

TRUE COLOURS



Devon McLean

Chairman's Message

Once more the approach to Christmas is being heralded by the brilliant flowers of pohutukawa and rata. This is a favourite time of the year for all of us, anticipating a fine and relaxing summer ahead. These magnificent trees have been a part of our landscape and our psyche for thousands of years. A backdrop to some of our seminal moments as a nation and as individuals.

In many ways they epitomise the characteristics we admire in New Zealanders. They are tenacious, pioneering, adventurous and steadfast. Flamboyant on occasion, but also down-to-earth.

Despite their tenacity these fine trees have struggled under the pressures of changing land use and the ravages of introduced pests to the point that they have disappeared from key stretches of their traditional home.

Fourteen years ago Project Crimson was formed to "make a difference" in support of these wonderful trees. Our mission is

to "enable pohutukawa and rata to flourish again in their natural habitat as icons in the hearts and minds of all New Zealanders".

Working with a wide network of community groups and individuals, and supported by Carter Holt Harvey and the Department of Conservation, Project Crimson funds and promotes protection, restoration, new planting and promotion of pohutukawa and rata communities throughout the country. Ours is a small team but to-date, with your help, more than 250,000 trees have been grown and planted on public and private land.

Many thousands of you have been a part of that success and we thank you for your efforts. Many more of you have walked on a Crimson Trail or enjoyed the superb floral display that healthy trees provide to welcome our summer season.

Over the summer you may see our brightly decorated Project Crimson vehicles kindly donated by Mazda, a key Crimson supporter.

Later this year you will see a TV advertising campaign offered to us at no cost through the TVNZ Community Support Foundation. This campaign will send a simple message to all New Zealanders – "Look after what you value". We hope you will take this message to heart and get involved with Project Crimson.

I want to thank you for another year of tireless support and wish that every glimpse of those brilliant flowers over the summer is a source of pride, satisfaction and inspiration for every one of you.

Devon McLean
Chairman

Mercury Energy Pohutukawa Festival

The Coromandel's launch into Summer takes place between 25 November and 12 December with a packed programme of Festival events.

Project Crimson has been a long-time supporter of the Festival and this year has sponsored the Festival Art Exhibition which runs from 26 November – 5 December. Here people can view the extraordinary work of local artists who have been inspired by the pohutukawa in the region.

To open the Exhibition, Project Crimson is hosting a 'wine and cheese' evening on Friday 26 November at Hauraki House, Coromandel Town from 6.00pm.

We warmly welcome all our supporters to join us at this event.

For more information on the programme please check the Festival website www.pohutukawafest.com

E-scape

The East Cape of the North Island is like another world and must surely be one of New Zealand's best kept secrets. But on my road trip there in October, I got the feeling the local people like it that way.

Inhabited predominantly by Maori, who are said to have arrived in the East Cape region over a thousand years ago, this is an area of our country that places great emphasis on the retention of its culture and traditions.

Project Crimson has had a long association with the East Cape region dating back to 1993 when it first began funding the Hicks Bay, Matakaoa Point project - a combination of tree planting, fencing, possum and weed control work.

A few years later in Te Araroa, Project Crimson began funding a fencing and replanting project that we have continued to fund ever since.

Pohutukawa hang precariously along the road between Te Araroa and the East Cape lighthouse - some old enough to have been a familiar sight to the great-great grandparents of the local people. A giant pohutukawa, reputed to be the largest and oldest in the country, continues to grow in the grounds of Te Araroa School.

Of course listening to local Maori talk about pohutukawa is a lesson in conservation that you simply can't find in a book.

Hal Hovell, the DOC ranger for Te Ararora area, along with many other locals, grew up on this land, and the next generation will do the same.

These are people who enforce their own rahui (a protection order) on their coastline, and who go to extraordinary lengths to protect the juvenile pohutukawa growing along the coast.

Protecting the land is not a new phenomenon. It has long been a way of life in this part of the country.

Further around the shingle road from Te Araroa to the Lighthouse, Hal pointed out a number of fenced areas where young pohutukawa are coming away on the sand dunes. The

success of these trees is thanks to the work of DOC, the local people (many of them young children), Project Crimson funds and the good pruning by Matawhero Nursery in Gisborne, which understands the preparation these trees need to survive in harsh conditions.

Tikitiki, half an hour south of Te Araroa, boasts a large stretch of juvenile pohutukawa, planted mainly by the young people in the area.

