

Enviroschools

Ōtākau Panui

Kohitātea
2024



Nau mai haere mai.

2023 marked 21 years of Enviroschools in Ōtākou. It started with small seeds. **Waitati School**, north of Ōtepoti/Dunedin, and **Glenorchy School**, west of Tāhuna / Queenstown, became pilot Enviroschools. Both schools continue to be deeply committed to the Enviroschool's Kaupapa.

Enviroschools now supports 100 Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres and schools across Ōtākou. This encompasses over 24,000 tamariki and students. Teachers and ākonga are at the heart of the sustainability mahi happening in schools and we are so lucky to work with such committed and creative people.

In this newsletter Enviroschools facilitators share some highlights of their work with schools. A consistent theme from the facilitators is that Enviroschools is about empowering students and making connections between people and te taiao creating resilient communities.

Ōtepoti / Dunedin Schools

From **Waitati School** in 2002 there are now 36 Enviroschools in Ōtepoti. Dunedin City Council started funding Enviroschools in 2004. Tania McLean was the first Enviroschools facilitator. Currently Jennie Upton, a stalwart of Enviroschools, and Tess Mackay support Ōtepoti schools. Jennie thinks she has the best job. *"It is such a privilege to work alongside passionate and inspiring teachers and students who are keen to create a healthy peaceful world for all"*. Tess describes the role as being like *"mycorrhiza fungi – connecting and working to create an environment where things can flourish"*. Empowering learners and teachers and connecting schools with their wider communities are highlights of the job for both Jennie and Tess.



Anderson Bay clean-up by Bayfield High students.

Examples of Ōtepoti schools' mahi

St. Leonards School students' are committed to caring for their local stretch of Te Ara Moana / West Harbour shared path and their work in harbour conservation awareness. The **Wakari School** Stream Team are learning how to assess the health of their local School Creek, then teaching the senior syndicate to do stream health assessments and the whole school is getting involved in looking after the stream. **Bayfield High School** students continue with their annual clean-up of Anderson Bay.



St. Leonards students caring for their backyard.

Queenstown Lakes District schools

Starting with **Glenorchy School** in 2002, all of the schools in the QLDC area and 3 ECE are now Enviroschools. QLDC started funding **Wānaka Wastebusters** to employ an Enviroschools facilitator in 2007. Many will remember Simon William's work establishing Enviroschools in the district. Nicky Gray says she feels very lucky to be the Facilitator of the nine schools in the Whakatipu area. *"My role brings me in contact with enthusiastic and passionate teachers. I love the collaborative nature of my work where many groups work together to support learners and teachers to make connections to our local environment and bring about positive change"*. Damian Foster, who facilitates the Wānaka schools and ECE, said *"It's a privilege, and great fun, to work with the students. We have shared some awesome mahi and really enjoy getting messy undertaking fun nature-based actions."*



Students from Queenstown schools are planting up the district.

We love hearing your stories and sharing them on our facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/EnviroschoolsOtago> and on the Enviroschools website

<https://enviroschools.org.nz/> Get in touch with your facilitator if you have a story to share or want to find out more about an Enviroschools story



The EnviroSchools Guiding Principles have been updated:

Over the past few months, the National EnviroSchools team have been working on updating the Guiding Principles. These are: **Empowered Learners, Sustainable Communities, Learning for Sustainability, Te Ao Māori and Respect for Diversity**. Find out more on the EnviroSchools website <https://enviroschools.org.nz/>

The EnviroSchools Kaupapa is about **creating a healthy, peaceful, sustainable world through learning and taking action together**.

Examples of QLD schools' mahi



Checking out the health of Horn Creek in Queenstown

Wānaka Primary students have been learning about the health benefits of native plants. **Mount Aspiring College** students found out about sustainability linked careers and what is involved in setting up social enterprises. **Shotover Primary School** got focused on reducing waste on camp and have come up with tips to share with other schools. Year 5 & 6 students at **Queenstown Primary** have been investigating their local creek and are now working with QLDC to do some riparian planting along the creek.

Schools in Queenstown have long involvement with planting projects across the area and they learn about the area's history and unique features through these projects.

