

THE LANDSCAPE OF WASTE

Stories of waste minimisation from across Maungakiekie

Manaaki whenua, manaaki tangata, haere whakamau!

Care for the land, care for the people, go forward!





RIGHT ACROSS TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU THE WASTE BUG IS CATCHING.

Local waste champions are rising. Communities are uniting and sharing ideas on ways to reduce landfill waste. Vegetables are sprouting in community-shared gardens. Businesses are actively seeking better ways of packaging products. Schools are engaging students in sustainability for the future. And community recycling centres are creating jobs and re-shaping local economy markets.

WASTE IS NOW EVERYONE'S BUSINESS.

This is certainly true for Maungakiekie, where the local communities of Onehunga, Te Papapa, Oranga, One Tree Hill and Penrose are joining forces to fight waste. A planned Community Recycling Centre has sparked a swell of interest on how these communities can do waste better and become local leaders in the zero waste movement.

This movement, and others like it emerging across Auckland, are propelling the city towards Auckland Council's ambitious goal of zero waste by 2040 in order to take care of people and the environment and turning waste into resources.

The Auckland Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2018 is Auckland Council's second waste minimization plan. This second plan confirms and continues the vision set out in the first plan in 2012: Zero Waste by 2040.

The city has already met the first target set by the original plan, reducing household waste by 10 per cent from 2010 – 2016. Yet, still, every year Aucklanders

send more than 1.6 million tonnes of waste to landfill – that's more than 1 tonne for every Aucklander, roughly the weight of an original 1979 Volkswagen Beetle car or a mature great white shark!

Zero waste means making the most of the resources and sending nothing to landfill. This happens when the environmental impact on manufacturing, retail and all industry is central to design and production, when resources are designed to be re-used, and when materials are used in ways to preserve value.

Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) sustainability perspectives are vital to planned initiatives, education and practical changes because zero waste is also about embracing Te Ao Māori – aligning with Te Ao Māori and the tradition of kaitiakitanga (guardianship and protection) to sustain and restore collective resources to enhance the mauri (life force) of taonga tuku iho (to foster the growth of traditional medical services, and improve Māori well-being).

In Maungakiekie there has never been a better time to join the zero waste movement as community initiatives continue to reshape the landscape when it comes to reducing local waste.

ADRIAN PETTIT

Local iwi Te Ākitai Waiohua are advocates for reducing waste to landfill and working in partnership with communities, stakeholders and Auckland Council to achieve strong sustainability outcomes.

Adrian Pettit from Te Ākitai explains why embracing Te Ao Māori sustainability perspectives are central to the local zero waste movement.



For many of us, overconsumption of resources and not returning them back to the earth has become ingrained in how we live. We have become very good at telling ourselves it doesn't matter. However, by not addressing the impacts of our behaviour on our environment, both immediately and in the long term, we are not able to create meaningful and sustainable behaviour change.

In practice, minimising the amount of waste we produce and learning how we can reuse our resources should be second nature to all of us. Traditionally, Māori practice a closed loop system. There is no such thing as "waste" as everything that is taken away from the land is given back. Recycling and reuse were everyday practice, however somewhere we drifted from our core principles.

Take food scraps for example. Composting used to be something everyone did. We need to be asking the questions;

Why have we lost this skill? When did we fall out of the habit?

Reducing food waste going to landfill is a really easy thing to do. Composting is a skill we know. We don't have to learn something new here.

As a community, if we can focus on minimising waste to landfill by composting our food scraps, it is a very good start to making lasting changes to our everyday behaviours.

So, we ask where to from here?

The idea of resources being disposable has come about by the rise of globalisation, the advent of cheap globalised labour and exploitation of that labour.

“ In a Māori worldview, managing and maximising resources is critical to survival. As Māori we are forever conscious of our footprint ”

This in itself goes against the mandate we live by, caring for others. The notion of exploiting people for cheap labour can't be reconciled with the notion of manaakitanga; the act of caring and supporting.

Traditionally, our tupuna (ancestors) were highly adept at managing the environment and maximising its inherent resources. We likewise need to be mindful of our footprint and follow suit accordingly, irrespective of our modern, highly urbanised environment.

Mana whenua (Māori with historic authority over the land) are duty bound to care for the whenua (land) and exercise their kaitiakitanga (guardianship) accordingly. The willingness to listen, to share, to offer and receive. The willingness to accept knowledge when it is gifted. The sharing of mātauranga (knowledge and wisdom) should be an exercise in reciprocity.

