

# Enviroschools Ōtākou

Enviroschools

Hereturikōkā

August 2025

Nau mai, haere mai

## Teacher Hui upskilling across Ōtākou



May and June were busy ones for our Enviroschools Facilitators, with two teacher hui reaching kaiako across most of the region. This year, these teacher hui have had a focus on upskilling key kaiako in the refreshed Holistic Reflection process for their Enviroschools mahi. These hui were well attended by teachers new and experienced to Enviroschools across our region.

The Central Otago and Queenstown Lakes hui was a chance for the Enviroschools team to share their knowledge of the refreshed process and guide participants through the process of reflecting. Reflecting is about closing the loop of the Action Learning Cycle, a key Enviroschools resource, and the sharing and celebrating of wonderful mahi that is happening within schools to improve their sustainability.

The day was filled with a buzz of positivity as kaiako shared korero around the benefits of the simplified reflection process and got to share the powerful student-led mahi happening in their kura. These hui are about making connections and learning in a holistic way so naturally that meant many breaks for Enviroschools Theme Area activities, endless cuppas and some good kai.

The Dunedin hui gathered teachers from Enviroschools from all over Ōtepoti at the Otago Yacht Club on a classic rainy and chill Dunedin day, ready to learn more about the refreshed holistic reflection process through food science. The rainy day was a perfect time to be indoors as we explored the Enviroschools kaupapa!

Alongside our kaupapa, we battled it out over dunking biscuits into tea (aptly named tea duelling), preserving food, sensory exploration, fermentation and even making vegan fish'n'chips with seaweed. The fabulous Mike Stevens talked with us about tītī and the person who inspired this day, Geraldine McGowan, talked about the science behind the activities.

Our refreshed holistic reflection process gives schools opportunities to celebrate and reflect on their actions, no matter where they are on their sustainability journey. We hope that kura will find the refreshed process more simple and will reflect more frequently.



*Kaiako at the Central Teacher hui throw a ball of yarn in the web of life activity that encourages participants to visualise how everything they do is connected.*



*Enviroschools Facilitator Damian mixes batter for the vegan fish as kaiako Tawhai starts the deep frying. Accessibility of food choices is a key aspect for kaiako to consider in their Enviroschools mahi.*



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## KIA ORA KOUTOU

Kā mihi mahana ki a koutou.

The refreshed holistic reflection process for kura is going well with most districts now having kaiako in-person and online professional development on how this would work for your schools. We love hearing about all the plans that kura have to reflect - whether its big or small! Get in touch with your facilitator if you're thinking about reflecting so we can support you with every step.

It may be winter but that hasn't stopped kura from getting out and about! We love hearing and sharing all the great mahi that you're doing, so please get in touch with us if you are happy for us to share in our newsletters and social media.

A special shout out to all those great people and community groups who work with us. Nothing in Enviroschools is done in isolation, so your collaboration is truly the spirit of Ōtākou, creating connection and environmental education wherever we go. Ka rawe!

**Leisa de Klerk**  
Enviroschools  
Regional  
Coordinator  
Lead



## Upcoming dates for Ōtākou Enviroschools

### CENTRAL OTAGO/QUEENSTOWN LAKES

30th October - Queenstown Primary Hui Year 4-6

Date TBC (likely September) - Central Otago Primary Hui Year 4-6

Date TBC (likely December) - Wānaka Primary Hui

### CLUTHA

18th November - Clutha Primary Hui Year 7-10

### DUNEDIN

28th August - Dunedin Primary Hui Year 4-6

28th November - Dunedin Primary Hui Year 7-10

### WAITAKI

31st October - Waitaki Primary Hui Year 4-6



*The Clutha Valley School Pest Group Envirogroup with their traps ready to make their community pest-free!*

## Butterfield Wetlands near Wānaka

In May, Wānaka Primary Year 3-4 ākonga enthusiastically immersed themselves in learning from experts about their local space, the Butterfield Wetlands. They explored the important role of wetlands for filtering water and holding in moisture for plants to thrive in the warmer months, all through simulating wetlands using a sponge.

This action-packed morning was the perfect way to explore our guiding principle, Learning for Sustainability. They feel connected to their whenua and build an awareness of living communities, their inter-connectedness and feel empowered to take action.



*Ākonga check to see whether their harakeke waka can survive the ultimate test of floating at Butterfields Wetlands, near Wānaka.*

## St Joseph's Queenstown Holistic Reflection

St Joseph's School Queenstown, a small school with a big heart, is the first to reflect in Ōtākou using the refreshed Holistic Reflection process.

