

TOP OF THE SOUTH



KAI RESILIENCE HUI REPORT

18th October 2025

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WHY DID WE MEET?

On 18th October 2025, over 20 people gathered at the Golden Bay Sustainable Living Centre to discuss Kai Resilience for the Top of the South. This was an event co-organised by the Nelson Tasman Climate Forum and the Golden Bay Sustainable Living Centre. It was well attended by groups from Whakatū, extending the scope of the project from the 2024 hui.

The 2024 Kai Resilience Hui defined Kai Resilience as:

- Disaster proof - resilience in the face of natural, medical and political disasters.
- Beneficial to the local economy - supports our growers and producers financially.
- Beneficial for health and wellbeing - for the environment (inc. waterways, biodiversity, soil health), and for humans now and in the future.
- Part of the community - so that all can access food through sharing/trading, utilising our abundant and fantastic resources.
- Access for all - to support vulnerable people and those in need.

In 2024, the hui concluded with the following objectives:

INITIATIVES
#1 - Branding GB Food “Made in the Bay”
#2 - Local verification scheme - Peer group verification that allows product to be ‘regeneratively grown’ or ‘spray-free’ & ties into “Made in the Bay” branding
#3 TIE- MPI Research
#3 TIE - Creating a co-op to allow de-centralized processing machinery and infrastructure for businesses and groups in the bay
#5 TIE- Map GB for bioregional strengths - Climate, soil, local knowledge, past experience
#5 TIE - Sharing hubs - Have locality sharing hubs for food and resources
#5 TIE- Analysing other Kai Resilience Projects in Aotearoa and see what’s transferrable

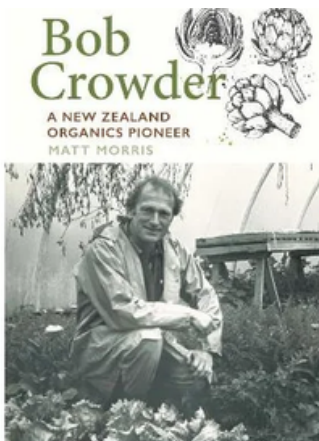
Progress since the 2024 hui has been slow. We have applied for funding for stickers, and are still struggling to find artists able to design the visuals for this promotional material. We have gained better understanding of the limitations of MPI research (see the 2024 report); but have no current leads on this (although the Government is apparently going to relax some legislative barriers to small businesses).

Which leads to the whakatauki “Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi” - “with your food basket and my food basket, the people will thrive” We cannot do this work separately; so the 2025 hui is focussed upon learning from other players in the field, learning from others’ experiences and building connection across the Top of the South.

LEARN - WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE GARDENING CONTEXT AND HISTORY IN AOTEAROA?

Matt Morris - Author of Common Grounds & Community Gardens Researcher

Aotearoa has a rich history of localized food initiatives, but we also have our challenges. Matt shares some of the learnings from his 2020 book 'Common Ground' and also from the book he is writing on a history of community gardening in Aotearoa. He spoke from experience in setting up the Food Resilience Network in Ōtautahi, Christchurch, and lessons learned through that process.



Matt was born in Invercargill in 1974s. He met Bob Crowder in 1994, and Bob has had a huge influence on Matt's experience, from Bob's work introducing organic growing in Aotearoa and developing it commercially. Bob became a mentor for Matt, who wrote a biography about this Kiwi organics pioneer. Matt became involved in Christchurch's Organic Garden City Trust, and Canterbury Organic, one of the original 4 pilot schemes that eventually became OrganicFarmNZ (Golden Bay was also a pilot area). Matt also became involved in Soil & Health. After a PhD he was employed by the University of Canterbury, and was involved in the post-quake rebuild of Christchurch.

