - Whiritoa Orchard

Despite disruptions with extreme weather events and a whole lot of other challenges such as labour shortages and ongoing problems with Covid-19, all the finalists staged amazing and very well attended field days at their respective orchards. The field days are a competition tradition that allow members of the public to come and see how each entity has made it through to the finals of this prestigious competition. Each field day consists of a welcome, presentations by trustees and management and then site visits to see first hand what staff are doing at the orchards.



The first event was held Whiritoa Orchards at Te Teko in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. The orchard is owned by Māori Investments Limited (MIL) which has 5,000 shareholders. There are two orchards: one just over 5ha which produces organic Gold kiwifruit which was planted in 2022, and a second which is 6.68ha and covered, which produces SunGold kiwifruit. MIL currently employs seven permanent staff and can employ up to 20 fixed term employees during the peak seasons.

The field day began with guests being welcomed on to the beautiful Kokohinau Marae, where they heard presentations from members of the MIL board and staff about the operation. A break in the weather on the day enabled visitors to travel by bus to the orchards and go on a site tour and hear from Orchard Manager Helen Scott and Property Manager, Rex Anderson.

MIL Board Chair, John O'Brien described the field day as fantastic and says the good turnout was quite unexpected given all the rain that fell in the days prior. He says they had to pivot at the last minute to hold the presentations at the historic Kokohinau Marae rather than on-orchard, but that Kokohinau was a very appropriate place to stage their presentations given its history with MIL.

John O'Brien says while all the fruit in the orchards has been harvested, it was not an easy task given the wet weather. He says other adverse events such as hail and frost caused problems for MIL this past season. "Everybody has suffered through the wet weather events but we fortunately we dodged a bullet with cyclone Gabrielle but we had other challenges with frost and hail," he says.

Wi Pere's day

The second field day took place at the orchard of Wi Pere Trust at Waipaoa near Gisborne. Guests were welcomed at Tangihanga Orchard, Wi Pere Trust's blueberry, citrus and apple orchard, where they heard from members of the Wi Pere board and staff about the operation. This orchard had been badly damaged by Cyclone Gabrielle and as part of the presentation guests were shown a video of this to highlight the work that has been done by staff and trustees to get the operation up and running.

Wi Pere Trust Horticulture consists of 79ha of permanent fruit crops. This area is made up of 26ha of Gold kiwifruit (11ha of which is organic), 4ha of persimmons, 15ha of citrus, 4ha of blueberries and 20ha of Rockit and 10ha of Tarzi apples. Wi Pere Horticulture is managed by General Manager Wayne Hall, with eight full-time staff and employs up to 85 casual workers at key times.

After the presentations in the marquee at Tangihanga, visitors were taken by bus to Toroa Orchard. On the way to this property a special radio link was set up and those on the buses were able to get more information about the Wi Pere operation, the damage caused by the floods and how they had managed the after effects of cyclone Gabrielle. At this site guests were able to see persimmons which were in the process of being harvested.

Orchard Manager, Wayne Hall says he was ecstatic about the turnout to the field day and says the good weather on the day enabled them to showcase their operation. He says people were amazed to see how well Wi Pere Trust had recovered from Cyclone Gabrielle in the past two months.

"By showing them photographs of what it was like, compared to how it is today was revealing to many people. Our apple and blueberry orchards suffered badly at the hands of Gabrielle. In regards to apples we lost about 1.6 hectares of the 20 hectares planted," he says.



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Field days highlight finalists' excellence

Ngāi Tukairangi Trust

The final field day for the competition was held at Ngāi Tukairangi Trust's orchards in the Hawke's Bay and again it attracted a crowd of more 250 people. The Trust has orchard operations in four regions across the country, the largest of which is their operation situated near Hastings. They also have orchards in Northland and the Bay of Plenty at Matapihi – the latter is just a matter of a few kilometres from the centre of Tauranga city.