Clutha Schools

Waiholā and **Clinton** Schools became the first Clutha EnviroSchools in 2006, of which there are now 10. Scott Martin, the EnviroSchools facilitator in Clutha said, *"I see through the engagement from ākongā, the sense of pride that is established, and how they are consciously and confidently stepping forward, creating a positive future for themselves, their schools and local communities with a strong sense of knowing that if our environment is healthy and thriving then so are we"*. Scott says that he can see the momentum around sustainability learning and action is really building and creating all sorts of ripple effects in the community.



Waiwera South students working on their Litter Intelligence project.

Examples of Clutha schools' mahi

Waiwera South students have got big plans for their garden and riparian planting projects. They have built a shade house with an overhead watering system so they can propagate more plants. **Clinton School** students are also learning how to propagate native plants so they can extend the plantings in their school grounds. **Warepa School** ākongā found they created a lot of food waste and have built compost bins so they convert this waste into a rich resource for their garden. **Clutha Valley School** are busy growing and cooking kai.



Getting the potatoes in at Clutha Valley School

Central Otago District Schools

Alexandra, Clyde and **The Terrace Primary Schools** all became EnviroSchools in 2009 when the CODC started to fund **Central Otago REAP** to deliver EnviroSchools. Now all 15 schools in the district are on board with EnviroSchools. Anna Robinson was instrumental in establishing lots of the sustainability practices that many of the local schools 'just do' now. Lucy Francke, the current EnviroSchools facilitator, says she works in one of the most stunning parts of the country and this is reflected in students' passion for learning about their local environment. Lucy said, *"EnviroSchools is accompanying each school on its individual sustainability journey and supporting them to connect with their local community - the people and the living environment"*.



Omakau Students making a tree and learning about water cycles.

EnviroSchools Agreement

The EnviroSchools Support Agreement sets out how facilitators work alongside schools to introduce the EnviroSchools kaupapa and process, support schools to plan, implement and evaluate sustainability learning and action, work collaboratively with other organisations to support schools with their sustainability aspirations and maintain regular communication with schools. To enable facilitators to effectively support schools we ask schools to develop a long-term vision and strategy to become a sustainable school, and support tamariki and ākongā to engage in student-centred action in the school and the community. *Talk to your facilitator about how they can support all staff and students at your school.*

21 Years of Enviroschools in Ōtākou meant there was lots of cakes to cut to celebrate across the region.

Tania McLean and Waitati students cutting the cake in Ōtepoti.



Dame Sukhi Turner cutting the cake with Glenorchy students in Tahuna.



Examples of CODC schools mahi

Maniototo Area School is undertaking a stream restoration project on the grounds of the local hospital to create a healthy and beautiful space for the community. They have also started a community garden with initial funding from Enviroschools and lots of collaboration with community members. **St. Gerard's School** students have been tracking the lifecycle of common products and considering alternatives to create circular economies. **Clyde Primary School** has a long-term project planting on the banks of the Mata Au. In partnership with passionate community groups and individuals they have transformed an area of exotic weeds into a native wildlife hub over the last 13 years. **Omakau and Poolburn Schools** work closely with their catchment groups monitoring water quality. **Alexandra Primary** is growing a food forest and re-creating a native forest on the school grounds, among many other sustainable initiatives.



Tarras students learning how catchments work.

Waitaki Schools

Waitaki District Council came on board to support Enviroschools in 2018 and Bron Claridge started working with 9 schools and 3 ECE. The council very quickly realised that the facilitator needed more time to support schools effectively and to meet the demand. Now 13 schools and 3 ECE are Enviroschools and Chantal Barnes recently started as the new facilitator to work alongside Lucianne White. Chantal's early impressions include being "happy to see that our next generation are being introduced to the value and necessity of being sustainable both at school and at home, and learning how their combined actions make a big difference to our natural world".



Learning about the hazards penguins navigate at the primary hui

Examples of Waitaki schools' mahi

Maheno Kindergarten is well on the way to creating a community hub at the kindergarten. Whanau are learning a lot about sustainability along with the tamariki. **Waitaki Boys High School** students are creating a composting hub at their school. They are sharing what they are learning with other schools with the students mentoring primary students. **Te Pākihi o Maru** and **Weston Schools** are getting on top of their waste and **Fenwick** and **Maheno Primary Schools** are getting students involved in various sustainability related passion projects.