A 'very' brief outline of home gardening in Aotearoa

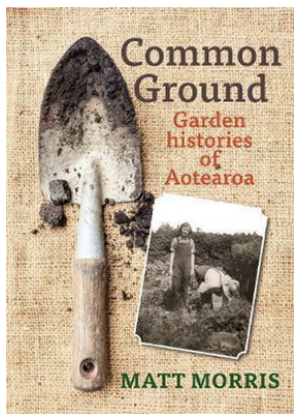
In the early post-colonial era Māori used land to farm corn and potatoes, and had immensely productive gardens that paved the way to make further colonisation possible. When families arrived from overseas, land confiscation created a



system where settlers were able to buy a ¼ acre and create a garden that sustained their needs, often leaving Māori with the infertile and marginal lands.

LEARN - WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE GARDENING CONTEXT AND HISTORY IN AOTEAROA?

Matt Morris - Author of *Common Grounds* & Community Gardens Researcher



In New Zealand, new settlers started food gardens immediately, and food was grown on any land available through until at least the 1960s. At this time food and vegetable shops didn't exist as they do today. In the 1940s if you wanted food it involved a lot of work, and you needed a garden. However from post-wartime to the 1970s gardens became a place for sanctuary and play, rather than necessity. Fewer hours were spent in labour to grow our own food.



Today we are undergoing a revival of gardens to grow fruit & veges. Yet in this era we beg the question who can afford a piece of land that can sustain a family? How can we encourage this ability to learn? There are many initiatives across the country who help this including community gardens, such as Aunty's Garden near Waitapu Marae, Hastings; which teaches the next generation to grow kumara amongst other crops.

We now live in a world where we have supermarkets for all our needs, which Matt believes has been a huge shift in our food sovereignty. Yet, he acknowledges it leaves us vulnerable as they only stock for 3-5 days and are vulnerable to supply chain disruptions from events such as earthquakes.



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Food Resilience Story from Ōtautahi.

In Ōtautahi an initiative started in 1997 to make the city the first Organic Garden City in the world: with many initiatives that covered edible gardens for children, community gardens, commercial organic operations to a local organic certification scheme. The Food Resilience Network then emerged in 2014, a multi-stakeholder collaboration that developed the Ōtākaro Orchard. Meanwhile post-2011 earthquake there was a further shift, opening 600-700Ha of good foraging in the red-zone and a new city to be developed.

Edible Canterbury

In 2012 a group of people began to self-organise around the theme of Kai Resilience. This gathering recognised the strengths of the various groups in Ōtautahi and brought them together to function as a whole.

In 2014 a hui was organised with local government and community organisations which developed the Edible Canterbury Charter - [link](#) . Originally the network met regularly with circle meetings to ask "What am I doing? What do I need help with?" and so a network of organisations became more formalised.

They identified a need for a common objective together, and identified a need to create a network of community nodes, including a high profile central city hub. This led to the development of [Ōtākaro Orchard](#).



Edible Canterbury Charter (2014)

- **Accessibility:** access to nutritious food is the right of all people and is a basic determinant of health;
- **Mahinga kai:** food gathering and food growing spaces that reflect the values of local iwi are integral to the vision of a food resilient region;
- **Cultural appropriateness:** food and culture are intimately connected and the many different cultural groups that make up our region's population should all have access to food that is culturally appropriate to them within the boundaries of our climate;
- **Ecological sustainability:** a resilient food system implies one in which food is grown in ways that regenerate the natural environment rather than harm it (for example using principles of organic agriculture, permaculture, agro-ecology etc);
- **Social enterprise and local economic development:** we endorse the establishment of organisations and businesses that grow, process and distribute food locally, and the development of a local food economy;
- **Food education:** education about nourishing food for all ages and in a variety of learning places is crucial;
- **Community empowerment:** everyone has a role to play in creating a food resilient region and everyone's role is valued;
- **Collaboration:** creating a food resilient region requires partnerships between many agencies and cannot be owned by any single group.

During the city re-build, the government wanted to procure a community garden in the central city.

With this government contract, they needed to get further funding and a project co-ordinator to support the build of a flashy new building in the corner of Oxford & Manchester Street.