The Hastings operation consists of 106ha of mostly G3 kiwifruit but there is an apple orchard where Rockit and Envy apples are grown. The kiwifruit operations are unique in that they are entirely covered by overhead cloth and this is the largest area of overhead shelter within the country.

Guests were welcomed onto Waipatu Marae by Ngāti Kahungunu, and then heard presentations from Ngāi Tukairangi trustees and staff about the operation. They were also shown photographs of the damage caused by cyclone Gabrielle and how Ngāi Tukairangi is working to repair this. Attendees then had the option of going by bus to the Tukituki apple orchard which was not damaged by the cyclone, or the Korokipo kiwifruit orchard which was damaged. At both locations the guests were spilt into groups and taken to see different aspects of that operation.

At Korokipo, visitors could see repairs being made to the stop bank on the Ngaruroro river which breached its banks and flooded the property and completely covered the vines. While a part of the orchard close to the river was badly hit, other parts of the orchard survived despite the vines being covered in floodwaters. It's estimated that 75% of this year's kiwifruit crop at Korokipo was lost in the floods.

At the apple orchard at Tukituki, visitors saw some amazing innovation and technology in operation including picking platforms run by solar power and spraying equipment designed to reduce spray drift.

Ngāi Tukairangi Trust Chair, Ratahi Cross says the field day was a great success and he was pleased with the massive turnout. He says it was great to see support from local iwi as well as a good cross section of industry people. He says given the damage suffered at the Heretaunga orchards, putting the field day together was no easy task, but he says they were lucky because being such a large organisation, they were able to bring in staff from other centres to help.

"In one way we were also lucky because there was virtually no silt left in the orchard because of the high velocity of the water and that will help us get production back to around 80% next season. When you look at the orchard, you can actually feel the damage in a spiritual sense.



Praise for finalists

Nukuhia Hadfield, Chair of the Ahuwhenua Trophy Management Committee, praised all finalists who also had to cope with cyclones, frosts, and other adverse weather events. She says 2023 has been an especially hard year for the whole of the primary sector and in many cases, it will take years before things get back to anything that looks like normal.

"All three finalists are very special people who have shown amazing resilience and commitment to their own operations and to the legacy of Sir Apirana Ngata and Lord Bledisloe who inaugurated the trophy 90 years ago," she says.

Nukuhia says based on what she had seen and heard all would have been deserving winners. She says regardless of the competition outcome, the 2023 round had been highly successful and will go down in the annals of Ahuwhenua as one that showed the loyalty and determination of Māori to continue to support the legacy of its founders.



Planning for Dairy 2024

While we celebrate this successful horticulture competition round, the Ahuwhenua Trophy Management Committee is already turning its attention to the 2024 dairy award. In the coming months the team will be motivating all those in the dairy sector to encourage trusts and individuals to enter the competition, as well as encourage our rangatahi to enter the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer Award. The Entry Form will be online soon, and for more information in the meantime, contact us at info@ahuwhenuatrophy.maori.nz.

Entries close Friday 8th December 2023.

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A special thanks to all our sponsors which make the Ahuwhenua Trophy Competition and the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer/Grower award. It is with their generous support we are able to stage the competition and all the amazing events which make up this prestigious award.

Primary ITO | Te Pūkenga supports Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower Award

Primary ITO | Te Pūkenga is proud to support the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer and Grower Award, a celebration of development, progression and legacy for young Māori working in the agriculture and horticulture industries.

The Award is given alongside the prestigious Ahuwhenua Trophy for Māori business excellence in Aotearoa's pastoral and horticulture sectors. Alternating annually between horticulture, dairy and sheep and beef, in 2023 the awards were for horticulture. Primary ITO | Te Pūkenga supports the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Awards by developing a values and Kaupapa-based framework for the event, resourcing and managing the finalist's study tour, providing a judge and contributing towards the prizes.