It is a small town with a big vision for the coastline. Remains of the Waiapu River pour out onto this coastline which leaves it



Paora Brooking at Tikitiki

covered in logs and other debris so the local people are keen to see it covered again in crimson trees.

Over three hundred trees, funded by Project Crimson, have been planted along this beach and have been fenced to protect them from the roaming stock. These trees will make it to old age if the local people have anything to do with it.

Ruatoria, further south again, was a special find for me. Get beyond the township and a whole world opens up.

Graeme Atkins, the DOC ranger for the area, clearly has a love of his work that goes well beyond his job description. He took me through a dense native forest area - where he says he spends many nights catching possums and other pests - and out onto Port Awanui beach. This is a beautiful, uninhabited



Peter Gibson and Andy Bassett at Whangara

coastline but it is not the view of sea that grabs you initially. It is the hills covered with pohutukawa which catches your eye.

Graeme explains that he has bent over backwards to keep the pests away from these specimens, and it shows.

As we drove back toward Ruatoria, Graeme showed me the community planting project, funded by Project Crimson, which starts at the Pokai Marae and follows the road for miles. In years to come these trees will be a feature of the Ruatoria district.

Further down the coast in Whangara, Peter Gibson has lead the Paikea-Whitireia Trust to plant hundreds of natives behind the marae on the hill known as Pukehapopo. Whangara is the now famous beach where the movie Whale Rider was filmed and it is hard to ignore the beauty of this spot. Paikea, an ancestor of the Ngati Porou, is said to have arrived in this area of the country on the back of a whale. He landed near East Cape then journeyed south to settle at Whangara.

Forty minutes down the coast we visited another successful local conservation initiative supported by Project Crimson. Sandy Bull of the Tuahine Point Ecological Trust has set about transforming a piece of land gifted to the Trust by Les and Rose Bell. The land was retired from grazing two years ago and has seen hundreds of native trees planted - many of them pohutukawa.

The Department of Conservation has had a big role in the resurgence of pohutukawa along the coastline from Gisborne to the East Cape.

To contact Project Crimson: Phone (09) 414 0466

Andy Bassett, DOC's Area Manager for Gisborne, has been with the organisation for 18 years and has been a strong supporter of Project Crimson since its introduction to the area in 1993. In that time he has made great progress toward his vision of a crimson coastline from Gisborne to East Cape, with the help of Project Crimson and the local people.

Whether it is a natural desire to protect the land, or just a different perspective, there is something about the people in this part of our beautiful country that is quite humbling. No one here is looking for thanks – they just want to get on with the job of protecting and enhancing this special corner of the world.

Bridget Abernethy
Executive Director Project Crimson

“You just wouldn't recognise the place”

This is the strap-line for the Project Crimson television advertisement that will go to air in December this year on TV1 and TV2.

Earlier this year the Television New Zealand Community Support Foundation chose Project Crimson to be one of 12 recipients to receive \$50,000 of free advertising over a two month period.

The advertisement was created by some of the best creative minds in New Zealand at Colenso .99. The agency chose Project Crimson as a pro-bono client five years ago and since then has become a key part of the Project Crimson brand.

The advertisement is designed to remind New Zealanders of the importance that pohutukawa and rata have in our lives and to consider what life would be like without them.

We hope you enjoy the ad.

Pohutukawa - Holding it all together

Eastern Bay of Plenty residents can thank the pohutukawa in their area for reducing slips along the coastal and harbour cliffs, according to a recent study into landslides in the area.

Project Crimson invited its science advisor and Trustee, Dr. Gordon Hosking, to assess the relationship between slips and pohutukawa, following the July 2004 floods in the eastern Bay of Plenty.

The objective of the study was to clarify the association, if any, between pohutukawa and the numerous slips along coastal and harbour cliffs from Matata to Te Kaha, by comparing vegetation on slip areas with the vegetation on non slip areas either side. The study followed community concerns about the safety of pohutukawa along this popular coastline.

The findings show pohutukawa are much more common on the areas that were not affected by slips and are in fact the best mechanism for protecting New Zealand coastlines from slips. The most common factor associated with the slips was lack of coastal pohutukawa forest and change in surrounding land use.

Where land was modified for pasture or residential purposes, slips were more likely than if the land was not modified. In these modified areas the vegetation had been altered or removed altogether, and there was evidence of water runoff from above.

“Hopefully what will come of this study is a view from the local people that pohutukawa are essential in reducing landslides in the district”, says Gordon.

