

Enviroschools

Ōtākou



Whiringa-ā-nuku
October 2024

Nau mai, haere mai

Reflection congratulations for Millers Flat and Warepa School!

When Millers Flat School reflected at silver in 2021, they were equally determined to get to Green Gold before the end of 2024. On the 29th of August, the whole school and community came together to start the holistic process towards their reflection, proudly showcasing all their integrated sustainability initiatives to visitors and whānau of the school.

Central Otago Enviroschools Facilitator, Lucy Francke, worked hard with the school to prepare them for the day, offering ideas for how the ākonga could best visually engage their community in their environmental journey. The school took community members on a guided tour around the school, unveiled the first of several new murals for around the school, planted four new apple trees and gave those involved a chance to write down the evidence they saw of the schools environmental journey.

When it came down to the final stage of the reflection process, the answer was clear. Millers Flat School has integrated sustainability into all aspects of their schooling and they are already looking forward to where they can go next in their journey.



Principal Hilary Spedding of Millers Flat School shows off the Green Gold Reflection certificate and beech tree gift.



Key Teacher, Amanda Hyslop, Clutha Enviroschools Facilitator, Scott Martin, and Principal, Sue Adcock, celebrate their new Bronze Reflection sign, certificates and tree.

Warepa School were equally as enthusiastic about their Bronze reflection. Held on the 24th of September, the senior school worked together to come to the decision of Bronze, recognising that their work for sustainability was integral to the school and shared the community spirit. Once the decision was made, the whole school gathered for a celebration of their hard work, starting with a kapa haka performance.

Clutha Enviroschools Facilitator, Scott Martin, has been helping the ākonga with their environmental goals for the past two years, including their annual roadside clean up that covers both sides of a stretch of road 13 kilometres long! This years clean up was done under torrential rain but the ākonga were determined to keep going, showing their dedication to make an impact in their community. After the celebration, the senior students took visitors around the school, showing guests all that they've achieved to be able to reflect at Bronze, finishing with a delicious morning tea. Amazing mahi and keep up the great work, Warepa School!





KIA ORA KOUTOU

Ka mihi mahana ki a koutou

A huge welcome to Romahapa School for joining the Ōtākou and Clutha team on our Enviroschools journey. We're so pleased to have you and we look forward to seeing your Enviroschools journey take flight at your school.

It's Annual Review time for Enviroschools! Annual Reviews are a part of the Enviroschools agreement and are an important part of how we all work together to identify what your school is doing and how to go forward. It's a simple recognition of where you're at and things that could change. Your facilitator will be in touch with your key teachers for Enviroschools with more information.

Holistic Reflections are having a refresh. From 2025, we are aiming to make the process less time intensive and more authentic for schools. We'll be in touch with more information over the coming months ready for 2025.

“He rau ringa e oti ai. Many hands make light work”.



Leisa de Klerk
Enviroschools
Regional
Coordinator
Lead



Term 3 beeswax wraps galore



L to R: Enviroschools Facilitator Damian helps a student from Hāwea Kindergarten with her beeswax wrap. Two students from Fairfield School show off their wraps. Students from Logan Park High School get stuck into the process.

Beeswax wrap making is a popular winter activity to help young people focus on their family's direct impacts to sustainability by learning how to keep their lunch box food fresh without the plastic wrap. Not only can their food last longer, there's little waste and the materials are also 100% compostable. By bringing home beeswax wraps or selling them as fundraisers at their schools, ākonga are promoting more sustainable habits in their wider community while learning new skills that will serve them well in the future.

Farewell Chelsea!

At the end of July, the Otago Regional Council and Ōtākou Enviroschools said goodbye to Chelsea Donnelly, who had taken on the position of Enviroschools Regional Coordinator for Central Otago in December last year. Chelsea quickly became an integral and valued member of the team and we have all valued her dedication, enthusiasm and support for Enviroschools. Good luck Chelsea!



Chelsea Donnelly waves goodbye on her last day with her team in Alexandra.