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The Food Resilience Network started under the umbrella of Soil & Health Canterbury, but when Ōtākaro Orchard became too big, the FRN became its own legal entity. A lot of energy was invested in this >\$1million hub that is managed by LINZ (with a 6-year build time) and it has faced major funding challenges. It will soon open as the education centre for the Food Resilience Network, a great success despite the challenges created as this large project diverted attention from other Food Resilience Projects.

Matt advises any Food Resilience Group to ask:

1. What is the problem that we want to solve?
 - a. Lack of knowledge?
 - b. Food justice?
 - c. Affordable land?
 - d. Flooding & seasonal unpredictability?



Everyone will have different imperatives, and so it is important to keep focused on your unique underlying solution.

Community Gardens Survey

As part of his work in the Community Gardens space, Matt shared the results of the 2025 survey:



Indicator	2020 Survey	2025 Survey
Responses & Response Rate	89 valid responses, giving a 43 % response rate.	80 valid responses (out of 216 surveyed gardens), = 37 % response rate.
Urban concentration	72 % of responding gardens were in Auckland (42 %), Wellington (17 %) or Christchurch (13 %).	80 % of respondents came from those three cities: Auckland (32.5%), Wellington (22.5%), Canterbury (25%)*. 69.2 % overall of all 216 known gardens are located there. * Most (but not all) of Canterbury's community gardens are in Christchurch.
Volunteer ethnic diversity	No formal diversity rating; but European/Pākehā was the most common volunteer ethnicity – followed by mixed, Māori, Asian, Pasifika.	11 % of gardens reported their volunteer base as 'not at all diverse', 40 % as 'somewhat diverse', and 23 % as 'very diverse'. 18.2 % cater to only Pākehā volunteers, 41 % to three or more ethnic groups.
Engagement with refugee/migrant communities	Around 21 % of gardens said they worked directly with refugee or migrant communities.	34 % of gardens reported this kind of engagement in 2025.
Age ranges of participants catered to	under-10 (~15 %), ages 11–15 (<10 %), 16–20 (~10 %), 21–30 (~20 %), 31–50 (~60 %), 51–70 (~35–40 %), <small>over: 70.1-25.5%</small>	Children, under-13 (19%) Tenns, 13-17 (10%) 18-24 (29%) 25-44 (52%) 45-64 (67%) 65+ (54%)

LEARN - WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE GARDENING CONTEXT AND HISTORY IN AOTEAROA?

2025 Community Gardens Survey Results



Lack of paid staff presence	No full-time staff: 95% No part-time staff: 64%	No full-time staff: 76.3% No part-time staff: 45%
Land ownership – public land (%)	~70 % (= 60 % Council land; = 11.5 % central-government land).	(Note that while many gardens do not have any staff, conversely some gardens have multiple staff. One garden has 15 part-time staff, for example.) 73 % (63 % Council; 10 % NZTA/MoE or other government body)
Land-use agreement / lease security	Not asked	29 % no formal agreement; ≤ 43 % in 3-year or longer lease (i.e., long-term security); lease-length breakdown given.
Legal entity status (%)	Not asked	68 % are a legal entity (e.g. incorporated society with charitable status); 22 % no; 10 % unsure.
Sources of funding – % gardens reliant on council grants	Unclear (asked differently), but funding sources: ~42 % regional funders; ~39 % philanthropics; ~12 % national; sponsorship 2 %.	58 % rely on council grants; 45 % on philanthropic grants; 39 % on community fundraising/koha; 10 % from national funders.
Self-generated income – % generating own income	41 % acknowledged generating some income (produce, workshops, donations).	35 % generate income directly (via sales/workshops/membership etc)
Financial self-assessment	48 % described as 'struggling or barely adequate'; only 11 % 'comfortable'.	31 % 'fully sufficient'; 46 % 'partially sufficient'; 20 % 'not sufficient at all'; 3 % unsure
Access to basic infrastructure	Not asked in same detail	80 % have water, 70 % compost system,* 60 % tool shed/storage; 56 % accessible paths/toilets; 45 % seating/shelter; fewer than 30 % have greenhouse/tunnel house. *Note that 97% also reported composting as an activity in their garden.
Experience of security incidents	Not captured	44 % cite security/fencing concerns; 71 % report theft; 54 % vandalism; 31 % unauthorized access; many strategies and quotes shared.
Gardens regularly recording planting	25 % routinely record planting	16 % reported regularly recording production (planting and/or harvest)
Gardens regularly recording harvest	5 % routinely track harvest weights; 16 % sometimes record	Same 16 % categorized as 'regular' production-tracking (note: questions combined planting & harvest)
Gardens using organic practices	91 % affirm they use organic methods	95 % report organic methods + 97 % composting
“Moderately engaged” communities	43.7 % reported surrounding communities as moderately engaged	58.6 % reported moderate community engagement
Support for national gardens network	73 % said 'yes' to a national gardening association	88 % said 'yes' to a national organisation