Mauri is the innate life force that occupies everything (people, the environment and its ecosystem, physical objects utilised in everyday life). Whatever we do, it should enhance mauri, not degrade it.

The groundswell of the zero waste movement is growing, and it remains important to seek out like-minded people. As we know, kōrero (conversation) helps continue the groundswell and raises the profile. We must keep plugging away at this, because we have no choice not to.

We have a responsibility to join the dots. In Onehunga we have all the initiatives and ideally, they should be better linked up and working in unison as a whole rather than individual components. This holistic view is the Te Ao Māori lens. Nothing is looked at in isolation.



Ki uta ki tai: From the mountains to the sea.

We need to support each other, speak with one voice, be considerate in the broader context of ultimate goals and provide a platform for broader dialogue.

My hopes are that the ideas of our tamariki (children) and mokopuna (grandchildren) will be innovative and unencumbered, whilst remaining true to the mātauranga (knowledge & wisdom) of their respective iwi. There is no doubt they have the passion for change, the ideas for better ways of working and they will keep all of us on the right track and hold us accountable. Ultimately, they are the ones who will re-normalise behaviour around reducing our waste and taking better care of our environment.

TE ĀKITAI WAIOHUA HISTORY

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Historically, land in the traditional rohe of Te Ākitai Waiohua was used for fishing, travel, occupation and cultivation.

Settlement was seasonal as the people stayed at main sites during winter, moved to smaller camps to plant gardens during spring, fished and collected kaimoana (seafood) from fishing camps during summer and then returned to the main settlements again during autumn to harvest and store crops in preparation for winter.

Te Ākitai Waiohua were accomplished fishermen and farmers growing fruit, vegetables and raising livestock through to the 1860's. However, the Land Wars changed everything.

With such a limited economic base to start with in a growing urban environment like Auckland, Māori poverty became a real issue with socio-economic consequences such as poor health, education and housing. Te Ākitai Waiohua had already lost most of their land by the 20th Century.

A new marae at Pūkaki was eventually constructed in the 1890's and the people re-populated the area. The land beneath Pūkaki Marae was gifted back to Te Ākitai Waiohua by the Turner family of Turners and Growers Ltd who were persuaded by their cousin Chief Judge Arnold Turner of the Planning Tribunal. Judge Turner by chance had presided over an environmental case where he heard how the land reserved for a marae at Pūkaki had been lost.



BRENDON MARSHAL

At Onehunga High School, teacher Brendon Marshall is on a mission for local schools to take a leading role in helping unlock students' potential to be key players in the waste minimisation game.

Brendon teaches a senior course in Sustainability, together with fellow teacher Allie Lim; a class which uses student led inquiry to explore local environmental issues and the global impact of these issues.

Brendon is also an Across School Lead Teacher for Te Iti Kahurangi Kāhui Ako - a community of ten schools in their local area. Brendon's role involves coaching teacher leaders in building networks of collaborative inquiry to improve outcomes for students.

In May 2020, Brendon was awarded a Fellowship with CollectivED, Centre for Coaching, Mentoring and Professional Development at Carnegie School of Education, Leeds-Beckett University. The Fellowship recognises his contribution to the field of coaching and mentoring in education, both as a researcher and practitioner.

Brendon recently graduated with his Master of Educational Leadership, focusing his research on the impact of coaching conversations in developing teacher practices for improving student achievement.

Brendon shares his thinking...

Sustainability in general is a personal passion of mine, in particular local issues of sustainability and the ability for us to connect with people advocating for change right here on our doorstep. When I'm teaching sustainability to students, making these connections is a strong focus.

The Sustainability class has been offered at Onehunga High for several years now. When we started the class we often looked at sustainability issues on a global level (such as looking at climate change and its impact on Antarctica). Now we put more of a local lens on sustainability, but still link these issues back to the global picture. Students make connections with the issues they study

and the impacts in their backyards and that seems to impact on their values and belief systems.

Much of the work in this course uses student led inquiry, where students take the lead to ask the questions, do the research and find the answers. They comment in their assignment reflections, the changes they have made at a very personal and whanau level. It can be very inspiring.

Examples of some student reflections:

'I found going into the public to create a sustainable action was most engaging and interesting because even though it is for a school assessment, we still had the opportunity to create a real impact. I think this is a great way to motivate students into creating a sustainable future.'

