

# Enviroschools Ōtākou Panui 2021



## NAU MAI HAERE MAI - WELCOME

Enviroschool's kaupapa is creating a healthy, peaceful, sustainable world through learning and taking action together. Events over the past year highlight the importance of creative thinking, innovation and environmental action as we work to create a positive and sustainable future. As you will see in this newsletter there is no shortage of creative and innovative mahi happening in Ōtākou.

*Talk to your facilitator if you want to find out more about any of these stories or if you want support with sustainability learning and mahi at your school.*



Portobello students showing off the fruit and vegetable bags they made.



Glenorchy students hard at work in their garden.

## RESULTS ARE IN FOR ENVIROSCHOOLS SURVEY

Some of you may have filled in a nation-wide survey from Enviroschools in June. The survey explored the value of Enviroschools and future directions for the programme. ECE, Schools, Councils and other partner organisations were among the 1103 respondents. We are highlighting some of the survey findings here and showcasing what these look like in our rohe.

The survey findings were divided into two main groups. One is people linked to schools. This included teachers, principals, Board of Trustee members, whanau and support staff. The second is people linked to councils, including Councillors.

### Survey highlights Enviroschools making a difference to ECE centres or schools.

People were given a series of statements about the difference Enviroschools makes. Here are some of the ways participants see Enviroschools making a difference.

### Enviroschools results in environmental improvement at ECE centre or school (94%)

We see schools across the region enjoying working to improve their school environments through planting, pest control, reducing waste, and art works to name a few actions.

**Glenorchy School** has been working hard to get their garden back into shape. With the help of the local community, the school now has an outdoor classroom right next to the vegetable garden. **Clutha Valley School** has made some great additions to their playground with sawn up tree rounds, branches and other leftover material from the school rebuild. It is not just the students that are making a positive difference to their environment. **Clyde School** teachers recently spent some time looking at what they need to do to reduce the amount of waste they create in their staff room.

*(note that 94% of people connected to schools were strongly positive or somewhat positive about this statement).*

## ENVIROSCHOOLS BENEFITS STUDENTS TAKING ACTION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY (94%)

Young people are not short of ideas on how to make their schools and communities more sustainable. **Kavanagh College** envirogroup organised a style day where students were encouraged to wear second-hand clothes and bring things no longer wear to swap with others. **Wakatipu High School** envirogroup has launched a carless day scheme. Staff and students pick a day where they will walk, bus, bike or rideshare to school rather than bring their own car. Students at **Alexandra Primary** have been gathering ideas from everyone to create a vision of what their school could look like. It will be exciting to see them bring those ideas to life over the next few years. Students take sustainability actions in their communities as well as at their schools. **Queenstown Primary School** has been involved in a restoration project at Moke Lake for several years. Every year students plant

more trees and maintain previous plantings. This year they were also learning how to weave harakeke. **Kaikorai Valley College** envirogroup spent a day volunteering at Kamau Taurua / Quarantine Is, in Otago Harbour recently. They did some planting, collected litter on the beach and sorted it for the Litter Intelligence project, and made time to enjoy a unique Island environment so close to Ōtepoti. Ōtākau students continue to be very active on climate change. The School Strike 4 Climate in April saw many passionate young people protesting across the region. The students are demanding phasing out of fossil fuels, investing in renewable energy and in a just transition including the agriculture sector, honouring Aoteroa's responsibilities to our pacific neighbours and taking climate change seriously in education.



Kaikorai Valley College making a difference at Kamau Taurua



Queenstown Primary students planting native trees they propagated at Moke Lake



School Strike 4 Climate action in Dunedin



Alexandra Primary students creating their vision for a sustainable school

## ENVIROSCHOOLS POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTES TO CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND TE TAIAO /THE ENVIRONMENT (93%)

Many of the projects Enviroschools are involved with help students to connect with their local environment. A teacher wrote that *It seems to me that the students feel that caring about their environment is cool and it's okay to be passionate about issues that touch them.* **Waitaki Boys High School** envirogroup have developed a plan to restore the creek that runs along the boundary of the school. Their plan is so comprehensive that RaboBank provided \$5000 funding for the work. The boys, with help from the community, have cleared the

weeds and done a lot of riparian planting. 'Muddy creek' is already running much cleaner and is now a source of pride for the school. **St. Johns School** from Ranfurly had a day connecting to their local taiao when they went to Naseby to do some water testing. They found all sorts of things living in the water. Some Dunedin schools are getting to know the Tomahawk Lagoon very well as they do water testing and biodiversity sampling with ECOtago on a monthly basis.



Waitaki Boys High School students and community hard at work at Muddy Creek



Otago Girls Highschool students investigating biodiversity and water quality at Tomahawk



Are these students from St. Johns Ranfurly our future water scientists?

## ENVIROSCHOOLS EMPOWERS STUDENTS AND PRODUCES CULTURES OF CARE/MANAAKI (92%)

As well as learning about issues that are important to them, Enviroschools supports students and teachers to take action on those issues. Looking after te taiao creates a culture of manaaki for those in our community as well as for the environment.

