



Media release
23 September 2009

Auckland's homeless putting down roots with community gardens at Bastion Point

A partnership between the Auckland City Mission and Ngati Whatua will see homeless Aucklanders work in community gardens at Bastion Point to supply fresh vegetables to Orakei Marae, and to Mission services.

"They will assist with the planning of the gardens, develop and maintain them, and harvest the produce," says the Mission's team leader for homeless services, Wilf Holt. "The objective is to provide opportunities for homeless people to re-engage with the community while they develop skills that will enable them to move into work."

Mr Holt said the support of Ngati Whatua adds a special character to the community gardens programme.

"Maori make up a substantial number of the Mission's homeless clients. This programme will allow them to reconnect with tikanga Maori by being a part of the day-to-day life of Orakei marae, and to learn about heritage plants and traditional uses for those plants."

Mr Holt said a number of the Mission's clients were keen to be involved in the first group selected for the community gardens programme.

"Over the last year many homeless have been involved in the planting of around 6000 native trees in the area around Orakei Marae. It's given them a chance to make a contribution from which the wider Auckland community will benefit in the long-term. The community garden provides another way for them to make a contribution."

A powhiri and celebration for all those that have been involved in the tree planting programme over the past year, and a welcome to the team of the first participants in the community gardens programme, is being held at Orakei Marae

this Thursday. The activities will conclude with the Mission team turning the soil for kumara beds to mark the beginning of the community garden.

For further information please contact:

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Timetable:

10.00	Powhiri at Orakei Marae
12 noon	Kai
1.00	Soil turned for gardens