

Enviroschools Ōtākou

Enviroschools

Whiringa-ā-nuku
October 2026

Nau mai, haere mai e te Enviroschools whānau

St Leonards Matariki Holistic Reflection!



St Leonards school decided to finish Term 2 with a holistic reflection and celebration during their Matariki events, inviting the schools whānau to be a part of the event.

An Enviroschools Holistic Reflection is a process that Enviroschools undertake when they pause to consider the past, present and future of their Enviroschools journey. The school community considers how they got to where they are, what changes have been made/ are being made, and how this informs next steps.

St Leonards celebrated their Enviroschools journey with their school whānau, who were invited to contribute to their leaves and stars with ideas for what's next and what they are doing well. Each ākoka presented their favourite place in the school and proudly showed off all the mahi they have been doing in their sustainability journey. The celebration ended with signing their names to the reflection certificate and planting their new cranberry bush, ready for their next steps in their garden plans for next term.

Congratulations to all the St Leonards ākoka for their amazing commitment to the Enviroschools kaupapa and all the actions they undertake daily to improve the health and wellbeing of their kura.



Colin and Ms T plant their new cranberry bush at the end of the Holistic Reflection.



St Leonards School ākoka gather proudly around their new cranberry bush after their reflection and celebration.



Trinity College ākoka organisers for the Ōtepoti School Strike for Climate on the steps of St Pauls Cathedral where the concert and strike was held.

Ōtepoti School Strike for Climate

Three years after the last School Strike for Climate, another student strike took place in Ōtepoti Dunedin. Well done to Trinity College enviro leaders for organising the School Strike for Climate on cold and wet Friday at the end of July. Moving inside to St Pauls Cathedral, the student leaders were undaunted by the weather and created a student concert that brought together a number of schools across the city.

Being able to have their voices heard on environmental issues they care about was an important factor of the strike. Local MPs and environmental scientists spoke and encouraged young people to keep their voices loud. It was a great opportunity to build leadership, teamwork, and active citizenship while supporting respectful ākoka participation from schools all across Ōtepoti.

Enviroschools

TOIMATA
FOUNDATION



KIA ORA KOUTOU

Kā mihi mahana ki a koutou.



Enviro Days at high schools are a popular way for Year 9's to engage with Enviroschools after the end of year exams. Starting at Waitaki Boys High School two years ago, the Enviro Day idea is growing. Organised by the high school and your local Enviroschools Facilitator, an Enviro Day gives Year 9s (and/or Year 10s) an opportunity to engage with a range of environmental organisations with fun activities over the course of a normal school day. If you'd like to learn more about how we could support an Enviro Day for your school, please get in touch with us!



What's your favourite theme area? From Zero Waste to Ecological Buildings; Energy to Living Landscapes; Water of Life to Me and My Environment - our theme areas are full of activities to kickstart your enquiry learning. Any teacher in your school can have access to these resources - all you need is a unique email and your MOE school number. Send us a message if you need access.



Leisa de Klerk
Enviroschools
Regional
Coordinator
Lead



Upcoming dates for Ōtākou Enviroschools

CENTRAL OTAGO/QUEENSTOWN LAKES

24 Nov - CO/QL Primary Hui (Bannockburn)

CLUTHA

20 Nov - Clutha Primary Hui Year 3-8

DUNEDIN

6 Nov - Dunedin Primary Hui Year 4-6

NEXT YEAR 2027

WAITAKI

25 Jan - Principals Breakfast

17 Feb - Waitaki Primary Hui Year 4-6

26 Feb - Waitaki Secondary Hui

CENTRAL OTAGO/QUEENSTOWN LAKES

16 Mar - CO/QL Secondary Hui

May - CO/QL Teacher Hui

CLUTHA

11 Mar (TBC) - Clutha Teacher Cafe

23 Mar (TBC) - Clutha Junior Secondary Hui Year 7-10



Haere ra, Lexie!

In mid July, we said goodbye to Lexie, our amazing Enviroschools Regional Coordinator for Central, coming straight from the classroom to support the Enviroschools team.