**Omakau School** students didn't let lockdown get in the way of looking after the environment in their back yards. Students created some stunning birdfeeders out of upcycled materials. Students at **Goldfields Primary School** are working on a koru garden which reflects their love of native plants and is a celebration of their wonderful caretaker, Ray. He helps the students with lots of their projects in and around the school. One of the ways many schools connect with their communities is through growing and sharing food. **Green Island School** students help out at the local community garden every Tuesday.



Green Island students helping out with getting the compost on the community garden



Goldfields Primary students working on the koru garden with Ray

## ENVIROSCHOOLS INCREASES APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF MĀORI PERSPECTIVES (75%)

Māori perspectives is one of the Enviroschools five guiding principles. Including Māori perspectives enriches the learning process and honours the indigenous people of this land. **Cromwell Primary School** have been learning about tirau / cabbage trees. Kahlee wrote; *When Māori people were travelling they always stopped at Tirau, which means Cromwell, and got some Kai to eat. Did you know the fibre in the cabbage tree leaf is stronger than flax and*

*the fibre can also be used to make a waka? Cabbage tree parts can be used for a lot of things like food (cooked in a hāngi), footwear and building materials. The flowers can also be food for birds.* **Queenstown Primary School** have been busy in their garden this year. Before the students do any planting or harvesting they say a mihi. Last term, with the help of Garden to Table, year 5 students cooked a meal every week. Students said karakia before eating the kai.



Cromwell Primary students planting a tirau / cabbage tree



## ENVIROSCHOOLS HELPS COUNCILS ACHIEVE THEIR COMMUNITY GOALS

Council staff and councillors also filled in the survey.

90% of those in council related roles said that Enviroschools makes a difference in the ability to achieve council community outcomes and priorities.

There are many examples where students are taking the initiative to support council outcomes. A group of **Cromwell Primary School** students have established the Junior Guardians of Lake Dunstan. They have identified an area of the lake shore they will plant up and maintain and they are encouraging other schools to adopt their

own spots. Their vision is to improve the mauri of the area and to encourage more families to spend time by the lake.

**Taieri College** envirogroup has created a planting plan for a section of the Silverstream with the support of the Dunedin City Council. They have found funding and are now getting on with the first stage of this multi-year project. **Waitaki Girls High School** envirogroup got on board with the Waitaki Council's drive to reduce plastic waste during Plastic Free July. They created a video encouraging people to bring their own containers when buying lunch from the school canteen – or from a café.



Taieri College envirogroup developing their planting plan for the Silverstream

## ENVIROSCHOOLS MAKES A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN COUNCIL INITIATIVES (87%)

The young people we work with are very aware of the challenges we face and have a lot of great ideas for creating the positive future they want. They have made the most of opportunities to tell local councils what they want to see them doing.

**Queens High School** envirogroup provided feedback to the Dunedin City Council on their Coastal Plan consultation. Schools in Queenstown and Wanaka have worked with the Climate Change team at Queenstown Lakes District Council to help them review their

Climate Change Plan. Students from **North East Valley Normal School** presented to the Otago Regional Councillors about what they thought the council should be doing, which included more public transport, stopping coal use, supporting farmers to become more sustainable and improving water quality. They also said; *we like that our school is an Enviroschool because we get to know what is happening in the environment around us and we get taught about climate change.*



Year 5 and 6 students from North East Valley Normal School presenting to ORC councillors

## HOLISTIC REFLECTIONS

A number of schools were hoping to reflect on their Enviroschools journey this year. COVID put paid to those plans for many. **Cromwell Primary** did reflect at Green-Gold earlier in the year. It was so inspiring to see how engaged everyone at the school, from the Chair of the Board of Trustees, to teachers, students, support staff and parents are in creating a healthy, peaceful, sustainable world through learning and taking action together.

Holistic reflection is a great opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the mahi of students, staff and the wider community in making the school and the community more resilient. It is also a great way to get everyone on board with next steps. *Get in touch with your facilitator to find out more about the holistic reflection process. Don't hesitate to get in touch with them if you want help with putting a sustainability lens across the curriculum, activity ideas, access to resources, or help with projects.*

## Kia ora ki te Enviroschools whanau

We would like to extend a very big welcome to the new Enviroschools in Ōtākau **Tokomairiro High School, Warena School** and **South Otago Kindergarten Association** (Clutha District) **Mount Aspiring College, Shotover Primary School** and **Te Kura Whakatipu o Kawarau** (Queenstown Lakes District).

## NEW FACES

There have been a few changes in the Enviroschools team this year. Lucianne White is the new facilitator in the Waitaki District. Jen Rodgers has joined the Dunedin team and Lucy Franke is working with Central Otago schools. They all bring a wealth of experience and knowledge in sustainability with them.



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## TELL US WHAT IS HAPPENING IN YOUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

We love hearing your stories and sharing them on the Otago Enviroschools facebook page

[www.facebook.com/EnviroschoolsOtago](https://www.facebook.com/EnviroschoolsOtago)

You can find out more about Enviroschools at the website [enviroschools.org.nz](https://enviroschools.org.nz)



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