'Prior to carrying out my action, I only had a basic understanding of what climate change was. After doing more research ... it made me think about my current actions and if I was doing enough to help our world and environment. I realised there was so much more I can do and that even the smallest actions can contribute to slowing down climate change.'

'My action has brought a change in my family and these small changes within our community can make a great influence on the future for providing a sustainable ecosystem. I started to limit my usage of electrical appliances and I don't use my own car to drive because my house is very near to school. Both my siblings and I walk to school. By doing this we are contributing towards reducing carbon emissions and also having some exercise to maintain good health.'

'This project has affected not only my actions but also my mindset in terms of sustainability as I now know the differences between waste and how to responsibly get rid of it. From this action, I had learnt that that many more things in my house could be recycled and reused. I now see potential in many things as being recyclable and strive to maintain a sustainable household.'

*Sustainability students collecting litter at Taumanu Reserve.
Photo taken by student photographer Annie Cauchi-Mills of Onehunga High School*



Brendon continues...

The solutions the students create can be pretty innovative, especially through using technology and social media to educate and influence in positive ways. The digital space provides new opportunities and is part of the solution for change and awareness. Through connecting with partners in the community, the students gain exposure and feedback from a wide range of people they otherwise may not have engaged with, building their agency and sense of confidence.

Right now the students are working on helping to creating a vision for zero waste for Onehunga with the hope to feed these ideas into the planning for the Onehunga Community Recycling Centre, particularly around the centre incorporating an education hub. The students will take an in-depth look into the entire waste process from extraction through distribution, use and disposal.

Where we can, I like to take a practical approach to learning. For example, recently, the students and I walked down to Taumanu Reserve and spent about 45 minutes scouring the reserve picking up rubbish, plastic and any waste we could find. We packed up all the rubbish and carted it back to school to analyse what we found. Connecting with the local community is also a focus of our shared work across the Kāhui Ako.



Photos taken by student photographer Annie Cauchi-Mills of Onehunga High School.



Kāhui Ako beach survey & audit at Mangere Boat Club Beach.
Photo taken by student photographer Logan D'Souza of Onehunga High School.

TE ITI KAHURANGI KĀHUI AKO

Early in 2019 we started an Enviro Group of teachers across our schools with a focus on the Manukau Harbour foreshore. Schools in this Kāhui Ako are Onehunga High School, Royal Oak Intermediate, Waterlea Primary School, Māngere Bridge Primary School, Onehunga Primary School, Royal Oak Primary School, Oranga Primary School, Te Papapa Primary School, Marcellin College, St Joseph's Primary School and several early childhood providers.

As a Kāhui Ako, we recognise that place is crucial to our identity and sense of belonging as a community of schools. The physical environment in which we live grounds us in our community and connects us with the history of those who have come before us. Key physical features that frame our community are our two maunga (mountain): Te Pane o Mataoho (Māngere mountain) and Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill), together with Te Manukanuka o Hoturoa (Manukau Harbour). By collaborating on projects linked with the Manukau Harbour, we provide opportunities for our students to connect with our moana (ocean) with its cultural significance to mana whenua. And then, by becoming kaitiaki of our moana, our students will discover ways to restore it and protect it for future generations.

The harbour connects our Kāhui Ako with schools on either side so it seemed a great place to start. We chose to make a commitment to the foreshore on either side - the Māngere Boat Club and Taumanu Reserve – and become the kaitiaki of those beaches.

A few times per year, students from schools in our Kāhui Ako participate in a Litter Intelligence Beach Audit in partnership with Sustainable Coastlines. This is a NZ charity whose mission is to enable people to look after the coastlines and waterways that they love. Our schools have committed to regularly clean and audit litter from our two local beaches.

“ By collaborating on projects linked with the Manukau Harbour, we provide opportunities for our students to connect with our moana with its cultural significance to mana whenua. ”

Students pick up all the litter in the marked area, then return to school to audit everything - sort, collate, count and weigh, then enter into a national database. This data is being used in our schools to support student inquiry.

Seeing the students across our schools working together with a shared purpose and vision is pretty special. There was already quite a lot of things happening in the sustainability space across the schools and our community, this is a way of connecting things together. We can play our part, become more informed of what others are doing and share our learnings for better overall outcomes for our students and the Onehunga community.

In this way, students can develop their agency and efficacy in being able to make a difference in and for their local community - building greater confidence in being able to affect positive change into the future.



Photo taken by student photographer Logan D'Souza of Onehunga High School.



ONEHUNGA COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRE

A thin strip of land, sitting in Alfred Street in Onehunga is set to become the next Community Recycling Centre (CRC) in Auckland.