Draft themes for book:

- Precarity
- Community
- Kai Motuhake/ Food Sovereignty
- * Resilience
- * Food Justice

Full report available on line [here](#).

LEARN - WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE GARDENING CONTEXT AND HISTORY IN AOTEAROA?

Madz BatachEl - General Manager of Environmental Network Manawatū

- Resources
 - Lend donated equipment for community use
 - Hire a van and trailer
 - Seed exchange
 - ENM tops up and manages this
 - Organisational assistance - finding volunteers to run events
- Funding
 - They have a City Council community funding pool called the Environmental Initiatives Fund that distributes \$50k each year. This allows them to distribute the funding to community groups as long as at the end ENM shows they meet the deliverables (e.g. supporting circular economy, food sovereignty, environmental action)
 - They also receive money from Eastern & Central Community Trust for \$165,000 for community groups with environmental projects. This can be distributed for:
 - Small grants <\$1000 for any individuals for projects
 - Groups/trusts/inc. society <\$15,000 which can include wages.
- Networking
 - They organise a quarterly networking hui which regularly gets 40-50 people. These 2-3hr lunchtime meetings help ENM to see how they can better develop connection & support



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Other examples of kai resilience work in support of Te Tiriti Partnerships:

- **Working with mana whenua**

ENM is a Te Tiriti partner, and is consistently trying to see how they can work better in this environment. It is often the question “how can we support you?” rather than deciding on solutions first, that is at the heart of this work.

For example, ENM Has supported Beth Lou of Growing Gardens and Community has helped create over 180 gardens in Palmerston North; she heads into gardens and gives 3-4 raised veggie beds and ongoing support from her knowledge; changing what is offered depending on the needs of each household.



- **Ora Konnect & Project 4412**

www.enm.org.nz/manawatu-food-action/food-free/kai-resilience-strategy

A group of social service connections which identified an area in Palmerston North with high deprivation, high māori and Pacific Peoples and immigrant populations. Ora Konnect created a series of squads to focus on areas of need in this ‘4412’-postcode. The Kai Security Squad was created with the goal of bringing together the various local organisations working in the food insecurity space to formulate a strategy to support Whānau on their journey to food sovereignty. In 2019 ENM’s Manawatū Food Action Network (MFAN) collective joined the collaboration and received sufficient resourcing from the 2021 Lotteries Covid-19 Community Wellbeing fund to develop the 4412 Kai Resilience Strategy (KRS). This led to giving planter boxes, supporting the crop-swap, built 3 community gardens, helped have a part-time mara-kai builder.

- **Research with Massey Uni**

ENM are working with Massey Uni who are doing literature studies on what food sovereignty actually is, including speaking to mana whenua. They are working to release a video/comic to make this information accessible.

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- **Kore Hiakai**



ENM is part of Kore hiakai which is a fantastic organisation working in alignment with Te Tiriti to establish food sovereignty.

www.zerohunger.org.nz

- **EnviroHubs Aotearoa**

ENM is an EnviroHub which really helps promote change, ensuring that ENM are working within the Te Tiriti.

