

# TĀNGATA HUAWHENUA

MĀORI HORTICULTURE COUNCIL AOTEAROA

## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Unlocking the Value of Māori Land: Māori Horticultural Council Responds to Landmark Report on Future Land Use

The Māori Horticultural Council welcomes the release of the “*Future Use of Land and How to Fund It*” report by Lincoln University and ASB, which highlights the critical role of Māori landowners in driving New Zealand’s land-use transformation.

The report identifies that diversification of on-farm systems and enabling Māori landowners to unlock value from multigenerational and iwi-owned land are essential pathways for New Zealand’s economic, environmental, and social future.

Council Chair Ratahi Cross says:

*“This report validates what we’ve long known — that Māori land, tikanga-led stewardship, and whānau-centred development are vital to the future of Aotearoa’s food and fibre economy. What’s needed now is capital access, regulatory flexibility, and a long-term commitment to Māori-led innovation.”*

The Māori horticulture sector has grown by over 300% in the past 12 years. Yet a significant portion of Māori land remains under-utilised due to financing constraints and systemic barriers. The Council sees this moment as an opportunity to co-design new investment pathways that respect whenua, enable intergenerational prosperity, and create high-value, sustainable Māori-led food systems.

“We call on Government, investors, and the finance sector to work with us,” says Mr Cross, “to build funding mechanisms that unlock our land’s full potential—whether it’s kiwifruit, functional foods, or indigenous crops based on mātauranga Māori.”

The Māori Horticultural Council looks forward to working alongside partners to activate the recommendations in the report and ensure Māori whenua is central to Aotearoa’s land-use future.

## ENDS

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### About Tāngata Huawhenua Māori Horticulture Council

Tāngata Huawhenua – Māori Horticulture Council Aotearoa is the national voice for Māori in horticulture and produce. As a platform for collective influence, collaboration, and advocacy, we represent Māori interests across the full spectrum of flora and produce – from taonga species and emerging fruits to hemp, vegetables, and value-added ingredients.

Our purpose is to grow Māori influence and impact in the sector through unity, investment, innovation, and capability. We work across the value chain, from breeding and intellectual property through to commercialisation and market access – grounded in our foundational values of Tino Rangatiratanga, Mātauranga Māori, and Tikanga Māori.