"The beauty of this event is that it is not focussed on who is going to win, but a journey of growth and development for our young ones to understand the importance of being Māori in the primary industry. These young ones represent their whānau, iwi and industry," says Primary ITO | Te Pūkenga Māori Engagement Manager Matiu Julian, a member of the judge's panel.

A point of difference to other competitions is that the Young Māori Awards are centred around values that encourage personal development, collaboration and career progression. The values are Manaakitanga; how we look after others, Whānaungatanga; engagement with others and Mana Motuhake; being our authentic selves.

"This approach helps the finalists to be the best version of themselves as they are given a number of learning experiences on the study tour," says Matiu.

This year for the first time the three finalists were wāhine. Winner Grace Rehu of Rangitāne, Taranaki, and a Leading Hand for Turners and Growers Hawke's Bay, acknowledged the support of the other two finalists during the competition. Matiu Julian says all three finalists experienced phenomenal growth during the judging programme which involved mentoring sessions, visiting and engaging with iwi growers, WorkSafe and media workshops and the opportunity to speak in public.

The Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower Award was introduced for horticulture in 2020, while the Young Māori Farmer Award goes back to 2012. The Awards experiences had accelerated the career pathway of previous winners and finalists, says Matiu.

"It gives them the space to celebrate being Māori, opening up their hearts and minds to who they are, their unique journey and their success is building on our tūpuna legacy."

Matiu cites the whakatauki of Sir Āpirana Ngata, who founded the Ahuwhenua Trophy competition in 1933 with the Governor General at the time, Lord Bledisloe, to explain the opportunity that the Young Māori Award provides.

"E tipu e rea mo ngā rā o tō ao"
"Grow up and thrive for the days destined to you."

Supporting the awards fits with Primary ITO | Te Pūkenga's commitment to increase the confidence and skill sets of young Māori in the agriculture and horticulture sectors and create engagement and career pathways for Māori to succeed.

"We get so much value out of supporting this kaupapa, it is a privilege to be able to contribute. This is our form of Manaakitanga to build Māori capability and increase the health and wellbeing of our people," says Matiu Julian.

Former Ahuwhenua Trophy Management Committee Chair, inducted into the New Zealand Business Hall of Fame

Kingi Smiler has been inducted into the New Zealand Business Hall of Fame, recognising his contribution to business in the country. Of Ngāti Kahungunu, Te Aitanga a Māhaki, Rongowhakaata and Te Āti Awa descent, he has served as a director for various companies throughout his long career dating back to the 1970s when he became a chartered accountant. Kingi Smiler is the chair of Māori milk company Miraka, which sells more than \$300m of dairy products around



the world each year, and is also the Chair of Wairarapa Moana Incorporation.

He joins the Hall of Fame alongside fellow influential Māori businesspeople such as Pania Tyson-Nathan (see article below), Sir Ralph Norris, Sir Chris Mace and Mavis Mullins.

"Kingi was one of the driving forces behind the establishment of Miraka - the first dairy processing company to be powered by geothermal energy and which has one of the lowest manufacturing carbon emissions footprints in the world," Miraka chief executive Karl Gradon says.

"An astute businessman, Kingi holds several directorships and is a former partner of Ernst & Young. He is a highly regarded leader among Māori commercial and agribusinesses and all of us at Miraka are very proud of the recognition bestowed upon him by the New Zealand Business Hall of Fame."

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Tangaroa Walker named Ravensdown Agricultural Communicator of the Year 2023

The inaugural winner of the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer in 2012, Tangaroa Walker has won the Ravensdown Agricultural Communicator of the Year.

The award was presented by the Minister of Agriculture, Hon Damien O'Connor at this year's Fieldays at Mystery Creek near Hamilton. Tangaroa is the 37th winner of this competition which recognises and honours individuals and groups that have made important contributions to the agricultural community by using their skills to effectively communicate issues, events, and information that are relevant to the sector.

