



**Media release – Monday 30 January 2023**

## **Kahikatea forest planting continues in Tiromoana Bush**

Kahikatea trees are being planted upstream of the Kate Pond wetland in Tiromoana Bush in an ongoing project to establish a kahikatea forest on the valley floor. It's part of the ambitious restoration project being undertaken by Transwaste Canterbury Ltd (Transwaste) who owns Tiromoana Bush and the adjacent landfill in Kate Valley.

Transwaste Chair Gill Cox says annual tree planting is a key part of restoring the native forests that once grew in Tiromoana Bush to their original condition.

“Since the restoration project began in 2004 we've planted thousands of native trees to kick-start natural regeneration”, says Mr Cox. “Kahikatea were first planted by Kate Pond over twelve years ago and these are now 5 metres tall. The success of those early plantings has led to a focus on creating a kahikatea forest and wetland around Kate Pond.”

At some point in its farming history the Kate Stream, which would have meandered through the valley creating a wetland, was constrained within a straightened drain and the surrounding wetland drained. The creation of Kate Pond is gradually re-wetting the valley and creating conditions suitable for restoring a kahikatea forest. Kahikatea appear to grow well with some shelter, so it's being planted with other native species says Mr Cox.

“We're planting a mixture of mānuka, mingimingi, harakeke (flax), tī kōuka (cabbage tree), kōwhai and other native species, with at least one kahikatea planted every 3 to 6 metres across the valley floor”, says Mr. Cox. “The aim is to establish a mixed kahikatea forest-wetland system, restoring a regionally rare habitat for a range of native fauna. Over time we expect birds such as kererū and korimako will help disperse plant seeds more widely through Tiromoana Bush. Therefore, it's important to ensure trees provide sufficient food to sustain these species. That's why we're planting harakeke and mānuka for nectar, and tī kōuka and other species for fruit.”

In addition to restoring the kahikatea forest, tōtara and matai, which would have been dominant species in the pre-human hill-slope forest, are also making a return. As seed sources for these are distant from Tiromoana Bush, natural regeneration would take decades if not centuries. That's why annual plantings of both species are taking place says Mr. Cox.

“We want to help speed up the regeneration process so we're planting about 100 each of tōtara and matai in suitable sites, such as gaps in existing regenerating forest”, says Mr. Cox. “Over time these plantings will produce seeds that support their natural regeneration which is our ultimate aim.”

Planting is usually scheduled for spring after the worst of the frosts and to take advantage of soil moisture being at a peak. Over 1,000 kahikatea trees along with other appropriate species are being planted in 2022-23 on the valley floor by Kate Pond to continue creating the mixed kahikatea forest and wetland. A QE2 Covenant protects Tiromoana Bush for perpetuity.

*- Ends -*

**For more information contact:**

Gill Cox, Transwaste Canterbury Ltd Chairman

Ph. 021 873-611