The Ōtākou Enviroschools team were honoured to be a part of St Joseph's Queenstown Enviroschools Reflection in term 2, where the ākonga gave us a guided tour around the school. The selected ākonga, filled with confidence and pride, showcased all of the mahi their school have been doing on their journey to increasing their sustainability.

During the tour we got to see:

- The use of GOOS paper (good on one side) and Paper 4 Trees recycling
- Worm Farm for recycling lunch food scraps and making quality soil for the gardens
- A bug garden to keep bugs safe so they can continue to do their important jobs in the ecosystem
- Playshed that turns someone's trash into another person's treasure for creative and imaginary play
- The school gardens, including vegetables that are given away, a nursery for all school leavers to receive a kōwhai, and a prayer garden - all driven by the Garden Club
- Litter-less lunch box initiatives and the monitoring of packaging.

Enviroschools is a holistic programme that also prioritises how the learning spaces affect physical and emotional well-being, making the following part of the tour one that is important for the Enviroschools kaupapa:

- Totem poles and a school mural that represent all of the cultures of ākonga and kaiako at the school
- Exercise stations to support physical and emotional well-being.

Following the tour, the QLDC Solid Waste Team, QLDC Wakatipu Basin Councillors, and the Ōtākou Enviroschools team worked with the group of ākonga to identify what is going well in the school using the 5 Guiding Principles. Next steps were identified and with some school-wide input, the school will decide on the actions they will take deeper through student-led inquiry.

Celebration is what the refreshed Holistic Reflection process is all about! Thank you for letting us celebrate your achievements with you, St Joseph's School. We look forward to seeing the actions that come out of this reflection.



St Joseph's ākonga in front of the mural they painted to represent biodiversity at their school and in their local community.

## Learning the Enviroschools way

Lexie and Megan, our two new team members from Ōtākou, joined other new facilitators and regional coordinators from across Aotearoa for an immersive introduction into the Enviroschools kaupapa in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington.

We are really grateful to the wonderful Enviroschools New Zealand Aotearoa tīma for sharing their time and knowledge with all of us.



New facilitators from across the motu gather together for an deep dive into the Enviroschools kaupapa in Wellington.



St Joseph's ākonga show guests their school garden with the Queenstown gondolas in the background.



## Schools in action

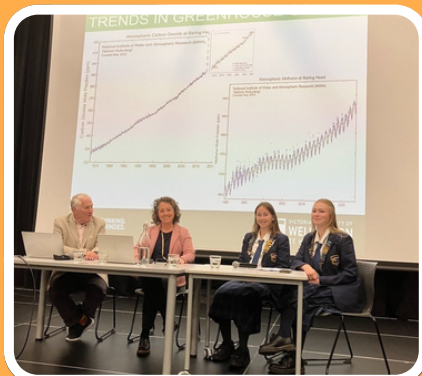
Ākonga are often out and about in our communities making a difference and learning more about their local awa and whenua. Here's a snapshot of what some of our local schools have been up to.



Ākonga at Macandrew Bay School get a close look at how rainfall affects our stormwater systems through our Enviroschools Enviroscape resource.



Rosebank School got up close with the local crabs on a field trip to Pounawea. The ākonga followed up their learning back at school by playing a crab related game to help them understand how a crab thinks and acts.



Wakatipu High School celebrated World Environment Day by inviting two climate scientists to talk to Year 11s about the changing climate and its impacts on their landscape.

## Ōtākou Schools Adopt-A-Drain

Macandrew Bay School and Broad Bay School in Ōtepoti have been working closely with the Otago Regional Council and Enviroschools to Adopt-A-Drain. This Regional Council led programme is part of their environmental education outreach that helps ākonga to identify the drains within their school and what they need to do as a school community to ensure that our oceans aren't polluted through our stormwater systems.

Our Ōtepoti Facilitators, Jennie and Megan, have been a big part of the programme, supporting the Catchment Advisors who are delivering Adopt-A-Drain to create next steps with ākonga. Macandrew Bay and Broad Bay ākonga have each had one session learning about water catchments and stormwater, a second session learning about stream health and macroinvertebrates and a third session where they celebrate their knowledge by "adopting" a drain within their school that they will take care of. This will help ākonga to be kaitiaki of their drains and support school policies that ensure these drains are well taken care of and don't gather any pollution that could head down into the ocean.