Walker became an instant household name through his Farm4Life Facebook group, where his light-hearted and educational videos gave us a 360-degree view of life as a dairy farmer in New Zealand. Since then, the group had grown to a community of over 144,000 people across the globe. In 2020,

Walker launched the Farm 4 Life Hub, a learning platform with a curated digital catalogue of videos that cover everything related to dairy farming. The hub now has over 500 paid subscribers and 4,500 freemium subscribers with 200 NZQA students starting this year.

Speaking as the sponsor of the award was Ravensdown's Chief Executive Garry Diack, who praised Walker as a strong agricultural leader, noting that "Tangaroa is a true inspiration to rangatahi, and an exceptional communicator. Well deserving of recognition in breaking down barriers between urban and rural communities and helping to build the future of farming excellence in Aotearoa".

Neal Wallace, President of the New Zealand Guild of Agricultural Journalists and Communicators said, "it is hard not to be impressed by Tangaroa and his life story. He's a tireless advocate for the rural sector and a perfect example of what this award was set up to celebrate – using modern media to communicate a great message to a wide audience."

PGG Wrightson's back Ahuwhenua

For over 15 years, PGG Wrightson has been a proud sponsor of the Ahuwhenua Trophy and we have been honoured to witness first-hand the exemplary growth in the calibre of finalists and winners over this time. The contribution of Māori agribusiness to the economic success of Aotearoa often flies under the radar of New Zealanders. The Ahuwhenua Trophy provides the much-needed platform to raise the country's awareness of the significant contribution of Māori to the success of rural communities, and the economy as a whole. We are delighted to share in the celebrations each year and take pride in the awahina our teams have provided to winners over the years.

Our own Māori Agribusiness team is dedicated to tautoko and guide Māori agribusiness clients in aligning their farming practices with environmental values. With a focus on whānaukatanga / relationships, technical and industry matauranga / knowledge, the team strives to empower Māori farmers and growers to become effective kaitiaki of their land.

The philosophy of "helping grow the country" lies at the heart of our commitment to New Zealand agribusiness. The Māori Agribusiness team enrich this philosophy with the five key principles of kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga, rangatiratanga, mātauranga Māori and kotahitanga. An important aspect of the team's role is to share, communicate and educate the wider PGG Wrightson business on these principles.

Recognising the importance of responsible land stewardship, our Māori Agribusiness team aims to provide support, products, and services that span our diverse operations including rural supplies, horticulture, water and irrigation, livestock, real estate, wool, velvet and insurance. By engaging with clients and offering introductions to technical experts who understand the values of kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga, rangatiratanga, mātauranga



L-R: Ron Walters, Mike Pritchard and Matt Hill, Iwi Relationship Managers, PGG Wrightson.

Māori and kotahitanga, the team helps ensure that Māori agribusinesses can prioritise environmental values while maintaining successful and profitable operations.

Beyond their direct involvement with Māori agribusiness clients, the team actively engage with various government bodies, farmer-owned primary industry participants, and industry stakeholders. This network enables the team to stay informed about industry trends, exchange

knowledge, and advocate for the unique perspectives and needs of Māori farmers and growers.

The recent growth in our Māori Agribusiness team seeks to further enable PGG Wrightson to understand and meet the unique requirements of Māori landowners, trusts and iwi, and ensure Māori contribution to New Zealand's economic success is maximised, recognised and celebrated.

We offer our warmest congratulations to this year's winners Wi Pere Trust, and the finalists MIL-Whiritoa Orchards and Ngāi Tukairangi Trust, and honour the outstanding commitment and resilience that all participants displayed during this year of unprecedented challenges. Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi – with your food basket, and my food basket, the people will thrive.

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Muka Tangata attends 2023 awards as sponsor of Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower Award

Muka Tangata, the People, Food and Fibre Workforce Development Council, is one of the sponsors of the 2023 Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower Award. Our Chair, Erin Simpson (Te Atiawa, Taranaki), brings many years of experience in the sector to his role as lead judge of the award. We're proud to support the award that recognises and celebrates the achievements of young Māori growers who are making a significant contribution to the horticultural industry in Aotearoa.

