

Supplier Development on Aotea

Growing Māori business capability to work on their whenua (land)

“On the ground, the ability to earn a good day's pay in our way has seen our whānau, some who had been overlooked and written off by everyone in the past, thriving...they can get a car, they can get a solar system, they can buy a boat to fish in get some kai in and provide well for their families. This is priceless to us.”

Sonya Palmer, Motairehe Limited

5

projects contracted:

- low incident plants
- wilding pines
- site led weeds
- cat control
- weed survey

\$450k+

Over \$450,000
awarded to
Motairehe Ltd for
work on Aotea

12

Up to 12 people
now working for
Motairehe Ltd



Figure 1 - Whānau from Motairehe Limited

The Story

Auckland Council supported the capability development and start-up of Marae enterprise Motairehe Limited to do work on their whenua on the island of Aotea (Great Barrier Island).

Auckland Council has a supplier diversity target to spend 5% of their addressable spend with diverse suppliers including Māori businesses.

Environmental Services is a team in Auckland Council that leads a range of environmental protection activities, including conservation work to protect our native plants and animals.

They have been actively looking for ways to support mana whenua to do the conservation projects on their whenua. They recognised the need for a tailored approach for each iwi and rohe depending on willingness, readiness and appetite to take on the work that Auckland Council was deploying.

One of the project's environmental services have undertaken is on Aotea (Great Barrier Island), working with mana whenua to develop their capability to deliver conservation work on the island.

Auckland Council took a supplier development approach where they supported the stand up of Motairehere Limited, a business run by Motairehe Marae to undertake conservation work on their whenua for Auckland Council.

Technical Insight

When Auckland Council's Environmental Services department needed conservation work done on Aotea they seized the opportunity to explore how they could work and enable mana whenua of the island to carry out this work rather than putting the work out to tender to the general market.

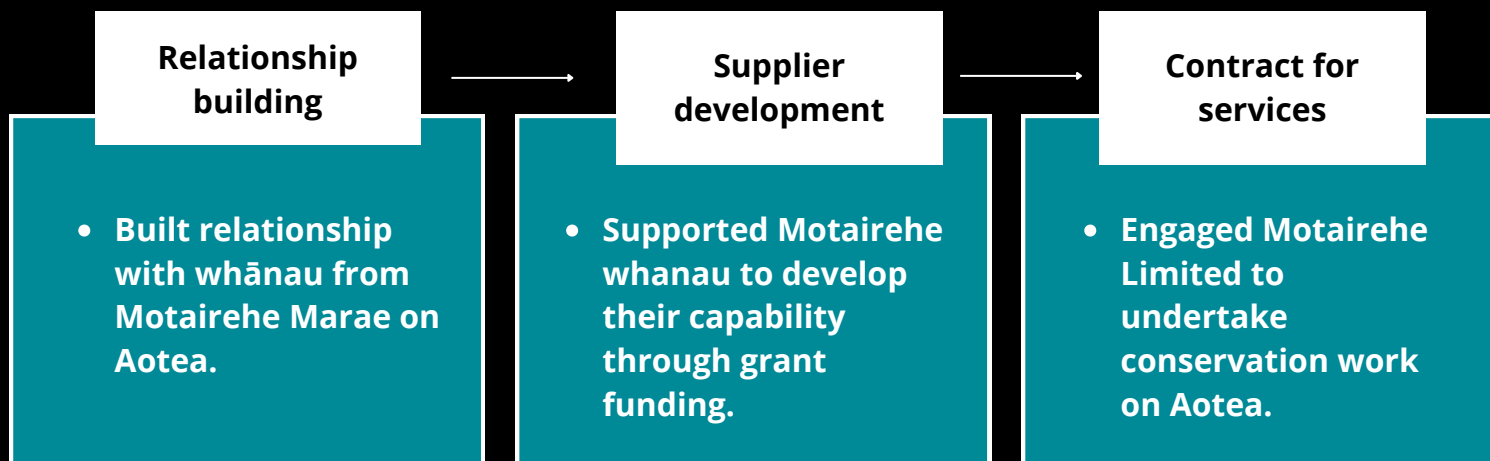
This was a bespoke approach.