Advocacy work

For years people involved in ENM have been a squeaky wheel to council members: and have asked those in power in policy to make change. They have shared connections beyond their own region and shared examples to inspire change.

As a result the PNCC Food Resilience Policy was borne:



See the document [here](#).

A key outcome for food sovereignty is increased PNCC resourcing for community food initiatives via the Environmental Initiatives Fund (a whopping extra \$30,000 per year).

Much of this is due to really passionate board members who have had a long-term plan, who continue to put in submissions, and go to Council meetings regularly. They have developed good relationships with councillors, and ENM staff talk to Council Officers to foster these. This, as well as good reporting of their work, improves their weight in the advocacy space.

GROW, SHARE AND USE - HOW DO WE MAKE THE FOOD THAT WE ARE PRODUCING AVAILABLE TO ALL?

Kelli Campbell & Luisa Zuppardi-Smith - Whakatū Food Sovereignty Project

These inspiring wahine work in the not-for-profit sector, changing the food scene of Whakatū. They are in the inception stage of the Whakatū Food Sovereignty Project which aims to maximise the value of open orchards in the Nelson region, bringing communities together to build food sovereignty and disaster resilience.



Luisa & Kelli met whilst working at the Nelson Environment Centre. Luisa has worked in all areas of the food market, including food rescue, food production and food processing. Kelli is currently studying a post-grad in Geospacial Sciences, alongside her job at NEC.

They are dreaming, and initiating, the “Whakatū Food Sovereignty Project”. This proposal utilises Open Orchards which are fruit and nut trees planted by the council for community use. Currently the council contracts-out the maintenance to “Green by Nature” and although this leads to the land around the trees is well looked after, there is little specific management and tending to the Open Orchards’ trees directly.

Luisa and Kelli propose to integrate ‘scattered efforts’ in managing this precious resource. One initial issue is that knowledge of the Open Orchards is piece-meal and out of date. There are currently 3 maps available:

Edible Walks

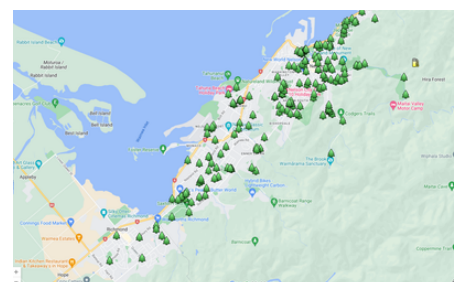


Council map

feeds into the edible walks and is part of Nelson’s asset management (outdated)

Google Map

made by general public and maps 500 trees (also outdated)



GROW, SHARE AND USE - HOW DO WE MAKE THE FOOD THAT WE ARE PRODUCING AVAILABLE TO ALL?

Kelli Campbell & Luisa Zuppardi-Smith -Whakatū
Food Sovereignty Project

Information about the proposal:

Stage 1:

Mapping is crucial for the orchards, and could include additional info to inform the public about what care is needed; and what time of year harvesting is appropriate.

Stage 2:

Have a project co-ordinator that can organise volunteers for maintenance, harvesting, processing & distributing.

Stage 3:

Harvesting: use community groups to gather and preserve (giving both a knowledge and skill exchange, and reduce gluts). The food could then be distributed to micro-pantries (potentially privately housed, and close to the orchards) that can only be accessed in the event of a disaster.

Stage 4:

Developing a publicly available App would be a great resource to make the Orchards more easily used and cared for. .

The benefits of the project:

- Food Sovereignty: Improving access to local, fresh and preserved food. Boosting communities' ability to source and share their own food.
- Disaster Resilience: communities are more prepared for disasters through reduced dependence on external food supply chains. Preserved foods from the open orchards can be stored for a long time and could be complemented by other long-life foods (potentially from sponsors). Volunteers could be a part of a standby disaster management team.
- Community Building: nurturing collaboration and knowledge-sharing, creating a self-sustaining network that benefits community connection.

GROW, SHARE AND USE - HOW DO WE MAKE THE FOOD THAT WE ARE PRODUCING AVAILABLE TO ALL?