We were inspired by the stories of the three wāhine finalists who found a pathway to a career in horticulture. Each had started in casual or temporary roles to support their whānau and built these into a careers to further support their whānau and hapū. They found ways to learn while earning on the job in ways that suited their needs and are now in roles that encourages others to reach their own goals.

The finalists are role models of what Muka Tangata want to achieve – a food and fibre sector that enables training and development while earning on the job.

We understand the importance of developing people to flourish in their work is important to the ongoing success of the sector - this award showcases talented young Māori farmers and horticulturalists and works to encourage other rangatahi to consider agri-business as a career.

Being committed to promoting sustainable practices and Māori workforce development and economic growth in Aotearoa, we are proud to celebrate the achievements of these exceptional farmers and growers.



L-R are Muka Tangata Manukura Moerangi Vercoe, Muka Tangata Chair Erin Simpson, Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower winner Grace Rehu, Muka Tangata Council member, and 2018 finalist for Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer Award Cheyenne Wilson.

Te Tumu Paeroa's recognition of Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower finalists – growing and nurturing leaders of tomorrow

Resilience, talent, and consistency were celebrated at the recent Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower award ceremony. For the first time all three finalists were wāhine; something the event's organisers found particularly pleasing.

Te Tumu Paeroa - the Office of the Māori Trustee is a Gold Sponsor of the Ahuwhenua Trophy, Excellence in Māori Horticulture Award and a proud sponsor of the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower Award.

Current Māori Trustee, Dr Charlotte Severne, who is the first woman to head the trust in its 100 year history, decided to recognise the achievements of all three finalists for the Young Māori Grower Award, by awarding each a special prize in addition to their other prizes. Dr Severne is committed to growing Māori leaders in the agriculture and horticulture and formed the winners Alumni three years ago to assist with accelerating this kaupapa. The Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer/Grower Alumni Roopu provides support and advice to the winners outside of the competition.

In 2022, she expanded the Alumni to include all finalists in recognition of increasing work force and life challenges of young leaders. "In 2023, we have seen the devastating impacts that climate variability and extreme weather events have had on the horticulture sector," Dr Severne says.

The Māori Trustee believes the three finalists, young wāhine, will bring their skills and ideas to ensure preparedness and resilience for this sector and the whenua.

"In acknowledgement of their importance to the future of the sector, each of the finalists were given a \$5,000 scholarship from Te Tumu Paeroa to support and further their careers and the future of the sector," says Dr Severne.

The overall winner of the 2023 Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower was 21-year-old Grace Rehu who has Rangitāne and Taranaki whakapapa. Grace is a Leading Hand for Turners and Growers in Puketapu, Hawke's Bay.

The other two finalists were Alix Te Kere, 30 years old with whakapapa links to Ngati Kahungunu, Ngati Tu, Ngati Maru, Ngati Maniapoto. Alix is a Health and Safety Advisor to Rockit Management Services, Hastings. Erica Henare, 28 years old with whakapapa links to Ngati Kahungunu, Ngati Maniapoto. Erica is the Pip Fruit and Kiwifruit Manager at Kono NZ LP, Motueka.

Commenting on their success, Dr Severne says: "At Te Tumu Paeroa we want to encourage our young people to work in this industry, especially more young women. By doing this they will be looking after our land, and when our lands are healthy, our people will be healthy too."

Dr Severne also congratulated the Wi Pere Trust who won the Ahuwhenua Trophy, Excellence in Māori Horticulture Award.

"The three finalists (Wi Pere, Ngāi Tukairangi Trust and MIL-Whiritoa Orchards, their kaimahi and governors have met enormous challenges over the last two years," she says.

"They are true champions for resilience! Koia kei a koutou mō tō koutou kaha me tō koutou manaakitanga."