Lexie has been an incredible support for the wider Ōtākou Enviroschools team, in particular supporting the facilitators in Central Otago and Queenstown Lakes, and she has now 'flown the nest' to her next adventure. A classroom teacher for many years, the wider team has benefited from her expertise and knowledge of the curriculum and everything that she has done to deepen our practice.

While we are sad to say goodbye to Lexie, from all of us in the Ōtākou Enviroschools team, and the wider Enviroschools network - good luck, Lexie! We will miss you!



Regional Coordinator Central, Lexie Davidson, during a bird count at Sinclair Wetlands.

Wānaka Primary visits Wānaka Wastebusters

When you're on your Enviroschools journey, and you want to know more about waste, recycling and where everything goes - a trip to Wānaka Wastebusters is in order! Five classes got the opportunity to get an up close look at what happens when your rubbish and recycling leaves your kura or home - finding out the reasons why we can recycle some things but not others and what the dedicated team at Wasties find exciting.

Ākoka at Wānaka Primary school are doing amazing things on their environmental journey - and this trip will help them continue and build on their already great mahi.



Ākoka listen in to facilitator, Damian, outside the Wānaka Wastebusters shop.

Adopt-A-Drain at Trinity College

Ākoka from Trinity College have taken an exciting step towards protecting their local environment by officially adopting a drain in partnership with the Otago Regional Council in July!



Ākoka stand in front of the drain they adopted with Janice, Catchment Advisor at ORC.

Clinton School at Waipahi Wetlands

What a fantastic day of hands-on learning with the students from Clinton School at the beautiful Waipahi Wetlands! The students explored the incredible world of macroinvertebrates, discovering how these tiny freshwater creatures can tell us so much about the health of our waterways. Armed with nets and identification guides, they investigated the stream and identified a range of fascinating aquatic life.

They also completed a riparian assessment, observing the vegetation along the stream margins and discussing how healthy riparian planting helps improve water quality, reduce erosion, and provide important habitat for wildlife.

It was wonderful to see so much curiosity, teamwork, and enthusiasm as ākoka connected classroom learning with the natural environment. Experiences like these help inspire the next generation of environmental kaitiaki.

A big thank you to everyone who made the day possible—we hope the students left with muddy boots, new knowledge, and a greater appreciation for our freshwater ecosystems. We look forward to more actions!



Clinton School ākoka draw the riparian life surrounding the stream before completing an assessment on how healthy the stream is.

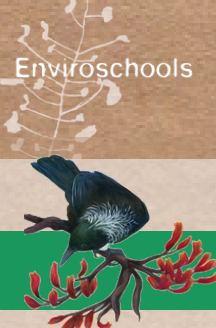
Facilitators Hui in Christchurch

School holidays are the perfect time for our tīma to get together, this time with facilitators from all around the South Island!

The two days in Ōtautahi were full of enthusiasm, professional development and connection - just what we need to fill our cups after a busy term!



Some of the wider Ōtākou team with our silly hats at the Facilitator Hui in Christchurch.



Schools in Action



Hāwea Flat School made t-shirt bags as a part of their Slow Fashion unit.



North East Valley school ākoka learned more about soil and worms as a part of their Garden to Table session.



Queenstown Primary School ākoka earning how decomposers eat up our food and plant waste.



Ākoka at the Ōtepoti Year 7-10 Hui made electricity with lemons.



Our NZ Bumblebee Tour!

Eleven schools in Central Otago and Queenstown Lakes were treated to a NZ Bumblebee tour in July, thanks to the New Zealand Bumblebee Conservation Trust. The Trust sent us a hive for ākoka to get an up close look at our NZ bumblebees - something that usually doesn't happen because their hives are underground!

Schools are now looking to see how they can create safe spaces to encourage the NZ bumblebees back to their gardens, in a wonderful way of showing kaitiakitanga for our native taoka. This will strengthen learning, build confidence in ākoka and support crucial systems in our environmental biodiversity.

This links to our Living Landscapes key concept: Habitats are places to live; living landscapes have spaces for all the children of Ranginui and Papatūānuku. Making space for all of this biodiversity means providing a diversity of habitat, such as wet, cool, shady places; hot, dry, rocky spots and watery areas. Animals need resources, and a diversity of flowers will attract different insects meaning more support for our native insects. Leaving some areas wild lets nature take over a corner of your Enviroschool and encourages this biodiversity.

