

Te kori a te kō redefining our sustainable, prosperous future

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In January 2024, Ōnuku Rūnanga held its first Te Kori a te Kō - Climate Change Adaptation Wānanga in the sweltering heat - a stark reminder of the kaupapa at hand. The wānanga was held at Ōnuku Marae and home to sub-tribes Ngāi Tārewa and Ngāti Īrakehu. For three days Ōnuku hosted workshops, expert panel discussions, and activities. The wānanga brought together whānau, community leaders, climate science experts, local government representatives and freshwater ecologists, to share ideas, fears, expertise and to start the conversation of how we can work collaboratively to shape a more resilient future.

Te Kori a te Kō is the name of an indigenous led climate change adaptation program which is inspired by the past, reaching into origin stories, and gives voice to the connection to whenua and moana. It encapsulates five projects, all of which are centred on Akaroa Harbour as the compass, teacher and guide for this kaupapa. The five projects are interwoven to break down silos and apply holistic, multi-objective planning and thinking to climate change adaptation.

Te Kori a te Kō flips climate change adaptation planning on its head. It integrates both bottom-up and top-down frameworks, but most importantly, it starts with action. From its conception, Te Kori a te Kō came from the position, that hapū members would never read a plan, many were either frightened or disinterested in climate change. As such, a different approach to engagement had to be taken. The other position taken was that mātauranga taiao (traditional ecological knowledge) and Western science had to be woven together and that growing knowledge in both is a critical component in building climate resilience.

The five projects of Te Kori a te Kō are all action-focused, from installing māra kai (productive gardens), research, gathering stream data based on traditional practices and observations, through to planting days and designing whare (home) resilience plans, each activity and project has been designed to build knowledge of climate change whilst physically engaging in shaping a more resilient future. What we have learned is that action empowers people. By doing, people are more engaged, and feel more positive about making a difference.

The presentation will take you on a journey of the principles of Te Kori a te Kō, the process taken to date, the learnings and outcomes of the first wānanga, and where we plan to go next.

The Chairperson of Ōnuku Rūnanga, Rik Tainui, notes “Te Kori a te Kō lines up beautifully with our iwi whakataukī (proverb) – Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei (for us and our children after us).