A massive thank you to the Macandrew Bay and Broad Bay teachers, staff and community for taking the plunge with their enthusiasm for drains in their school!



Enviro Leaders at Macandrew Bay School do a stream health assessment with Janice Huang, Catchment Advisor at the Otago Regional Council.

## Romahapa School Field Day

Our newest Enviroschool, Romahapa School in Clutha, have leaped into action with a day out in their community, learning more about planting, stream health and macro invertebrates.

Ākonga were joined by Craig Simpson from Otago Catchment Community, to help them with their learning. Being able to learn more about their streams is a normal part of the school year for Romahapa School. Bringing it all together in an Enviroschools context for the first time was an exciting moment. Ākonga really enjoyed their day and are already looking forward to what comes next!



Learning to identify macro invertebrates is an important part of checking the health of our streams. It helps us know what more we need to do to keep our streams healthy.

## Dunedin Enviroschools Team at the International Science Festival



Our Dunedin team took the opportunity to get involved with the school holiday fun and showcase some of our Enviroschools activities to more of the community. Our activity, Where in the World, in which we explored where our food comes from, was a popular one for young and old alike.

There were some surprising results and it was a good opportunity to see what information was provided for us to make the final decision.

A big thank you to Robyn Zink, from Our Food Network, Qa-t-a Amun from Heart Foundation and Janice Huang from Otago Regional Council for supporting our stall with information and human power!



A variety of food was available for young people to search for information about where the products could have come from.



Dunedin Facilitator, Megan Greer, gets young people looking at where their food comes from.

## Te Waipaku with Waikouaiti School



Through the East Otago Catchment group, Kati Huirapa Runaka ki Puketeraki, Enviroschools and Otago Regional Council, Waikouaiti School ākonga did water monitoring over 4 months using different methods to help them gain an understanding of what the water quality is like. At the end of the project, ākonga were able to articulate their conclusions to the community and their whānau using the data that they had gathered.

The ākonga also did some pest monitoring, learnt about their tohu and the awa, recognising the importance of being able to protect their local tohu (landmark) and awa. Ākonga gave a mihi before going to the awa and learnt more about being kaitiaki and what that means for their monitoring going forward as well.

A wonderful video has also been produced about this project, which you can find on YouTube by searching for Waipaku Video Final 2. A big thank you to everyone involved!



Dunedin Facilitator, Jennie Upton, talk to Waikouaiti School ākonga about their local awa.

## Schools in Action



Waiwera South ākonga conduct a beach clean up as a part of the Litter Intelligence project. In April, their efforts uncovered car parts, including tyres, that could have had a significantly detrimental effect on the local coastline.



East Taieri ākonga visit their local neighbourhood and do a rubbish clean up in their community.



Alexandra Primary School ākonga get up close with stream health assessments in the Manuhērikia.



The Trinity College Envirogroup hosted an Enviroweek focusing on Ocean Conservation and encouraging their fellow ākonga to think and buy secondhand with a range of activities that celebrated their sustainability journey in their school.

# Enviroschools Ōtākou



## Working together for the Southern region

In June, our Ōtākou Enviroschools Regional Coordinators, Leisa and Lexie, had the pleasure of attending the Murihiku Enviroschools Waste Workshop in Gore, alongside around 100 ākonga from the area.

It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with passionate environmental educators, share ideas, and explore innovative ways to reduce waste and support sustainable practices across our regions. Exploring collaboration between our regions is such important work and we're looking forward to all that comes from our teams working closer together.

Huge thanks to the Southland team for hosting such an inspiring and practical workshop — collaboration like this helps strengthen our mahi and keep the momentum going for a more sustainable future!



*L to R: Enviroschools Regional Coordinators, Josh Sullivan, Leisa de Klerk, Lexie Davidson and Facilitator, Jane Tagomoa after a long day at the Waste Workshop.*

## Enviroschools Ōtākou Tīma

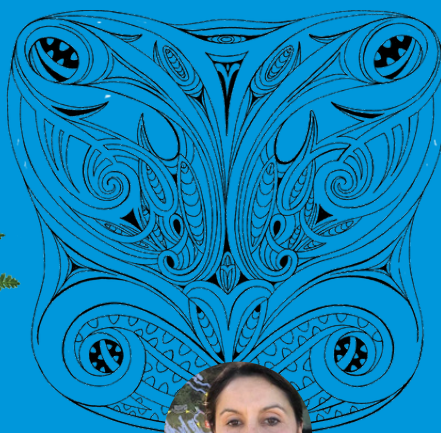


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