“Pohutukawa act as stabilisers of the soil and are very useful in a fragile geological area such as the eastern Bay of

Plenty. Planting pohutukawa on colluvial slopes and along cliff edges would almost certainly reduce slippage.

“For centuries these trees have held this fragile coastline together. It is only with the change in land use that landslides in coastal areas have increased.

“The greatest thing to come from this study is that we can do something useful to limit slips in the future. Being aware of what contributes to landslides and what reduces the likelihood of them, will help us manage these coastal cliffs in the future.

Slip assessments were grouped in five general areas:

- Coastal cliffs between Otamarakau and Matata (27 sites)
- Cliff above Ohope west (1 site)
- Ohiwa Harbour edge (7 sites)
- Waiotahi Beach (15 sites)
- Opotiki north to Te Kaha (13 sites)

A full copy of the study is available on www.projectcrimson.org.nz





Project Crimson Trustee – Panu Raea

Environmental Management is a core value for Carter Holt Harvey.

When Panu Raea, General Manager - Environment, Health & Safety and Risk for Carter Holt Harvey, was appointed to the Project Crimson Trust as a Trustee earlier this year, he brought with him a perspective that is fundamental to the Trust.

“Pohutukawa has a special place in the minds of kiwis who have holidayed at, or who visit the beach” says Panu, who spent much of his childhood surfing at beaches all over New Zealand.

It is the pohutukawa that attracted Panu and his family to their home in a street close to Cornwall Park - an Auckland park that has many pohutukawa and rata.

Indeed there is also a strong presence of these magnificent trees inside the Raea household where a large painting of a pohutukawa resides over the family dining table.

Panu is a welcome addition to the Project Crimson Trust.

New Project Crimson t-shirts now available for Christmas

Check out the website www.projectcrimson.org.nz

Project Crimson Annual Funding Round

– closes 1 March 2005

In March each year Project Crimson considers funding applications for pohutukawa and rata restoration and protection projects.

Applications come from community groups, iwi, schools, environmental groups, councils, the Department of Conservation, individuals and land care groups.

The land can be public or private provided applicants can demonstrate there will be a value to the broader public from their work. The focus must be on pohutukawa and rata.

After applications close, Project Crimson Trustees meet to determine which applications fit the goals of the Trust, and then allocate funds and resources accordingly.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants are advised by mail as soon as possible.

In return for our support, the Trust asks that signage supplied by us is displayed at the project site, and that we are kept advised of planting/workshop days and general progress of the project.

Interested applicants should be considering their applications NOW for the 2005 funding round. Application forms can be obtained from our website www.projectcrimson.org.nz or by contacting the Project Crimson office on 09 414 0466 or email info@projectcrimson.org.nz. APPLICATIONS CLOSE ON 1 MARCH 2005.

Advent – Big Red’s Coming

Poem by Flim Flam

Pohutukawa, flower of Christmas –
firebrand fringing shore and isthmus,
icon hot of season festive,
ablaze in redness rich yet restive;
stand-in for holly, snow and spruce
on wrapping papers quick unloosed.

Of *Metrosideros*, widely spread
from Oahu to Young Nick’s Head;
your plasma spawned from magma fert’le –
as bottle-brush and guava – myrtle;
in salt-splashed rock an early starter,
migrating mutant as bush rata.

Arawa chief, Tau-ninihi
beholding your infinity
blood-feathered headdress cast to brine,
bedazzled by your crimson line,
convinced that birds in tree-top perch
would yield red plumage without search.

To Maori, *taonga* of great awe,
from roots of which, in tribal lore,
the spirits of dead kin revered
to far Hawaiki passage steered –
there to join ancestral souls
in sacred coral-white atolls.

’Tis food for thought that your delights
gob-smacked explorers at Poor Knights:
Cook’s book well likens you to jam
which served to top a pudding crammed
by pensioned soldiers at Chelsea,
washed down with toddy (not Bell Tea!)

Beneath your canopy in flood
Marsden offered bread and blood –
administering in sanguine silence
respite brief to bay of violence.
Upon that spot now stands a cross,
grey like you, it marks your loss.

Yet you’ve survived the scourge of pest,
from furry demon stood the test.
Your ‘iron heart’ has seen you through,
(with help from Project Crimson too) –
from tooth and claw delivered, dearer,
as our *rakau rangatira*.



Protecting Pohutukawa & Rata | www.projectcrimson.org.nz