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BDO Backing Excellence in Māori pastoral farming and horticulture

Acknowledging hard work and celebrating success lifts the wairua and wellbeing of all of our people. BDO has been incredibly honoured to recognise excellence in the Māori farming and horticulture sectors by continuing our sponsorship of the Ahuwhenua Trophy for over 14 years.



*BDO Gisborne Pākihi Māori Director, Kylee Potae, speaking on behalf of BDO New Zealand at the 2023 Wi Pere Trust Ahuwhenua Trophy Field Day at Toroa Orchard, Gisborne.
Photo Credit: BDO Gisborne.*

While the Tairāwhiti and Hawke's Bay regions continue to recover from the destruction of Cyclone Gabrielle and more recent adverse weather events, the 2023 Ahuwhenua Trophy awards have highlighted the resiliency of our people and their respective communities who have demonstrated nothing but strength and determination despite the immense challenges they have faced along the way.

Ko au te whenua, ko te whenua ko au – I am the land, and the land is me

Our BDO Gisborne Pākihi Māori team have been a trusted adviser to Wi Pere Trust for over 15 years. The kaupapa of the team is underpinned by a deep respect for our Māori incorporation and trust clients and their stakeholders, backed with a strong commitment to te reo Māori me ōna tikanga.

Whilst our team continues to provide a broad range of accounting, advisory and secretarial administrative services to support the diverse operations and needs of the Wi Pere Trust, we must also acknowledge that relationship management plays such a key role in everything we do.

As a reflection of our overarching BDO vision of "people helping people achieve their dreams", we place great emphasis on the importance of our in-depth multi-layered working relationships which can involve interactions on many levels with a variety of stakeholders, i.e., shareholders and their wider whānau, farm management and employees, external consultants and advisers, through to governance board members.

DairyNZ's Māori initiative

DairyNZ is working on a project to engage better with Māori dairy farmers and in a way that is meaningful to them. Clinton Hemana, Māori Agribusiness Specialist, has been running a series of 'Kai and Korero' meetings around the country, but mainly in the North Island to meet with Māori dairy farmers.

DairyNZ's farm performance manager, Sarah Speight told Dairy News that Māori are very important to the dairy sector and the Kai and Korero sessions were developed to engage with Māori at the trustee level to identify the key things that they wanted to know from DairyNZ. She admits that in the past DairyNZ probably hasn't engaged as well as it should with Māori and says there are now a number of initiatives planned to change that.

Sarah Speight says the Kai and Korero sessions have been good because it enabled both parties to state their needs – DairyNZ to make Māori aware of the DairyNZ priorities and Māori to put their view forward which Sarah Speight says was about getting more of their people into the dairy industry and back on the land.

"I have attended a few of the Kai and Korero sessions and the overall feedback is that Māori haven't felt that DairyNZ has

been particularly applicable to them but they are now pleased that we want to engage with them. The thing I enjoy with Māori farmers is they are not afraid to say what they think and they raise some really good points about how do we get our young people back on the land and what can DairyNZ do to help," she says.

She says the issue going forward is to make sure that DairyNZ engages with Māori in an authentic way and in a way that fits in with their culture and expectations. She says the starting point is for field staff to have the skills to do that and ultimately to recruit more Māori staff. She says they are very lucky having Clinton Hemana to assist them as he is a member of a number of trusts and is highly skilled in dealing with Māori.

She says the next phase of Clinton's work is develop further plans to take this forward and this may include special field days for Māori farmers. She says this will likely be done in conjunction with some key Māori farms, such as Pouarua Farms near Ngatea on the Hauraki Plains – a Māori trust which was a finalist in the 2021 Ahuwhenua Trophy competition.

Sarah Speight says when running any courses, for example on condition scoring cows or calving smart, our job is to ensure that we do that in an environment that makes those people on the farm feel included feel supported and get the skills they need.

