



## Para Kore

A world that honours Papatūānuku and works towards being zero waste is the kind of future registered charity Para Kore (CC46404) would like to see. For the past twelve years Para Kore has been working with marae, giving them the tools to reduce their impact, minimise their waste, and learn vital skills like composting, growing their own kai and moving away from the throw away mentality. Since their inception in 2008 they have spread throughout the North Island and part of the South. They now have a team of 18 kaiārahi (advisors) working with 468 marae, kōhanga reo, kura, and community organisations and have succeeded in diverting over 500 tonnes worth of waste from going to the landfill.

Para Kore formed back in 2008 in the Waikato. General Manager of Para Kore, Jacqui Forbes, was part of the original team and from their first pilot programme of three marae they have delivered over 1400 workshops and reached over 370,00 people. That means the message of a zero waste, sustainable lifestyle is spreading. Ka rawe!

Living sustainably and being zero waste is not a new concept. The group champions a return to a more circular way of living. Guided by the principles of Kaitiakitanga (stewardship), Whakapapa (genealogy), Manaakitanga (generosity) and Māramatanga (understanding/enlightenment) they have two key missions: “Hei te 2025 e whai ana ngā marae katoa o Aotearoa I te Para Kore” (By 2025, all marae and Māori organisations in New Zealand are working towards zero waste) and “Riro taonga mai, hoki taonga atu” (We receive valuable resources from Papatūānuku, we return valuable resources to her).

Although they have managed to grow their charity and support Māori organisations, it has not been without challenges. Speaking to Para Kore they explained that they are in “a constant battle to get to the ‘top of the cliff’. We don’t want to be cleaning up other people’s mess, or...cleaning up at the bottom of the cliff. What is needed is widespread awareness and commitment to change from the community level right up to business and government.

This includes challenging government - both national and local - to do more for waste minimisation, for example through adopting a container deposit system, an increase in landfill levy or product stewardship.” Zero waste requires everyone to get on board to reduce our footprint on the earth.

Another challenge, that many small charities can relate to, has been achieving long-term financial stability. As a not-for-profit community organisation, they juggle relationships with dozens of financial partners and rely on contestable funding to achieve their goals. They are hoping to be able to generate more of their own income to guarantee their mahi can continue. Para Kore has an impressive number of supporters and partners and they credit this to a focus on whanaungatanga (relationships). The advice they have for other charities seeking funding is relationship building. Being in the voluntary and not-for-profit sector means finding connection to a common cause and forging ties with those that support the kaupapa.





The best part is, becoming a sustainable organisation won't cost you the earth! In fact, Para Kore does not charge for their services. A team of dedicated kaiārahi work closely with marae to put in place the Para Kore programme. Organisations nominate a champion to work with the kaiārahi and to ensure the practices are followed. To start, the marae takes part in a waste audit of their waste with their Para Kore kaiārahi who then helps the marae set up recycling and composting systems and works with the marae to create Para Kore policies. In this way they can ensure that the practices put in place are maintained into the future.

For those just starting out on their zero waste journey, Para Kore offers this advice: "We encourage you and your whānau to look at zero waste as collective action to support Rangi and Papa. Take small and manageable steps to start with, check out what other families, marae or kōhanga are doing and get going. The biggest impact we can have is to start growing our own kai.

Whether it's a few pots with herbs and greens on the deck or balcony, getting involved in a community garden or digging up your front lawn: growing kai connects us with the whenua and each other."

So, get out there and get your hands dirty and help clean up Papatūānuku! To learn more about their amazing mahi you can check out [Para Kore's website](#). To learn more about what being a Para Kore marae entails, [join Poihakena Marae champion Richmond in this entertaining video all about waste reduction!](#)