

Maori Farming Incorporations and Trusts - Feedback from the E Tupu Governance Workshops

A successful workshop focusing solely on Governance within Maori Farming Incorporations and Trusts was held at Uepohatu Marae on Saturday, 29th July 2006. The Uepohatu Marae workshop was attended by 17 Trustees or Committee Members and for those who attended, feedback was extremely positive. Many asked when the next such Workshop would be held on the Coast and where were all the other Trustees and Committee Members? There was a powerful team of presenters for participants to draw upon including:

- Paora Ammunson – Director of Te Poukani Farms (Wairarapa Moana Incorporation)
- Bill Konui - Chairman Waituhi Kuratau 1A1B2 Trust
- Fred Cookson – Cookson Forbes KCSM Ltd Chartered Accountants
- Roger Pikia and Peter Madden – Zennex Corporation Limited

Geoff Milner of GMA Chartered Accountants facilitated the open floor discussion session straight after lunch which involved questions from those in attendance. There were a number of questions raised around the role of the Incorporation or Trust Secretary and Accountant. Geoff Milner and Fred Cookson provided their views as to the roles and expectations of Secretaries – Accountants as follows:

1. Like other external advisors – they are appointed (not anointed) and their role is to serve the needs of the Committee
2. There should be a clearly documented agreement alongside the traditional letter of engagement – performance expectations should be explicit
3. There should be an annual performance review by the Committee – no different to staff employed by the Committee
4. Regular Communication with the Chair is critical – particularly

- around setting of the agenda
5. They must be proactive – identifying opportunities for consideration by the Committee
6. They must push the envelope with the adoption of technology – improve service and reduce costs
7. They must visit the whenua regularly to ensure they understand your business

Paora Ammunson and Bill Konui, both experienced Directors on multi-million dollar Maori Farming Incorporations shared their professional experiences:

1. The role of the Chairperson is critical – they are appointed leader and must lead
2. The focus should be on Performance – every other activity must be aligned to this objective
3. They have separated the business from the social responsibilities (established a Charitable Trust)
4. They didn't accept that the East Coast isolation was a factor in performance
5. Planning (Strategic; Business and Annual Farm Plans) was the single most important role of the Committee
6. The Committee must lead the budget process – with support from External Advisors
7. Communication with Shareholders was seen as within the top 3 priorities for their businesses
8. The Committee runs the business – not the appointed external advisors



GMA to set-up an Office in Ruatoria

With the recent growth of clients on the Coast, GMA Chartered Accountants are currently evaluating a number of office options in Ruatoria. Potential staff members have been identified and we are looking at having an office in place by the end of September 2006. Support GMA Chartered Accountants and put some of those Accounting Fees back into your own Community instead of Gisborne!

GMA still has its Maori Farming Incorporations and Trusts special running until 30 November. Make the switch to GMA Chartered Accountants and you get the opportunity to nominate a Marae, Kohanga Reo or other not-for-profit organisation for one-year free annual accounts (another opportunity to put something back into your Community).



GMA Chartered Accountants are also interested in talking to Maori involved with:

- Maori businesses on the Coast
- Maori not-for-profit organisations
- Maori education providers

***Kanohi ki te kanohi, pakihwi ki te pakihwi
Face to face, shoulder to shoulder***



COBDEN HOUSE 300 CHILDERS RD
PO BOX 625, GISBORNE
p. 06 867 0015 f. 06 867 0016



**Contact Geoff Milner now on 0800 GMILNER (0800 464 5637)
for an obligation-free proposal**