

# True colours *Spring 2008*

**W**elcome to the Spring edition of the Project Crimson newsletter. Project Crimson is a charitable trust established 'to enable pohutukawa and rata to flourish again in their natural habitat as icons in the hearts and minds of all New Zealanders'.



## What does Project Crimson do?

**P**roject Crimson administers an annual funding round in support of groups which are committed to the protection and enhancement of pohutukawa and rata. In addition to providing trees, the trust may support projects by assisting with pest and weed control, propagation materials, fencing and scientific research.

Past applicants include public organisations, community groups, conservation groups, individuals on private land, marae-based groups and even sporting groups.

In support of our vision, the Trust also undertakes other major conservation projects and carries out a range of public awareness activities.

Project Crimson only grows eco-sourced pohutukawa and rata, contracting many nurseries around the country to source seed and propagate trees for specific areas and projects.

Funding applications must be received by 1 March 2009.

See [www.projectcrimson.org.nz](http://www.projectcrimson.org.nz) for an application form or for more information or contact us on 0800 764 888.

## Meridian opens doors for Project Crimson

**T**hanks to principal sponsor Meridian Energy, Project Crimson has not only been able to strengthen its commitment to conservation projects around New Zealand, but has forged new partnerships that have allowed Project Crimson to expand in other ways as well.

Relationships with the Canterbury Rugby Football Union (Project Crimson was recently announced as one of their charities of choice) and the Hurricanes in Wellington (who helped Project Crimson this year plant rata as part of a Wellington restoration project) have benefited Project Crimson in expanding awareness of the Trust's work.

Three years ago Project Crimson was faced with finding a new partner for the Trust.

"In Meridian we have found an organisation that shares our fundamental conservation principles and has a genuine desire to make a significant and sustained impact on the protection of pohutukawa and rata," says Bruce Waters, Chairman of the Project Crimson Trust.

"We share a robust, collaborative 'we are in this together' working style and enjoy their receptiveness to innovative conservation concepts.

"Meridian has shown careful respect for Project Crimson and its many supporters' hard won reputation as an effective advocate for, and protector of, pohutukawa and rata."

## What you can do to help

- Plant a pohutukawa or rata - but think ahead before choosing a site because these trees grow to be very big and can be a nuisance in a small residential property.
- Never chop down pohutukawa or rata. Ask an arborist or garden centre for advice on pruning.
- Get involved in local pohutukawa and rata planting and protection activities. Contact your local Department of Conservation office, council parks department or Project Crimson to find out what is happening in your area.
- Avoid parking cars underneath pohutukawa and rata trees as this can damage their roots. Lighting barbecues or bonfires near the trees can damage foliage and roots.
- Where possible eradicate possums. These are the single biggest threat to the survival of pohutukawa and rata in New Zealand.
- Stock can cause damage to pohutukawa and rata if they trample the roots. Fence trees on farmland to protect them from stock.
- Educate others. There is information on the Project Crimson website which can be used for educating others.
- Support the trust by making a donation, sponsoring a tree or buying products from our online shop and by supporting the organisations that support us.



Crusaders planting rata, Christchurch Park, June 2008.

## Funding Round

By Bridget Abernethy, Executive Director

This year, Project Crimson completed its 18th funding round in support of community pohutukawa and rata projects around New Zealand.

Groups and individuals all around the country approach Project Crimson annually with ideas and plans for how they can protect and enhance the pohutukawa and rata populations in New Zealand.

One successful recipient this year was the Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park Supporters, and given the Park's location in my home town of Wellington, I took my family up there one Sunday in June to help them plant the rata trees we had donated to their project.

The planting was done high up along the peaks of Wellington on a beautifully still and crisp day. I always think a planting day is simply not complete without an element of adventure to it - and we certainly got it that day. Wellingtonians love their hills but they can be trying for young children, particularly when there are five of them under seven years old to lead up the craggy, slippery slopes.

With one child on my back, gloves, morning tea and spades in hand, and a repertoire of stories and songs to keep them occupied, we eventually made it to the planting site where we set about digging holes, laying fertiliser, planting trees and watching the recreational mountain bikers weave their way around the great trails.

As a young Wellingtonian I can recall the bleakness of these hills, and the gorse covering much of them. Now, thanks to the Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park Supporters, the area now boasts one of the best mountain bike parks in New Zealand, and over 30,000 native trees have now been planted there. While the children can't see the transformation - it wasn't lost on me.

This area is a great example of how a committed and hard-working group can change an area of New Zealand using native trees and some vision.

It's well worth a visit when you're next in Wellington both for cyclists and walkers.

For more information visit: [www.makarapeak.org.nz](http://www.makarapeak.org.nz)



Treemendous Team after all the work is done at Ohaupo School, Waikato.

## Treemendous school makeovers

### New Mazda Foundation Partnership – a Treemendous success

Project Crimson has enjoyed five years of strong support with Mazda.

Recently the Treemendous Makeovers programme was launched by the Mazda Foundation and Project Crimson, signalling a new level of commitment between the two organisations.

In its first year the programme selected four New Zealand schools from nearly 200 applications across the country. The winning schools, Hamilton's Ohaupo School, Kaikohe's Ohaeawai School, Wainui Beach School in Gisborne, and Karitane School in Dunedin, won the opportunity to have their grounds made-over with native shrubs and trees, and in some cases additional landscaping work was done as well.

Mazda Foundation Chairman Andrew Clearwater says the response to the competition was outstanding, with creative applications in many forms, from children's heartfelt letters and pictures, to photographs and intricate landscaping drawings. "It is community projects like these that enable Mazda to express its particular set of human values, and help create amazing environments in the schoolyards of New Zealand. This fits very easily into our way of giving something worthwhile back to our smaller communities".