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Māori Agribusiness a priority for MPI

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) became one of the Ahuwhenua Trophy's two platinum sponsors in 2020, joining Te Puni Kōkiri. As a platinum sponsor, MPI provides both financial and in-kind support to the competition, including a green-fingered judge to help pick the winner of 2023's Ahuwhenua Trophy for horticulture, and native seedlings for finalists courtesy of Minginui Nurseries and Te Uru Rākau.

The Ahuwhenua Trophy competition and MPI share common ground - both celebrate the important work done by Māori agribusinesses, and both have a shared love for the whenua. Māori agribusiness is a high priority for MPI, as evidenced by Budget 2022 investment of \$34.5 million over four years to expand the suite of Māori agribusiness funds and \$35 million over four years to support Māori-led responses to climate change.

Partnership with Māori primary producers is also a high priority for MPI. For example, last year MPI worked alongside the Māori Primary Sector Forum to develop a first-time strategy for the Māori food and fibre sector – Rautaki mō te Taurikura – the Strategy will guide our mahi and investments in years to come.



On farm with Onuku Trust.

Partnership with Māori primary producers is at the heart of the mahi done by MPI's Māori Agribusiness team – their main objective is to help Māori realise their aspirations for their whenua and primary assets through provision of funding, advice and advocacy. The Māori Agribusiness team currently administers a suite of four programmes. A new programme focused on climate and freshwater is being developed too.

Māori Agribusiness Pathway to Increased Productivity (MAPIP)

The original Māori agribusiness programme - launched in 2014 and still going strong. MAPIP provides individualised support to Māori to help increase the productivity of their whenua, with 17 new projects approved in the last calendar year.

Māori Agribusiness Extension programme (MABx)

The MABx programme was added in 2019 to help groups of Māori landowners to work collectively and benefit from economies of scale. Eight new MABx clusters were approved in the last calendar year.

He Ara Mahi Hou

He Ara Mahi Hou focuses on workforce skills and training – providing employment opportunities for rangatahi and people-power for Māori agribusinesses. 30 He Ara Mahi Hou projects have been approved since the programme's inception in 2022.

Māori Agribusiness Innovation Fund

The newest addition to the Māori Agribusiness programme family - a fund to help Māori develop new and innovative primary sector products and processes. Less than a year in, there's already been a baker's dozen of Innovation projects approved for funding.

Bovine to Ovine - Onuku Trust

The Onuku Māori Lands Trust is a great example of Māori primary sector innovation. The Trust, a former winner of the Ahuwhenua Trophy for excellence in dairying, decided to transition one of their dairy blocks from bovine to ovine and explore the untapped potential of sheep milk. MPI supported the business case for the ovine dairy transition through the MAPIP fund and is also supporting a sheep dairy collective that includes Onuku Trust through the MABx fund.

Pania Tyson-Nathan inducted into business hall of fame

The New Zealand Business Hall of Fame has inducted Rongomaiwahine descendant Pania Tyson-Nathan. Already a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit, Tyson-Nathan now joins other Hall of Fame business leaders Sir Christopher Mace, Pāora Morgan, Mavis Mullins and the late Sir Apirana Ngata.

Regarded as one of the most influential Māori wāhine in business, Tyson-Nathan in her role as Chief Executive of New Zealand Māori Tourism has built the industry value from \$130 million to \$1.2 billion.

Tyson-Nathan offered a reminder to “never underestimate the teachings from the marae”. “At the marae, the front doesn't work without the back and vice versa. But it's also about humility and those who are coming through the opportunity to be amongst others. Tā Wira Gardiner always said to me, ‘Go to war with what you've got’ and that's exactly what we've done.”

Mullins said that she was “honoured to be with her” as fellows in

the Hall of Fame, while Morgan commented that Tyson-Nathan's “service to our people is to be without peer”

Gala attendees included Judge Sir Joseph Williams, Terry Shipman, and Steven Adams.