Auckland Council spent time building strong relationships with Motairehe Marae to understand the aspirations of whānau in this space and how they could help. What came out of these discussions was a clear desire for Motairehe Marae whānau to carry out the conservation contracts on their own whenua. However, there was a need to support them to develop their capability to undertake the work.

Environmental Services took a supplier development approach providing Motairehe Marae with wrap around support to build a sustainable business under the umbrella of the Marae Trust.

This started with a funding agreement (grant) for Motairehe whānau to undertake training in key areas like the safe use of pesticides. These grants were a way to build the capability of Motairehe Marae to deliver biosecurity work on Aotea.

The grants were structured with key deliverables to help make the transition to a contract for services easier. This engagement model reflected the need to scale up the business to deliver work. From there, they were given small contracts to deliver services, and these have grown as the capability and capacity of the business has expanded.



Technical Insight cont.

Subsequently, they have delivered contracts on pest plants and animals including cat control and wilding pines not only for Auckland Council but for the Ministry of Primary Industries and others as well.

The social outcomes created for Motairehe whānau are significant.

Not only have they been able to employ at least 10FTE, in an isolated place where there are very few job prospects, but all employees start on \$35 an hour.

"It's been lifechanging for our whānau. I have a 48yr old cousin who was on the benefit and has never had power before. Since working for Motairehe, he has been able to buy solar panels and now has a fridge and a tv. It's just incredible" - Darren Cleve, Motairehe Marae Chair.

Motairehe Limited have secured a 3 year contract for services with Auckland Council.

Importantly, this was much greater than a contract for services. The team really leaned into the relationship and built genuine connections, understanding the unique perspectives of Motairehe.

"Our mātaraunga Māori, our whenua, our responsibilities as kaitiaki to protect tribal lands has been fully respected, realised and brought to life by Auckland Council in Motairehe Limited"

-Hope Munro, Motairehe Marae

Benefits

- Strengthened relationships with mana whenua.
- Enabled and empowered Motairehe whānau to work on their own whenua.
- Created a new business and job opportunities on Aotea where work prospects are limited.
- Contributed to the local economy with money staying on Aotea.
- Reduced the need, cost and environmental toll of travel for an external contractor.
- Created a model that can be replicated in other rohe (should mana whenua wish).

Challenges

- Staff require strong relationship building skills and cultural competency.
- Time is required to build relationships with local Marae and whānau.
- Financial investment may be needed to build capability.



Lessons Learnt

Having supportive management is key

To undertake supplier development, you need leadership that is supportive of your time being invested differently. Management at all levels created an environment of trust and enabled their staff to feel confident in taking a different approach to ensure a better outcome for all involved. This was recognised by the team as being both formal and informal support.

Formal support in the form of approvals for different approaches or funding mechanism and informal support by the team culture that has been created. There is a high trust model whereby the staff feel empowered to do what they feel is right.

Supplier development requires investment.

Resource and budget is required to support development. Utilising existing training programmes or funding for training can assist in this space.

In this example, the team used their grant process to enable funding for capability development as this was readily available to them. They used their existing process to enable the growth of the business to deliver on the opportunity at hand.

People and relationships

Having the right people with a relational approach enabled this programme of work to succeed. It takes a special person to spend time in the region and listen to what is wanted by mana whenua and find a way to practically deliver it.

Contracts for services can be innately transactional, however this approach certainly wasn't thanks to the staff and strong relationships created. It was high trust and built on the principle of reciprocity enabled by the people centric approach.

Growth mindset

Enabling a new approach requires problem solving and a 'yes' mindset. Finding ways outside of the traditional way of doing things is a skill and requires a growth mindset. There can be many barriers when it comes to supplier diversity and supplier development so the ability to persevere and find ways to enable things to happen is critical. It requires positivity and a growth mindset.

Impact

- A business was created, Motairehe Limited, specifically to take on conservation work on their whenua, Aotea.
- Motairehe Limited has delivered 5 projects for Auckland Council worth over \$450k. They have secured a contract for services with Auckland Council for 3years.
- Motairehe Limited has successfully attracted contracts from other agencies such as the Ministry for Primary Industries.
- Motairehe Limited have been able to employ over 10FTE and pay their staff a starting rate of \$35/hour.
- Motairehe whānau are going home to Aotea thanks to job opportunities on the island.

Figure 2 - Whānau from Motairehe Limited

This case study is authored by Puna Awarau Limited on behalf of Amotai.