Kelli Campbell & Luisa Zuppardi-Smith -Whakatū
Food Sovereignty Project

Potential financing options:

The project need to be financially sustainable at its core; and they are considering:

- Corporate partnership: Possible contributors could be Pics Peanut Butter or Watties. These partnerships would give funding to help pay for operations and salaries and in return there would be brand awareness.
- Social enterprise: Offer the gardening services of the volunteers to individuals. The individuals would have first pick of the food grown on their land and then the rest can be shared among pataka kai to ensure no food waste.
- Advertisement revenue through the app: The app showing the orchard locations and information could have two versions - a free version with ads for revenue or a subscription version with no ads.
- Grants: Funding could be sourced through council support, commercial sponsors, and trusts; especially in the launch-phase.

The challenges of the project:

- Funding sustainability
- Existing community use of orchards
- Rats (public perception, as much an issue as 'real' risk)
- Volunteer recruitment
- Vandalism
- Types of food for micro-pantries (i.e sourcing foods other than fruits)
- Premises for food preservation activities

If this project sounds like it could be something you are interested in, or know of similar projects/apps around the country, please get in touch with Luisa & Kelli.

GROW. SHARE AND USE - HOW DO WE MAKE THE FOOD THAT WE ARE PRODUCING AVAILABLE TO ALL?

Michal Garvey- Founder of FoodPrint

Foodprint has helped save 200 tonnes of carbon dioxide over five years, by connecting end-of-day food excess to consumers and reducing waste. Michal gives an outline of the negatives of our existing food system, her journey to set up the business, and how this App works in the food resilience sector, and what challenges they have faced.



Michal Garvey began by giving a shocking summary of how our food system has a hugely wasteful impact.

1/3 of food wasted (FAO, 2011)
=
1.3 billion tons of food/year
=
\$1,000,000,000,000 USD/year.

In 20-30 years the world will have 9-10 billion humans who all need to be fed. Project Drawdown is a Thinktank of Climate Crisis (www.drawdown.org) and it believes that reducing waste is the #1 action to to mitigate climate change.

A huge exemplar of the wasteful nature of the food system is bread.

**Bread is the number 1
wasted food item in
the world**



**In Aotearoa we throw
away ~29million
loaves of bread/year.**

GROW, SHARE AND USE - HOW DO WE MAKE THE FOOD THAT WE ARE PRODUCING AVAILABLE TO ALL?

Michal Garvey - Founder of FoodPrint

1.4 billion Ha (26% of world's agricultural land) is used to grow food that is wasted



Every 5 seconds we lose a rugby pitch of soil due to over-use.

10% of crop yields will be lost by 2050.

Much of the world's productive land is being converted to housing.



45 trillion litres of water are used to create wasted food each year.

MEANWHILE...

¼ people don't have access to safe drinking water.

LoveFoodHate Waste NZ believes we need 1525l to make EACH loaf of bread!



At every stage there is also a waste of time, labour and money.

The majority of food waste ends up in the landfill, releasing CH₄ that is 28-36x more potent than CO₂ (IPCC, 2021) at heat trapping.

10% of greenhouse gases are produced by food waste (IPCC, 2019), whilst the aviation industry produces just 2.5%.

Michal believes we are on track for well above 3 degrees of global warming. With this, climate events are coming closer to home: Auckland Anniversary floods saw onions rolling down the road. Cyclone Gabrielle resulted in a reduction in supply of kumara & apples. This reduces our production, and increases costs. These significant events are quickly forgotten, and business as usual continues for many.

GROW, SHARE AND USE - HOW DO WE MAKE THE FOOD THAT WE ARE PRODUCING AVAILABLE TO ALL?

Michal Garvey - Founder of FoodPrint



The hospitality & food retail industry accounts for 30% of the total food waste.

WasteMINZ found that 60% of food wasted is still edible: due to plate waste and cabinet food.

For every dollar thrown out; \$3 must be made to combat that waste.