“Her compassion extends to the few and many. She has met American presidents, the Queen, the UK Prime Minister and so many more. From the beginning to the end, she is Mahia, she is Rongomaiwahine,” Sir Joseph Williams said.

Adams, who now plays for Memphis Grizzlies said it was a huge honour to be in attendance and share the moment with Tyson-Nathan. “She's awesome. When I'm in the US and I come back, I get grounded immediately. You're not too caught up in the clouds, she sets you straight really quickly.”

Tyson-Nathan has held leadership positions at the Māori exporters collective, Māori Inc and the Kahungunu Asset Holding Company, as well as directorships of the Māori Economic board, the Ministerial Advisory Group on trade and New Zealand Film Commission Board. Tyson-Nathan has also supported the Māori Battalion through various fundraising initiatives.

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TPK – a time to celebrate excellence

Alongside Manatū Ahu Matua (MPI), Te Puni Kōkiri is a platinum sponsor of the Ahuwhenua Trophy – united in celebrating Māori excellence.

“We are proud to support this prestigious award,” says Secretary for Māori Development, and our Chief Executive Dave Samuels.

“It exemplifies Māori achievement in land-based industries where hard work, fortitude and innovation is continually demonstrated. We collectively celebrate those who are creating jobs, engaging rangatahi, and developing new ways of succeeding – driving towards sustainable prosperity for the people, the whenua, and the economy.”

Congratulations to all of the finalists and especially to the winners – Grace Rehu for Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower Award, and Wi Pere Trust for Ahuwhenua Trophy, Excellence in Maori Horticulture Award.

Our Whenua Māori Fund supports whenua Māori based economic, cultural, social and environmental projects which help strengthen whānau, communities, regions and the wider Aotearoa New Zealand economy.

It assists Trustees and owners of whenua Māori to explore the potential of their whenua and to investigate the means of lifting productivity, either through improving and growing existing operations, diversification, or preparing for new ventures.

To be eligible to apply for funding from the Whenua Māori Fund:

- Your whenua must be Māori freehold land. To check, enter your block details on the Tupu.NZ website, Find your whenua <https://www.tupu.nz/>

- Your whenua must have a governing entity, i.e. Trust, Incorporation or other entity established under Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993 unless there are seven or fewer owners
- If there are seven or fewer owners, each owner must be supportive of an application to the Fund.

Thanks to the Whenua Māori Fund, Ōwhata 2B and Ōwhata 2B7 Trusts in Rotorua is future-proofing their land for generations to come. The funding enabled the 21-hectare whenua, which already runs a nursery and forestry enterprise, to carry out feasibility work to explore land-use options. Following the feasibility study, three-and-a-half hectares were identified for housing development.

The Whenua Māori Fund has also helped to restore the mauri to diseased whenua located 30 minutes from Tauranga. The whenua had been sitting idle for twenty years, but now Paengaroa South 3 can finally look to restore the mauri to their whenua that was once good pastureland.

A company planted eucalyptus trees on the whenua which didn't take, then ten-foot-high blackberries started taking over. The company stopped paying rent, filed for bankruptcy, and effectively walked off the land with a lot of damage done.

Restoration costs were quoted at \$90k but the Trust only had \$13k so they found a forestry contractor who does firewood on the weekend and a young farmer whose cows will keep the berries down. Also Western Bay Council agreed to write off the back-dated rates.

Looking to the future, the Trust started working with Te Puni Kōkiri and Glenn Hawkins & Associates to help run whānau workshops and training and develop a business plan. The Trust now has a few options for their board to consider including growing Kiwi fruit and potentially housing, that will strengthen their economic future for whenua and whānau.



Dave Samuels, Secretary for Māori Development, Grace Rehu, Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower 2023 winner, Paula Rawiri, Management Committee member, Jessica Smith, Judge, and TPK staff.

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AHUWHENUA TROPHY 2023 – HORTICULTURE AWARDS DINNER

FRIDAY 9TH JUNE
MERCURY BAYPARK ARENA, TAURANGA



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