Waitaki Boys High students adding carbon to their compost.

Teachers' reflections on Enviroschools:

Empowering students so they can see they can make a change.

Enviroschools is a holistic approach to learning and action for positive change in students' own context, and environment and community.

Enviroschools integrates well across the curriculum, the resources are valuable, as are the links to community.



So what is Sustainability?

For Enviroschools sustainability means living in a country where people work with positive energy to connect with each other, their cultural identity and whenua/the land around us. It's about the regeneration of ecosystems and places we love and care for in the environment. It's about loving what you do, having fun and being out in nature. It means developing livelihoods and an economy that support and restore the environment and creates resilient, caring communities.

We believe this can be achieved if we learn together in empowering, creative, and action-oriented ways which the Otago Enviroschools are modelling now.

Whanau Manaaki

Whanau Manaaki (previously South Otago Kindergarten Association) joined Enviroschools in 2021 and have five Centres in the Clutha district. Jolene Barclay, the head teacher at Balclutha Kindergarten, is the facilitator working with the five centres. She said she "loves to see the Tamariki learning how to look after papatūānuku and sharing that learning with their whanau. And it is so inspiring to see all the staff get on board with the Kaupapa".



Celebrating the Bronze reflection at Balclutha Kindergarten with cake

Examples of Whanau Manaaki mahi



Goldfields Kindergarten Tamariki extending the ngahere at their centre.

Balclutha Kindergarten tamariki have planted trees at the new bike park. They will be able to see the trees grow over the years they use their local bike park. They are also involved in the mara kai and are expert at planting vegetables before they leave for primary school. **Clinton Kindergarten** has been focusing on wai. They have put in a water tank and Tamariki are learning that it has to rain before they can turn on the tap. **Goldfields**

Kindergarten have been planting native trees in their forest area to develop a place where Tamariki can explore more and learn about caring for the ngahere.

Otago Region

The Enviroschools Regional Coordinator position has been funded by the Otago Regional Council since 2016. Robyn Zink says "the strength of Enviroschools is the kaupapa and guiding principles enable schools to focus on sustainability issues that are relevant to the school and their community. Learning and taking action together builds skills and relationships needed to create a healthy, peaceful and sustainable world." Chelsea Donnelly has recently joined the Enviroschools whanau to support the Central and Queenstown Lakes facilitators. We are so lucky to be funded by all the councils in Ōtākou and to be able to work collaboratively with councils, community organisations, businesses, and passionate individuals to support schools and students to be change makers in their communities.

2023 hui

2023 was another busy year for Enviroschools hui across the rohe. Topics ranged from the changing climate, leadership, reflection, natural building, kai for the birds, bees and us, living landscapes and supporting hauora through Enviroschools. Hui give teacher and students the chance to connect, get inspired by what is happening in other schools, have thinking challenged and learn new skills to be change makers in their schools and communities.



Developing leadership by creating a shared lunch at the Waitaki Secondary student hui



Chantal Barnes
Waitaki
cbarnes@waitaki.govt.nz



Lucianne White
Waitaki
lwhite@waitaki.govt.nz



Jennie Upton
Ōtepoti
jennie.upton@dcc.govt.nz



Tess Mackay
Ōtepoti
tess.mackay@dcc.govt.nz



Scott Martin
Clutha
scott.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz



Jolene Barclay
Whānau Manaaki
jolene.barclay@wmkindergartens.org.nz



Lucy Francke
Central Otago
Enviroschools@coreap.org.nz



Nicky Gray
Tahuna
nicky@wastebusters.co.nz



Damian Foster
Wānaka
damian@wastebusters.co.nz



Chelsea Donnelly
Regional Coordinator (Central)
Chelsea.donnelly@orc.govt.nz



Robyn Zink
Regional Coordinator
robyn.zink@orc.govt.nz

027 387 8946

027 853 2097

021 348 374

021 023 24163

022 014 2938

03 448 6115

021 303 884

027 605 6133

027 4780068

027 541 1290



WHĀNAU MANAAKI

