

# Enviroschools Ōtākou

Enviroschools

Poutū-te-rangi.  
March 2025

Nau mai, haere mai



## Annual reviews showcase immense sustainability efforts of Ōtākou schools

Annual reviews have long been an important part of our Enviroschools kaupapa, helping our region to gain important understandings of what schools are doing in their sustainability journeys. Last year was no exception with the majority of Enviroschools in Ōtākou reporting enormous growth in sustainability projects, alongside growth in the numbers of ākonga wanting to be involved. It's a heartening read of dozens of snapshots of what schools value and their goals for the year.

For the 2024 report, we focused on specific examples of schools exemplifying the Guiding Principles in each district and city area, amplifying the voices of the kura no matter where they are in their journey. This report is shared with our wider city and district council partners, our national Enviroschools colleagues, as well as our external stakeholders. The ability to tell a story, with specific information straight from the schools, helps to build a powerful narrative of collective action happening for the environment across our schools. We're so proud of all that you are achieving!



An ākonga from Te Kura Whakatipu o Kawarau shows off their bug hotel during the Queenstown Enviroschools Student Hui in October, 2024.



Planting seedlings for penguin habitats is an important part of the work done by the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony. Here, ākonga find spaces for new seedlings to thrive and work together to plant them. These ākonga joined several other schools at the Waitaki Enviroschools Primary Hui in November, 2024.



Ākonga from the Logan Park High School Envirogroup make beeswax wraps to reduce rubbish at school and to sell as a fundraiser for wider Envirogroup activities.



## KIA ORA KOUTOU

Ka mihi mahana ki a koutou



This year is off at the speed of light and it's been fantastic seeing schools get stuck right back in to their sustainability goals from the get go!



If you have any projects in mind that you need funding for, check out the Otago Regional Council's ECO Fund and Air New Zealand's new Every Corner Project funding, both closing on the 31st of March. Please reach out to your facilitators for more information.



Our team has been working hard getting Ōtākou specific resources ready for our new Holistic Reflection process. While the new process is less time intensive, we know that change requires additional support so we've got some amazing new resources for schools to reflect more often!



We are in recruitment processes for two roles within the wider Ōtākou team, so watch out for announcements on who these people are soon!

"Ahakoa he iti he pounamu. Although it is small it is a treasure."



**Leisa de Klerk**  
Enviroschools  
Regional  
Coordinator  
Lead



## Upcoming dates for Ōtākou Enviroschools

1st-31st March Otago Regional Council ECOFund open (more information about this below).

### CENTRAL OTAGO/QUEENSTOWN LAKES

18th March - Central Otago/Queenstown Lakes Secondary Hui

6th May - Central Otago/Queenstown Lakes Teacher Hui

30th October - Queenstown Primary Hui Year 4-6

### CLUTHA

25th March - Clutha Primary Hui Year 4-6 "Harvest Hui"

3rd June - Clutha Teacher Hui

18th November - Clutha Primary Hui Year 7-10

### DUNEDIN

7th March - Dunedin Senior Secondary Hui

6th June - Dunedin Teacher Hui

28th August - Dunedin Primary Hui Year 4-6

28th November - Dunedin Primary Hui Year 7-10

### WAITAKI

Term 4 - Waitaki Primary Hui Year 4-6 (Date TBC)



Ākonga from Ōtepoti schools search for plant and animal life during the Dunedin Enviroschools Primary Hui in September, 2024.

## Otago Regional Council ECO Fund

The ECO Fund from Otago Regional Council supports sustainability projects that protect, enhance or promote Otago's environment. There is a general fund for community-led environmental projects and incentives funding that targets specific environmental issues.

If you have a project in mind for your school that enables community-led environmental activities or weed removal and revegetation, the ECO Fund may be able to support.

ORC has made some changes to the fund processes which should make applying clearer and easier for applicants to navigate. As always, it's a good plan to speak to council staff early about your project before lodging your application to ensure your eligibility and whether the project goals fits the fund.



Ākonga at Cromwell Primary School plant natives along their walking track inquiry project.

## Waitaki Key Kaiako Hui



*Henry from the Oamaru Penguin Colony shows a little blue penguin feather to kaiako at the Key Kaiako Hui.*



*Gary, the little blue penguin, made a guest appearance to the Key Kaiako hui with friends from the Oamaru Penguin Colony.*

Possible partnerships to Empower Learners in the Waitaki District was the aim of the day at the Waitaki Enviroschools Key Kaiako Hui, held on the 21st of February. The busy day gave kaiako from primary and secondary schools a chance to connect and share what they are doing with sustainability in their schools, as well as a chance to hear from presenters of different community groups.

Together, we are creating opportunities for our ākonga to connect, care, and take action to enhance their own well-being and that of our communities. To all our passionate Waitaki Enviroschools teachers—thank you for your dedication! We can't wait to see the ripple effects of these new connections in your schools. Ka mau te wehi!

## Speed 'dating' of Dunedin Experts

Key Kaiako in Dunedin schools were able to listen to and connect with over a dozen experts in a range of topics all related to sustainability at a teacher cluster meeting held on the 18th of February.