The council-owned site aims to support the goal of maximum waste diversion from landfill, create local employment opportunities and reinvest back into the local community. This development falls under the Resource Recovery Network (RRN), a key initiative of Auckland's Waste Management and Minimisation Plan.

There are currently 8 operational community recycling centres across the city. The Onehunga Community Recycling Centre (OCRC) will be the ninth of 12 planned CRCs.

Community recycling centres aim to provide residents and local businesses with a one-stop-shop recycling service where items and materials that cannot be recycled through kerbside recycling collections can be taken – instead of transporting individual items around the city to different recycling businesses. The main benefit is convenience, but there are also benefits in reduced emissions and traffic congestion. CRCs promote a circular economy aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources.

Onehunga Community Recycling Centre Manager Project Manager Ban Najim Aldin explains how this is the first purpose-built CRC in Auckland initiated 'from scratch'.

"The location is also unique because the CRC will be part of a hub where a lot of Auckland's waste is processed," she adds. "I'm excited about this project because it has the potential to inspire the local community and be a centre that is 'local for local': a place that benefits both the wider community and the environment."

“Waste reduction is not just what we do with our rubbish. It is about jobs, social procurement, education, a circular economy and the power of community”

The possibility for the OCRC to influence wider change for sustainability in the area was a major discussion point at two community workshops held in late 2019 and early 2020. The workshops were attended by mana whenua, site technical and design team, key stakeholders and community members in a unique collaborative effort to design and create how the OCRC will operate. Talking points included ways to create a site that reflected its history, opened up opportunities for learning and wider education on sustainability as well as practical challenges of the site, like access and traffic flow.

The OCRC is the first purpose-built CRC in Auckland initiated 'from scratch' with a unique location; the centre will be part of a hub where a lot of Auckland's waste is processed. The OCRC will be a centre that is 'local for local': a place that benefits both the wider community and the environment.

Senior waste planning advisor Jenny Chilcott says this collaboration is playing a key role in creating the OCRC a "beacon for regeneration" and "inspiration for change".

"Waste reduction is not just what we do with our rubbish. It is about jobs, social procurement, education, a circular economy and the power of community," she explains. "Community and mana whenua have brought a real richness to the potential of the centre and grounded it to the essence of the land."



NGĀ MĀTĀPONO / PROJECT PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles offered by mana whenua for the Onehunga Community Recycling Centre development.

(Mana Whenua Working Group (Te Ākitai Waiohua, Te Ahiwaru Waiohua, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, Ngaati Whanaaga, Te Patukiriki) for the design of the Onehunga CRC, December 2019)

WHAKAPAPA

Acknowledging and recognising relationships and connections within the physical and metaphysical realms: treasuring and acknowledging Ranginui and Papatūānuku.

HONONGA

Sense of belonging and association of people and community to the wider Onehunga landscape: connections to the whenua, maunga, awa and moana.

E TIPU, E REA, KAKANO

Planting the seed of change. Normalising through practise, a behavioural change whilst unleashing an interconnected web of potential towards recycling.

MANAAKI

Respect, generosity and welcoming of place and space, supporting the giving and receiving as a catalyst to reduce our environmental impact.

MĀTAURANGA

Encourage, create and provide a community lead interactive teaching and learning environment: uplifting skill, creativity, innovation and understandings for repurposing and regenerating of our material world.

RAWA

By recycling and/or repurposing, we reveal, respect the value and beauty in things that couldn't be seen before: materials, their source, their meaning and their evolution.

REFLECTIONS

The importance of care and protection, of learning from those around you and connecting with what is already happening were strong themes in the stories generously shared by mana whenua, educators and waste champions.

Tiaki / Care and protect

Doing a better job at reducing waste to landfill in all aspects of life, to leave the land in a better condition than it is currently in. Making sure future generations have a healthy community to thrive in. Understanding actions and behaviour should enhance the environment, not degrade it.

Mātauranga / Knowledge, wisdom and education

Embrace the groundswell of change and those playing key roles in education and advocacy for better outcomes. Stop the rhetoric that the waste reduction movement is a political movement or a 'Greenie' approach. It should be a natural desire to protect the future of our world. Educate change is practical, normalize the behaviour.

Hononga / Connectedness

Kindness of each other leads to kindness of the environment. Unite in the common fight to protect the whenua. Let our local champions rise and lead the way, let us learn from each other and replenish our land and people at the same time.



