

New Zealand's Far North iwi, Te Runanga o Ngāi Tako, have started planting its new 20-hectare avocado farm.

The orchard - Rakau Ora - has been in the works for four years. It partners with the Primary Industries (MPI) and businesses in the horticulture industry.

Chief executive of [Ngāi Tako](#) Rangitane Marsden said that 20 hectares is just the start. The project plans to add 40 hectares over the next two years. Additionally, there's potential to extend the orchard to 200 hectares over 10 years.

"The orchard is a means to achieve our aspiration of using our Treaty settlement assets to build a strong economic base for our people," said Marsden.

He then went on to say that this enables the iwi to create employment opportunities. It also helps realize the community's vision. That vision is: "if we live as we ought, we shall know things as they are, and if we see things as they are, we shall live as we ought".

Marsden also explained that the avocado orchard is a tribute to the kaumātua and kuia who made settlement possible.

This specifically refers to when the far north tribal authority signed a Deed of Settlement. The community signed the agreement with the New Zealand government in 2012. This included land that the group is developing for tourism, horticulture, farming and forestry.

Ngāi Tako iwi avocado orchard's role in development

Further, this partnership is part of a larger developments. Currently, there is a pathway to encourage iwi youth to lead in economic development. [Whenua Ora](#) is a national engagement program that promotes career development in agribusiness for young indigenous peoples.

"We are delighted the iwi is entering this high-value food sector. It's an excellent example of promoting whānau development through whenua, as part of our strategy to grow our partnership with iwi and Māori landowners," commented MPI's Māori director Andrew McConnell.

Iwi member Claire Tamati is the new orchard manager.

"This ties in with the iwi succession strategy," stated Marsden. "We are placing some of our people with the potential to be future business leaders in our enterprises so they can be

mentored and gain experience."