Dunedin Facilitator, Jennie Upton, organised the day to give schools ideas of how to integrate sustainability projects and community experts into their curriculum and unit planning for 2025.



*Ōtepoti kaiako talk to the experts to help them with their sustainability journey at their schools for 2025.*

## Little Blue Penguins the focus for Waitaki Secondary Hui

Waitaki secondary ākonga use their skills and knowledge to help local kororā | little blue penguins have a safe habitat!

February 28th saw ākonga from Waitaki Boys and Waitaki Girls come together for an action packed day of environmental action supporting the local Oamaru Blue Penguin colony. Together, ākonga went penguin spotting (they're moulting at the moment, so they were fluffy looking!), potted new seedlings for new penguin habitats, and built new homes for more penguins to join the safe colony away from predators. Working collectively, ākonga were able to decide on how they can support more of the work done to create safer habitats for the penguins including what actions they can take in the wider community.

Enviroschools Secondary Hui are a full day of professional development for senior secondary environmental leaders at schools, equipping ākonga with both knowledge and practical skills and highlighting possible opportunities for the focus of their Envirogroups in their school. Both Waitaki Boys and Waitaki Girls are already planning a full-day EnviroDay at the end of the school year, following on from the incredibly successful EnviroDay held by Waitaki Boys in November last year.



*Ākonga from Waitaki Girls High School show off the new penguin habitat they built at the Waitaki Secondary hui.*



## Schools Bumper Start to 2025!

We've loved seeing the progress schools have made with revitalising and continuing their Enviroschools projects — especially after the long summer break! Below are some of our favourite photos sent through to us.



Ākonga at Remarkables School get started on weeding in preparation for planting new vegetables in their garden.



Clinton School started their school year with a waste audit and school clean up.



Shotover School's Year 7&8 leaders learn to garden and cook every week as a part of the Garden to Table programme. The leaders will soon be teaching other ākonga what they've learnt!

## Clutha Valley School visits Waipahi Wetlands

The ākonga from Clutha Valley and Waitahuna School that came to our Clutha Enviroschools hui at Waipahi Wetlands in November last year loved it so much that they convinced the whole school to come back! Around 100 ākonga, plus parents and teachers, came to spend the day learning more about the amazing space at Waipahi Wetlands, organised by Clutha Facilitator, Scott Martin.

The day had six activities including Māori games, local Māori history of the area, harakeke weaving, water quality testing, identification of macroinvertebrates and eel release. Ākonga from Year 1 to 8 got stuck in and enjoyed a cloudy day learning more about the wetlands and all that has been done to protect them.

Thanks to landowners, Gerard and Ann Vallely; Shane Bocock, project manager of the Wetlands and Nicole Foote from Junior NZ Landcare Trust who provided funding for the event. Thanks also to activity presenters from Sport Clutha, Otago Regional Council and the Pomahaka Water Care group, as well as individuals Ruth Baldwin and Karyn Hearn.



Clutha Enviroschools Facilitator, Scott Martin, pauses for a photo while teaching ākonga how to identify macroinvertebrates found in Waipahi Wetland.

## Holistic Reflection Update for Ōtākou

The new holistic process for all Enviroschools in Aotearoa starts this year to move reflections back to the original intentions — being a meaningful, holistic, celebratory and honest snapshot of the school at the time of reflection. This approach is less time intensive and allows schools to be more creative in how they choose to reflect.

Our Ōtākou team has created new Otago specific resources for schools to use as templates and spark ideas as to how to reflect. Building on our diversity as a region from our mountains, salt pans, wetlands, and our rivers, finding ways to reflect that is authentic to your school is all part of the process. If you have any questions about the new process, reach out to your facilitator.



Ki Uta Tai | Mountains to the Sea, part of the Ōtākou specific resources for the new holistic reflection process.

# Enviroschools Ōtākou



## Mount Aspiring College at Lake Hāwea Station



Mount Aspiring Year 8 ākonga took the opportunity to visit Lake Hāwea Station to learn more about how farms and environmental action can work well together.

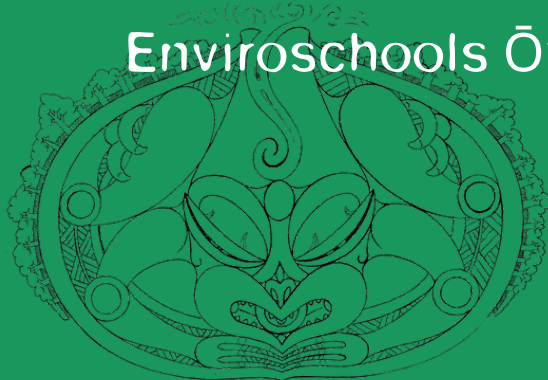
## Ōtākou Catch up

This term's kanohi ki te kanohi catch up for our wider Ōtākou team was based in the beautiful sunny Alexandra where we tackled our big plans for 2025, and refined our processes for schools. It was a good opportunity to reconnect after the summer break and get enthusiastic about what we want to achieve for this year. We're looking forward to supporting schools in all they may need this year!



Some of the Ōtākou team pose for a photo outside the Alexandra Community House at the start of a beautifully hot sunny day at the end of January.

## Enviroschools Ōtākou Tīma



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