

# Enviroschools Ōtākou

Enviroschools

Potoū-te-rangi  
March 2026

Nau mai, haere mai

## Haere Mai ki te Ōamaru Kindergarten Association!

We are pleased to announce that Ōamaru Kindergarten Association has joined the Ōtākou Enviroschools whānau!

Maheno Kindergarten has been a part of Enviroschools since Waitaki District Council started facilitating the Enviroschools kaupapa in 2017, and has proven to be an incredible inspiration, showing how early childhood and Enviroschools are an essential start to sustainability journeys with the school and their wider whānau. Their inspiring journey has grown so much that the rest of the kindergartens under Ōamaru Kindergarten Association, Casa Nova, Edna McCulloch, Glen Warren and Holmes, are now joining the whānau in May this year.

Kindergarten Associations play a key part in facilitating early childhood education along their Enviroschools journey. They support facilitators and lead teachers, and strengthen peer-to-peer learning within the sector. We are looking forward to what 2026 will bring for Ōamaru Kindergarten Association!



*A young person at Maheno Kindergarten makes an atua inspired wreath for Matariki in 2025.*

## Holistic Reflection for Little Wonders

Congratulations to Little Wonders, Oamaru for their Holistic Reflection this month! Our Waitaki Enviroschools Facilitator, Chantal Barnes, supported the Little Wonders team to hold their first reflection, as they celebrated all the hard work they have done in the last few years, and planned their next steps. Regional Coordinator, Leisa de Klerk, and Otago Regional Council General Manager, Amanda Vercoe, were VIPs to the reflection and were treated to a tour of their centre where they got to see all the great work in action!

As soon as you come into the foyer at Little Wonders, you can hear bird song and feel the centre is focusing on something special. From the koha cup and recycling station at the entrance, to the Enviroschools mural wall and ki uta ki tai image with the steps to action amongst it - everything you see is either wood or some sustainable material. Kaimahi are trained on the Enviroschools kaupapa and are asked to have their 'recycling' glasses on at home, so that they bring this lens to the ECE.

At the end of the reflection, Leisa gifted the team with a 'Mischief' apple tree for their growing orchard. We hope it grows tall and fruits for many years to come!



*A young person plays with their adventure table during the Little Wonders Holistic Reflection.*



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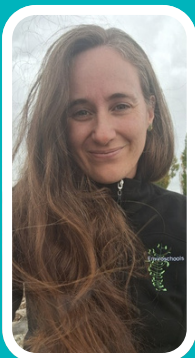
## KIA ORA KOUTOU

Kā mihi mahana ki a koutou.

Welcome to John McGlashan College, who is officially rejoining the Ōtākou Enviroschools whānau. We look forward to seeing your actions in 2026!

It has been a busy start to the year with multiple hui and plans for more. This year we are providing dedicated teacher professional development for Southern Enviroschools by unpacking the Theme Areas of Enviroschools. These are online, and we started with the popular Water of Life theme area which over 30 kaiako attended. Check our upcoming dates for our next cluster workshops once a term.

As always, feel free to get in touch if you have any questions about Enviroschools!



**Leisa de Klerk**  
Enviroschools  
Regional  
Coordinator  
Lead



**Lexie Davidson**  
Enviroschools  
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## Upcoming dates for Ōtākou Enviroschools

### CENTRAL OTAGO/QUEENSTOWN LAKES

1st May - CO/QL Teacher Hui

### CLUTHA

TBC - Clutha Primary Hui Year 3-8

### DUNEDIN

5th June - Dunedin Teacher Hui

4th Sept - Dunedin Year 7-10 Hui

Oct/Nov - Dunedin Primary Hui Year 4-6

### REGIONWIDE

30th April - Southern Teacher Cluster Workshop (online) - Energy

6th-8th May - Climate Youth Jam (senior secondary students)

30th July - Southern Teacher Cluster Workshop (online) - Ecological Building



*The Enviroscape is a 3D model of a water catchment, and this is a popular resource for schools exploring water in their local areas.*

## Waitaki Enviro Day December 2025

The Waitaki Boys Enviro Day was so much fun that this time, we had to get Waitaki Girls to join in! Over 100 ākoka from Year 9 and 10 spent the day learning about coastal erosion and our place to manage the impact on our communities - an important theme for Oamaru!

Among the activities were:

- learning more about hinaki nets with Whiria Te Waitaki,
- taking action for what we can do to prevent ground pollution with the Enviroschools team,
- taking a virtual tour next to whales with the Marine Studies Centre,
- sorting trash and recycling with the Waitaki Resource Recovery centre,
- Becoming penguins and trying to find food in murky water with the Oamaru Blue Penguin colony.



*Learning how to be penguins with the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony.*

A massive thank you to the teachers at Waitaki Boys and Waitaki Girls for supporting the day, and to Waitaki Boys for hosting!