A massive thank you to Jennie, our Ōtepoti Facilitator, for her incredible energy and enthusiasm bringing this road show to life!



Year 11 Science ākoka at Dunstan High School NZ Bumblebees.

Papakaio Schools in-depth recycling

Papakaio School ākoka have made huge strides in diverting their waste over the past few years, and now they're getting into the nitty gritty! Ākoka had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge about what can and can't be recycled, exploring some of those tricky items that can cause confusion in our recycling bins.

These conversations are helping their Envirogroup become more confident waste-wise and make informed choices about what happens to our resources after they leave the classroom. A big thank you to Trish from Waitaki Resource Recovery Park for sharing her knowledge and helping our students take another step in their Enviroschools journey!



Ākoka listen in to Trish from Waitaki Resource Recovery Park.

Te Kura O Take Kārara at Butterfields Wetland

Ākoka from Te Kura o Take Kārara had the opportunity to take a closer look at nature in August with a range of activities with Ōtākou Enviroschools at Butterfields Wetland near Albert Town.

The ākoka took part in a range of activities alongside Department of Conservation, Te Kāhano, Wai Wānaka and Otago Regional Council, as well as our Wānaka Enviroschools facilitator, Damian, gaining practical knowledge and discovering more about the whenua, wai and taiao around our community. Many of the ākoka had never been to Butterfields Wetland before and found it a beautiful space to learn and grow their knowledge of their local environment.

We hope to see more actions for the Butterfields Wetland coming up in the future!



Building a temporary shelter at the Wetland.

Ōtepoti Kids Care About Climate

What do penguins and coral reefs have in common? That was the question asked by Dr Marji Puotinen, a coral reef scientist, to Ōtepoti ākoka during a recent visit to a number of schools across the city. Penguins and coral reefs don't live in the same place and they don't need the same conditions, but they are both affected by the fact that Earth's oceans are getting hot, hot, hot!

Dressed as a penguin, Marji shared with ākoka that one action that can be taken to help is to plant trees and create an awareness of how together we can make a difference, just like her Kids Care About Climate Change initiative. Ākoka were also able to spell out words of action with Marji's drone in the air to share with other tamariki around the globe. These actions will be seen by the United Nations, putting Ōtepoti on the map of global action!

Kā mihi nui to Marji for coming to Ōtepoti and sharing your wisdom and enthusiasm with us, and to Megan, our Ōtepoti facilitator in organising the busy week of schools!



Students from North East Valley school get busy with the map.



Dr Marji Puotinen dressed as a penguin, encouraging ākoka to care about the climate.

The Ōtākou Team at Clyde Dam

Every term, our amazing and busy Ōtākou facilitators come together to connect, learn, support and take action together. Each term is in a different area so that we can connect with the local action that is happening, and explore more of what Ōtākou can offer for the Enviroschools kaupapa.

With a focus on Energy for our own professional development, we were grateful for the team at Contact Energy to give us all a tour of Clyde Dam, where we learned more about how the dam was constructed, and how the energy is controlled so that we can encourage kura to learn more about these fascinating structures.

We spent the afternoon planning ahead for a busy term four, where we will kick off our next round of hui across the region. We're looking forward to a busy term 4!



Ōtākou Facilitators get up close to the Clyde Dam spillway during their tour.



Poolburn School checks out their soil



How do you know if your soil is healthy? With their Enviroschools facilitator, Arron, Poolburn school ākoka got the opportunity to have an in-depth look at the soil in their raised garden beds. They used a few different testing methods to find the pH of the soil to see what was needed to make sure they get tasty and healthy vegetables in the future.

This work is a part of our Living Landscapes theme area key concept, whenua is the land that nourishes life. When we grow our own kai, we are learning to be healthy, self-sufficient and resourceful. We can also trade or gift the surplus within our community, fostering relationships through this flow of aroha. Working with others in a food network, we can draw on each other's strengths to meet more of our community's kai needs locally.



Ākoka from Poolburn school show off some of the vegetables they harvested from their gardens in August.

Ōtepoti Year 7-10 Enviroschools Hui



Energy, ideas and action at the Ōtepoti Enviroschools Year 7-10 Hui where we looked at energy in all its forms!