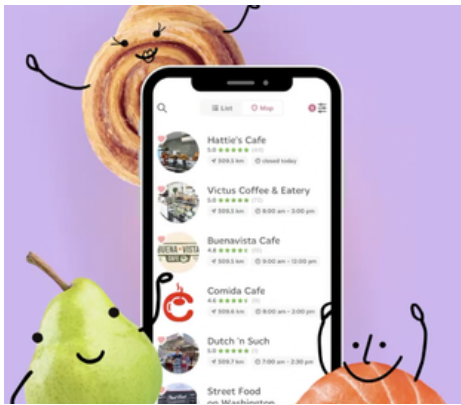
The story of FoodPrint

- Michal Garvey studied marketing and is the daughter of an entrepreneur. As a teenager she learned about dairy farming, and wondered why we grow crops to feed animals to then eat the animals; when we could just eat the original crops.
- Through various work experiences she realised the enormity of food waste.
- Working at HelloFresh in London helped her see the value of tech in changing food consumption.
- In Copenhagen she studied coding for a year, was introduced to an app that gave discounted access to food waste items.
- In 2018 Michal moved back to Aotearoa and started working on FoodPrint, she networked with software developers and by 2019 the app was launched.



GROW, SHARE AND USE - HOW DO WE MAKE THE FOOD THAT WE ARE PRODUCING AVAILABLE TO ALL?

Michal Garvey - Founder of FoodPrint



The app works by cafes listing their 'end-of-day' food, which can be listed at a price that they choose. The consumer then downloads the app for free, and can locate the eatery and buy food at a 30-90% discount.

FoodPrint helps businesses to reduce their food waste and the revenue associated. Businesses aren't charged to join the app, but are charged a 15% service fee on each of their listings. Eateries are paid weekly.

In the Nelson/Tasman region FoodPrint works at: GoodFor, FSI, OnTheSpot Richmond; and contracts with FourSquare are in the pipeline.

The results

Although FoodPrint isn't changing the issue of food production wastage, it is a step in the direction of behaviour change, and highlights to cafes alternatives. to dumping food waste. Many cafes have got a better idea of the amount of food they waste, and can target their production better to match sales.

Businesses often have a myriad of reasons to not sign-up but by targeting ideals about:

1. Social, 2. Environmental, 3. Business (financial) aspects, many are convinced of the benefit of FoodPrint.

To date Foodprint has saved ~200tons of emissions

Learnings from FoodPrint

- Starting a business is a great way to make a change; Michal was surprised by the generosity of people who gave help in knowledge or contacts.
- There is a lot of data available to collect, including letting users know how much emissions have been saved.

CONNECT, SEED AND CULTIVATE- FOOD RESILIENCE IN THE TOP OF THE SOUTH: WORKING TOWARDS A LOCAL FOOD RESILIENCE NETWORK

Babu Blatt – Program Manager of WAO Aotearoa



Rosie met with Babu Blatt from WAO Aotearoa in the lead up to the hui. She posed 3 key questions to Babu.

Tell me a little about the work of WAO?

WAO is a Wānaka based charity and is a collective for climate action and regeneration. It focusses on accelerating systems change by bringing together people (businesses, local government etc.).

WAO Aotearoa works in 3 key areas:

- Climate
- Ecosystems & biodiversity
- Social resilience (inc. food resilience)

Food Resilience has been part of WAO Aotearoa's work from the very beginning. WAO Aotearoa assessed the UN Sustainable Development Goals to ensure all their work is in alignment with them. With knowledge that everything is interconnected, WAO Aotearoa has a systems based approach. They ask, 'How do we build a food system that is resilient to disruption, nourishes people, strengthens the economy & regenerates?'

What is the most impactful part of your work in the food resilience space?

The main focus has been connection and understanding. WAO hosts a series of hui's connecting businesses, growers, distributors, local organisations and council representatives to build a full picture of the current food system. This work resulted in the Food Resilience Report in 2023. One key outcome of this hui was the Southern Lakes Kai Collective which is a group of 35 representatives of the food system; and acts as a ThinkTank to look at where they can make the best impact. In 2025 they released a Roadmap to strengthen their Food System.

