

Tanks For Far North Whānau



Who: Puna Wai Ora - Te Hiku Drought Relief Programme funded by National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) delivered by Te Aupōuri Iwi Development Trust and benefitting whānau of the five Iwi in the Region.

Where: Te Hiku region (Far North)

Products: 25,000 and 30,000 litre ENDURO above-ground water storage tanks plus accessories to keep the tank water clean, including Tank Vacs, Floating Outtakes and Tank Level indicators.

Why: Ko te wai te ora o ngā mea katoa - Water is the life giver of all things.

But what happens when water is scarce? For nine of the last ten years, the people of Te Hiku (Far North) have had to endure severe drought conditions. As a result, chronic water-borne diseases from drinking poor-quality water are common and whānau in remote communities, often without a town supply, are forced to buy bottled water. This prompted the Te Hiku Iwi Development Trust to take practical action on behalf of these whānau in the Te Hiku region utilising social wellbeing data to inform the concept and planning in order to secure funding before the project was handed over to iwi to deliver. In late 2021, Te Aupōuri Iwi Development Trust launched the Puna Wai Ora - Te Hiku Drought Relief Programme: A potable water system installation scheme that allows local whānau to harvest rain and store clean and safe drinking water. This promotes improved health in the region and helps alleviate the stress that frequent drought brings with it. Of course, there's an environmental factor, too: less plastic packaging from all that bottled water!

In May 2021, the Government came on board with funding of eight million dollars for a three-year initiative. It started with a pilot programme of 30 tank installations in the Far North communities of Ahipara, Awanui and Te Kao. The pilot ran from December 2021 to June 2022 and was designed to enable engagement with a small number of whānau and to trial site assessments. After the pilot, local whānau could apply to the Puna Wai Ora - Te Hiku Drought Relief Programme, and if these applicants were eligible, Puna Wai Ora would support these whānau towards getting a safe potable water system set up at their property.

Promax was one of four tank manufacturers who participated in the pilot. We then tendered to supply tanks for the broader rollout of the programme. Even though we're a Northland company that employs local people, we took nothing for granted. We knew we'd have to do more than deliver great tanks and excellent value for money. We had to show that we were in this for the long term and were flexible enough to meet the requirements of the other parties working on this project.

This programme is close to home and our hearts; we're honoured that the Te Aupōuri Iwi Development Trust has entrusted us to supply and deliver water storage tanks within Te Hiku. This goes well beyond a typical transaction and is a relationship we take very seriously. We do all we can to ensure Te Hiku whānau get timely access to clean water; for example, we've adjusted our lead times to align with plumbers' schedules so they can connect tanks sooner. It's also fantastic to see employment and training opportunities open up for Te Hiku local businesses, with many of them joining the programme to install and connect the tanks

What: The goal of this programme is for Te Hiku whānau to harvest as much rainwater as possible. So, it makes sense for us to deliver our biggest water storage tanks – 25,000 litre and 30,000 litre ENDURO tanks. Because corrugated ENDURO tanks are strong enough to be partially buried and sit below gutter height, tanks can be filled entirely and water storage maximised. This is vital when every drop counts during times of drought.

As well as tanks, Promax also supplies accessories to keep the stored water as clean as possible, including floating outtakes and tank vacs. An outtake floats on the surface and always takes the cleanest water from the tank, about 100 – 150mm below the surface. Meanwhile, the Tank Vac cleans any debris that gets into the tank and settles on the floor. Every time the tank fills to overflowing, the Tank Vac builds up a head of pressure and dumps out the overflow by sucking from the pipe across the tank floor.

Puna Wai Ora – Te Hiku Drought Relief Programme has delivered over 100 tanks into Te Hiku homes, with 450 whānau members now accessing fresh and clean drinking water. That's 2,365,000 litres of new water storage in Te Hiku homes – roughly the equivalent of an Olympic-sized swimming pool. (Without the chlorine!) This is a fantastic start, but more tanks are desperately needed. More than 500 applications have already been received, highlighting the need for drought relief in Te Hiku communities. Te Hiku Iwi Development Trust led by three Te Hiku Iwi – Te Aupōuri, Te Rarawa and Ngāi Takoto gave this project the impetus to get off the ground, but ongoing funding is required if that momentum is to continue. Everyone at Promax hopes this happens; we're in this for the long haul and will do everything we can to help improve our neighbours' health and well-being in Te Hiku.

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