

Mobilising for Action

Focusing on the human dimensions of forest health management.

Key People

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Background

Mobilising for Action (MFA) focuses on the human dimensions of forest well-being, paying particular attention to how kauri dieback and myrtle rust are understood and acted upon.

Our survival is dependent on te taiao, and we have a duty of care to retain its mana and mauri. But what motivates New Zealanders to act to save our taonga species? How do we unlock the potential for mana whenua, community and researchers to take action?

We are developing and supporting research that explores these connections between people and te taiao, building and exchanging knowledge between Māori knowledge, Western science, including the social sciences, and the arts.



Kauri Park's full senior school musical production applied and included material from our workshops. This picture shows the section in the production about the effects of kauri dieback and myrtle rust on the ngahere.

"I hope our theme can advocate for the enhanced use and acknowledgement of Kaupapa Māori in the biosecurity space."
 Natasha Tassell-Matamua
 Associate Professor at Massey University

Highlights:

- A special edition of the International journal Knowledge Cultures published in April 2023 is devoted to Mobilising for Action research and includes 13 peer-reviewed articles.
- Several other publications from MFA projects have been published in international and local journals.
- Five members of the MFA team showcased their research at an international science communication conference in Europe in April 2023. The presentation highlighted MFA's approach to interweaving mātauranga Māori, kaupapa Māori and critical social science to address the complex socio-environmental issues of kauri dieback and myrtle rust.
- MFA launched its own theme website to display its projects to wider audiences and this has now become an excellent resource for communities and scientists.
- A karakia for myrtle rust created by Jane Mihingarangi Ruka and Tanya Te Miringa Te Rorarangi Ruka of Ngati Pakau, Ngapuhi, Waitaha-Hokianga was released publicly to great acclaim.
- Toi Taiao Whakatairanga launched its own project website, to beautifully showcase its commissioned artists.
- Toi Taiao Whakatairanga's film Mate Tipu, Mate Rākau, by Māori film producer Fiona Apanui-Kupenga (Ngāti Porou) which documents with Graeme Atkins the impact of myrtle rust in the Ruakūmara Range, has increased the publics, policy-makers' and politicians' awareness about the devastating impacts of this disease.
- The project Māra Tautāne premiered its film about the revitalisation of a customary practice connected to te taiao at Ngāi Tūhoe's Living Village in Tāneatua in September 2022. The film recorded for the first time ever this deeply spiritual ceremony undertaken by the hapū Te Māhurehure from the Ruātoki Valley of Te Urewera.
- Two more Māra Tautāne (ceremonial gardens) are being created in the Bay of Plenty. The revitalisation of the Māra Tautāne is beginning to occur in surrounding areas.
- Toitū te Ngahere, a project exploring art in schools, has enjoyed many highlights with their collaborating primary schools, including workshop delivery, musical productions, an art gallery exhibition attended by hundreds of visitors, artwork installations elsewhere, and university lectures delivered by the children.
- Several projects have developed brochures for forest users to support their ethical and sustainable engagement with the ngahere and have worked with government agencies to assist them on how to successfully co-create solutions with communities.
- Deanna Haami and Ariana Apiti won best poster at the NZ Psychological Society annual conference, for their research based on findings from our project He taonga kē te ngahere.
- Scholarship recipient Isla Christensen was awarded first prize in the University of Auckland's Faculty of Science Three Minute Thesis competition for her master's research on media coverage of kauri dieback forest closures.
- By supporting young journalism students, MFA has seen several stories in mainstream and Māori media including Liam Ratana and Zoe Madden-Smith film in Re News titled: The Fight to save kauri dieback with mātautanga Māori and Jenny Leonard's commentary piece on Myrtle Rust in Stuff.



The Māra Tautāne in Ruatoki. This ceremonial garden was planted for the coming season as a gift to the atua. The photo was taken immediately after the opening ceremony in November 2021. Image thanks to Grant Dumbell.