Applications are welcome from all primary and intermediate schools in New Zealand but have now closed for 2008. For more information see:

[www.mazdafoundation.org.nz/treemendous/](http://www.mazdafoundation.org.nz/treemendous/)



From left - Matilda, Hugo, Olive, Lucy, Oscar and Bridget.



## Ata Rangi serves up another fine pinot noir in support of rata

Ata Rangi reports that their delicious *Crimson* pinot noir, with its beautiful rata-clad label, continues to wow wine lovers and media critics not only close to home, but in cities as diverse as Tokyo, London, Melbourne, Singapore and Rio. Reference to the work of Project Crimson is carried on the back label, helping to spread the word across the globe.

*Crimson* 2006 is now sold out, but the excellent 2007 vintage is available from the winery and fine wine stores. This vintage is a 'best of both worlds' blend of fruit from Martinborough and Central Otago. Cropping levels on the home blocks were tiny in 2007, after cold, wet spring weather seriously affected flowering and fruit set. The result (we are told) is a slightly more serious, muscular and deep ruby-coloured *Crimson* which is fabulous value for money. We should also tell you that Australian wine critic Nick Stock (Nick Stock, Wine Business Monthly 100, Jul 08") recently wrote:

*"Ata Rangi CRIMSON 2007 – 93 points. It's staggering to think that this is Ata Rangi's second tier Pinot – it wipes the deck with the best efforts of many other wineries! Super bright fruit aromas, there's pure cherry flesh and gravelly mineral complexity, gentle savoury spice and haunting fragrance. Supple and steadily balanced, cherry flavour runs on layers of fine tannins, finishing long and fresh."*

Thankfully the 2008 season was more bountiful, benefiting Project Crimson with another marvellous financial contribution from the sale of each crimson bottle. The team at Ata Rangi have let us know that the 2008 *Crimson* will be released in time for Christmas, and can be pre-ordered from the winery anytime from now. Release date is 1 December. Personalized gift packs are a specialty which makes Christmas shopping a breeze.

[www.projectcrimson.org.nz/shop](http://www.projectcrimson.org.nz/shop)  
or [www.atarangi.co.nz](http://www.atarangi.co.nz)

ATA RANGI  
· MARTINBOROUGH ·

## Pigeon Mountain Primary School sees red

Children at Pigeon Mountain Primary School (PMPS) in Auckland understand conservation and so it's no surprise that they were the first school in New Zealand to renew their Enviro School Green Gold status.

Their keen interest in protecting our natural heritage resulted in them inviting Project Crimson to speak at their PMPS environmental committee meeting earlier this year.

Comprising two representatives from each classroom, Project Crimson's Jenny Harper, was able to bring them up to speed on the work of the Trust.

The discussion resulted in the environmental committee agreeing to run a fundraising multi-day on World Environment Day/Arbor Day, where the children would be encouraged to wear red and donate a gold coin to Project Crimson.

The event was a huge success, with the school raising \$453. Project Crimson will use these funds to raise trees to plant out in the Manukau region.

In August a group of Year 3 and Year 6 students joined Jenny and the Manukau City Council to plant 200 pohutukawa in a local reserve.

Teacher Leigh Steel said "the students and staff of Pigeon Mountain Primary are very proud to be associated with Project Crimson. We value the opportunity of working with the community in taking action and promoting sustainable practices. The classes involved in the planting had a fabulous fun filled day and are very proud of what they have achieved. We hope to continue our association in the future."

  
PROJECT CRIMSON  
renewing pohutukawa and rata

  
powered by  
meridian



## Meridian and Canterbury Rugby Football Union staff trade their computers for conservation work in the Canterbury foothills

August 2008

Over 300 southern rata plants were planted at Washpen Falls, in Hororata recently by a highly motivated group of employees from Meridian's Christchurch office with staff from Canterbury Rugby Football Union.

The name Washpen Falls has an ethereal beauty to it which you understand when you finally get there. The falls are located 50 minutes from Christchurch, toward Lake Coleridge in the area of the Canterbury where the plains turn into the foothills, at the base of the Southern Alps. Hororata (meaning 'drooping rata') is thought to have been named due to the dominance of southern rata there 100 years ago, though sadly, today, they aren't as easy to find. Despite this, Washpen Falls, tucked away up high in the rhyolite hills behind Hororata, boasts hundreds of them, many of which are hundreds of years old.

Canterbury farmers Tom and Jen McElrea recognised the exceptional conservation values of the land and retired the farm ten years ago. They fenced the premium area off to exclude stock and developed a walkway in order that the public could enjoy what they have been enjoying privately for a long time.

"It's an amazing place to visit. And because they have been a recipient of Project Crimson funds for some years," says Bridget Abernethy, "it's a special place for us as well."

Fortunately, Tom and Jen also built a great entertainment area in the native forest area for corporate groups. So after the hard work is done, groups can relax there and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of this remarkable place.

[www.washpenfalls.co.nz](http://www.washpenfalls.co.nz)

## Restoration Nursery of the Year winner – Jonathan Bussell, Wellington City Council

We call him the 'rata' warrior because of the way he embraced Project Crimson's mission to bring rata back to Wellington. So we were delighted, but not at all surprised, to hear that the Wellington City Council Berhampore Nursery, which Jonathan manages, recently won the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network award for best restoration nursery in New Zealand.

Jonathan has provided vital support to Project Crimson in Wellington, and has even bent over backwards to support other Project Crimson projects around the country.

### Contact Us

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Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

With Christmas not too far away, don't forget to visit our online shop:

<https://www.projectcrimson.org.nz/shop/>  
which includes the Sponsor-A-Tree option.

We're hoping to launch a fabulous new range of New Zealand designer merchandise in time for Christmas! Keep an eye on our website – where you can buy all your Xmas gifts.