<https://www.wao.co.nz/food-resilience>

What are the biggest challenges you have faced, or continue to face?

The ongoing challenge is financial sustainability despite the number of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. It needs long-term funding to be able to make a slow-growing lasting change in the food sector. They are looking to changes into 2125 and so really need strategic funding to support this work.

CONNECT, SEED AND CULTIVATE- FOOD RESILIENCE IN THE TOP OF THE SOUTH: WORKING TOWARDS A LOCAL FOOD RESILIENCE NETWORK

Further resources & reading

Te Ao Māori perspectives:

Reading:

- [“Pātaka Kai, Growing kai sovereignty”](#) book by Jessica Hutchings & Jo Smith
- [He Whenua Rongo – Elevating Māori Soil & Food sovereignty Report](#)

Watching:

- [We were gardeners](#) - Māori TV
- [Hua Parakore](#) - Māori TV
- [Indigenising Design Webinar Series | Webinar Two: Decolonising Global Systems](#)

Websites:

- [Papawhakaritorito](#) - Organisation to improve Māori Kai Sovereignty
- [The Aotearoa Circle – Creating a mana kai initiative to start a food roadmap rooted in Te Ao Maori](#)

Climate change websites:

- [Drawdown](#) - A practical map about how to mitigate climate change

Commentaries on the need for food systems:

- [National Food System – Eat New Zealand](#)
- [The growing call for a national food strategy to build resilience in New Zealand – Lincoln University](#)
- [NZ's food system in 'disarray', scientist says – RNZ](#)
- [Sowing the seeds of a healthier economy – Otago Daily Times](#)

CONNECT, SEED AND CULTIVATE- FOOD RESILIENCE IN THE TOP OF THE SOUTH: WORKING TOWARDS A LOCAL FOOD RESILIENCE NETWORK

Further resources & reading

Food systems work in action

Websites:

- [Zero Hunger](#) especially [this article](#)
- [United Nations Food Systems Hub](#) (Great resources)
- [WAO Aotearoa](#) - Environmental organisation based in Wānaka
- [Kai Anamata mō Aotearoa](#) - Working towards organising future-proof foodsystems in Aotearoa.

Policies:

- [Palmerston North Food Policy](#)
- [Christchurch City Council Food Resilience Policy](#)
- [Resilience Challenge Food Security and disaster recovery policy](#)
- [Wellington Regional Food Systems plan](#)
- [Healthy Families New Zealand, the Southern Initiative, TSI, Good Food Road Map](#)

Reports

- [Southern lakes food resilience report](#)
- [Kai Anamata workshop report](#)
- [Ministry for Primary Industries' \(MPI's\) first Long-term Insights Briefing: The future of Aotearoa New Zealand's food sector: exploring global demand opportunities in the year 2050](#)

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Further resources & reading

- [Report for Kaipātiki Organisation, in association with University of Auckland](#)
- [Public Health Advisory Board – Rebalancing our food system](#)
- [Report for Te Whatu Ora and Wellington Regional Leadership Council – About Phase One.](#)
- [United Nations food systems hub report for Aotearoa](#)
- [Rabobank & WasteMINZ Foodwaste Report](#)

This list is by no means exhaustive, and is current in Dec 2025.

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Next steps

Networking

Since the Hui there has already been meetings to strengthen work in Food Resilience across the Top of the South: including in the seed-saving area.

Regular catch-ups

Throughout 2026, inspired by other organisation's we heard about, we will be holding a regular gathering space online for those working in community gardens, kai resilience and food strategy space. We hope to invite a guest speaker to inspire or share their learnings, and then will have an open floor for all those attending.

It's up to you...

We will continue to build connections and advocate the importance of kai resilience; and are open to suggestions for future work in this field.

TOP OF THE SOUTH



KAI RESILIENCE HUI

Thanks to all those who attended, the generous work of the NTCF team & Golden Bay Sustainable Living Centre.



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