Ōtepoti ākoka came together at the Gasworks museum to explore the many ways energy shapes our lives, communities and environment. From learning about the history of energy and the Gasworks site to thinking about the energy challenges and opportunities of the future, students were encouraged to ask questions, share ideas and imagine what a more sustainable future could look like.

Our Energy theme area is a popular theme area, but it is sometimes hard to know where to start. This hui was an opportunity for teachers and ākoka alike to learn new skills, think about energy differently and hopefully get a chance to practice and collaborate with some of the groups they worked with in the future.

A big thank you to all the students, teachers, facilitators and the Gasworks Museum team for making the hui such a great opportunity to connect, learn and take action.

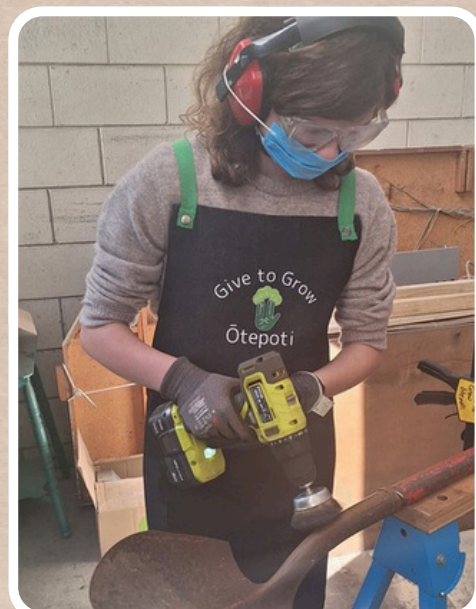
Beach clean up!

Waiwera South ākoka spent a windy and rainy day at the beach, rolling up their sleeves and taking action for their local environment. Their dedication to make a difference was evident through their enthusiasm to continue going through the wet weather! 🗑️

Their beach clean-up was a fantastic opportunity to care for our coastline, work together and see first-hand the impact that small actions can have. This links with our theme areas, Water of Life and Living Landscapes, which encourages ākoka to consider their actions in water and flora and to leave only footprints. 💧



Wet and windy weather doesn't bother Waiwera South ākoka. The beach clean up was a great success!



An ākoka gives a rusty garden shovel a fresh start, helping Give to Grow to provide garden tools for people in need.

Enviroschools Ōtākou

Annual Reviews are coming up!

It's coming up to Annual Review time and this year, we've made it easier for you to complete.

Annual reviews are an important resource for schools looking at their sustainability and environmental journey across the school year - inevitably, schools realise they have done so much more than they realised before the annual review!

Making time to sit with your local facilitator and talk through actions, challenges and make some plans for the following year can also help shape your curriculum learning as well. With shifts in the curriculum, facilitators can help identify early on where they can support you with the learning in the classroom.

The annual reviews are also the basis for the reporting of Ōtākou Enviroschools, which gets your schools actions in front of the regional and local councils. We absolutely love to talk about what actions you are up to, and it's an opportunity for you to share with a much wider audience.



Ākoka from Queenstown Primary school check for water clarity at Matakauri Wetland in September.

Ōtākou Enviroschools Tīma



Damian Foster
Wānaka Facilitator
damian@
wastebusters.co.nz



Euan Scrivener
ECE Facilitator Waitaki
euan.scrivener@oamaru
kindergarten.co.nz



Karen Hailes
ECE Facilitator Waitaki
st@oamarukindergarten
.co.nz



Megan Greer
Dunedin Facilitator
megan.greer@
dcc.govt.nz



Jennie Upton
Dunedin Facilitator
jennie.upton@
dcc.govt.nz



Arron Harvie
Central Otago
Facilitator
enviroschools@
coreap.org.nz



Nicky Gray
Queenstown
Facilitator
nicky@
wastebusters.co.nz



Jolene Barclay
ECE Facilitator Clutha
jolene.barclay@
wmkindergartens.org.nz



Chantal Barnes
Waitaki Facilitator
cbarnes@
waitaki.govt.nz



Hannah McLeary
Clutha Facilitator
hannah.mcleary@
cluthadc.govt.nz