The Ōtākou team Catch Up



Once a term, the wider Ōtākou team of facilitators come together to reconnect and re-energise ourselves kano ki te kano. This term, we met on a beautiful sunny Monday in the Big River Town, Balclutha where we tapped into local gem Ruth Baldwin, who took us on a historical oral tour across Clutha to share the stories of her whānau, all related to Te Māta Au | Clutha River.

Budding Geochemists in Central Otago

Welcome to Romahapa School!



Romahapa School joins the wider Ōtākou team as the 101st school in the region! The school recognised that they were already achieving a lot of the mahi needed to be an Enviroschool and are excited to now be a part of the Enviroschool whānau and officially starting their journey. Thanks to Enviroschools Clutha Facilitator, Scott Martin, for encouraging them to join.

St Gerard's School ākonga work with Dr Sophie Briggs and Enviroschools Facilitator, Lucy Francke, at the Chapman Road Scientific Reserve in Alexandra.

After months of planning, the Geology department and Marine Studies Centre at the University of Otago came together with Enviroschools in Central Otago to provide Central Otago schools with the opportunity to become citizen scientists and learn more about what makes their local area special, especially in relation to the ocean and native plants. Each group of ākonga spent 2 hours at the local salt pans, using magnifying glasses to hunt out endangered native plants and then mapped where they were as groups. The ākonga then checked the pH levels of each plant and shared the results alongside other groups findings.

Ākonga then spent 2 hours with the Marine Studies Centre and the Aquavan about how our actions with water in Central Otago can affect the oceans further away. Ākonga learned about the connectivity between river health and the coastal environment using live animals, scientific equipment, the Enviroscape and Storymap.



Dr Sophie Briggs shows ākonga what endangered plants to search for.

The Great Southern BioBlitz for Clutha & Dunedin Schools



Ākonga from different Clutha and Ōtepoti schools look out over sand dunes to spot different bird life for the Great Southern BioBlitz.

The Ōtepoti Enviroschools Year 4 -6 Great Southern BioBlitz Hui at Tomahawk beach and lagoon was an absolute blast this year! Students from 10 schools in Ōtepoti and Clutha looked closely at all that is living in the rock pools, sand dunes, fresh water and on the land.

We talked about the importance of biodiversity - how every living thing plays a part on this interconnected Earth - and schools thought about how they could encourage biodiversity in their place.

We were very humbled to work with experts across Ōtepoti, including the NZ Marine Studies Centre, Orokonui Ecosanctuary, the University of Otago Zoology Department, Botanical Society of Dunedin, Otago Regional Council and City of Literature Dunedin.

The support that Enviroschools' action receives from our environmental education community here in Ōtepoti is helps create a more sustainable, supportive practice across the city. It enriches our schools' sustainability journeys and strengthens our voice as advocates for the living world. Kā mihi to all those who got involved!

Enviroschools Ōtākou



Waikouaiti and Macraes Moonlight at Te Hukapupu

Otago Regional Council has partnered with Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki to restore and enhance the mauri and health of the Pleasant Catchment River Restoration project - called Toitū Te Hukapupu. On the 25th of September, both Waikouaiti School and Macraes Moonlight school were invited to participate in learning more about this important East Otago river system and do some planting of their own to support the catchment restoration action plan. The day, organised by Otago Regional Council and supported by Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki and Enviroschools, turned into a beautiful day with enthusiastic ākonga getting their hands in the soil, learning more about the catchment and their place in it, as well as finding eels and macroinvertebrates direct from the river itself. They were able to take the skills they'd be learning in the classroom to the catchment and had decorated their plant guards for some extra beautification for their plants.



Before planting, ākonga from both schools decorated their plant guards in preparation for their day.

The Importance of Annual Reviews for Enviroschools in Ōtākou

Annual reviews are important for the Enviroschools tīma to get an idea of where schools are at and what they're planning. It doesn't matter where you are at in your Enviroschools journey – we frequently hear schools say that they didn't realise just how much they actually accomplished in their year until they did their annual review, so it's a valuable process to put your schools mahi into words. We really appreciate schools taking the time to do the annual reviews as it is important for us to see how we're doing as a region as well as plan for the next year. We look forward to seeing all that is happening in our beautiful part of Aotearoa!

Enviroschools Ōtākou Tīma



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