## Community Effort at Dunedin Secondary Hui



It was a beautiful sunny day at Ōtokia Creek where students from six secondary Enviroschools across Dunedin got the opportunity to learn more about this beautiful spot and give back to the community by planting more trees around the creek.

Joining the day was Janice, from Otago Regional Council, who helped students to do a stream health assessment; Lizzy and Claudia, from City Sanctuary, who showed students different traps for pests; and Tabitha, from the Zoology department at University of Otago, and Nora, from Forest and Bird Youth, who went bug hunting with students and helped them identify the bugs at the creek.

As a break from the blazing sun, we held a planning session for the school groups about what they can achieve in their Envirogroups once back at school. This was an opportunity to take what they learned in the morning and decide the actions they will undertake with their peers.



*Ākoka take a break on the banks of the Ōtokia Creek on the sunny day of the Dunedin Secondary Hui.*

## A Sunny Waitaki Key Kaiako Hui



“Together, we can make a difference” was the theme for the day, exploring how to steer kura with strength and purpose to achieve a whole school approach on their Enviroschools journey. The day was about connections, deepening understanding of the Enviroschools kaupapa and how we can embed sustainability into everything that we do.

Key Kaiako from ECE to Secondary had the opportunity to learn from other kaiako, then we headed off for a field trip to Waitaki Resource Recovery Park, the Waitaki Community Gardens and finished off with the Ōamaru Blue Penguin colony. A massive thank you to those groups for having us and sharing your knowledge and expertise!

Our Teacher Hui, hosted across the region, are ways for Key Teachers of Enviroschools to have professional development in Enviroschools, that supports the work they do within schools. It's a day of learning from people passionate about sustainability - and committed to getting young people involved and leading the way!



## Haere Ra ki a Scott!

Our Clutha Facilitator, Scott Martin, has left Ōtākou Enviroschools for a new management role at Clutha District Council.

Scott has been the Clutha Facilitator for over 3 years, and has led the Enviroschools programme with Clutha Schools with enthusiasm and dedication. Many of our Clutha Enviroschools will miss Scott's friendly face and communication while we recruit for a new facilitator.

Tēnā koe for all your hard mahi, Scott! We look forward to seeing all that you achieve on your next adventure!



*Scott Martin stops for a quick photo during the Clutha Primary Hui, Nov 25.*



*Waitaki Kaiako get the opportunity to learn more about composting systems within their school with Waitaki Community Gardens.*



## Schools in Action



When Enviroschools actions happen even on costume day! Pirates get into the garden at Clutha Valley School.



Dunstan High School ākoka had a day of volunteering and chose rubbish pick up on the banks of the Mata-Au.



Waikouaiti School learnt how to make beeswax wraps as a part of reducing rubbish within their school.



St Joseph's Oamaru's 'Big Dig' came to an end at the end of last year when they dug up all the rubbish they had buried in term 1 to see what would biodegrade and what wouldn't.



## Inspiring Hui at the End of 2025

Right at the end of 2025, we held three hui that didn't make it into our last newsletter for 2025; the Dunedin Junior Secondary Hui on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, the Central Otago Primary Hui on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December and the Wānaka Primary Hui on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December. All these hui showcased the work that could be done even at the end of a busy year full of environmental and sustainable actions.

Ōtepoti ākoka dived into hands-on workshops and youth-led discussions where they explored real solutions—recycling bicycles, encouraging biodiversity, sustainable transport, and building climate-resilient communities. Their energy, creativity, and determination are leading the way for the climate and are today's leaders!

Central Otago schools got to experience a Zero Waste hub and teaching space. Together they learnt what taonga was important to them as well as learning how to compost, how to make homemade house cleaners, how to safely dispose of batteries, as well as the recycling of classroom stationery. That is what Empowered Learners and Sustainable Communities look like in action!

Wānaka ākoka got a hands on and belly filling day designed to bring elements of zero waste food, food resilience, composting, growing food and food security learning for the 30 ākoka attending. This day was rich in the Enviroschools Guiding Principles, giving ākoka the knowledge and skills that they can take to grow, buy, cook, and dispose of food sustainably.



Ākoka get stuck in harvesting strawberries in preparation for making smoothies on a bike in Wānaka.



Ākoka learnt bicycle maintenance skills as a part of bicycle recycling at the Dunedin Enviroschools Hui.



Central Otago ākoka were invited to join a drama activity, living the life of a piece of clothing, a battery and classroom stationery. Shockwaves were felt in the room as the koru artwork was used as the landfill - spoiling the hard mahi and the beauty the group had created.

## Water of Life at the Waitaki Primary Hui

A wet and windy day didn't stop these Waitaki ākoka from learning more about Water of Life - in fact, it added to the day! While the weather meant we couldn't head down to the Kakanui River mouth as planned, our incredible activity leaders quickly adapted their outdoor learning into engaging indoor experiences — proving that great learning can happen anywhere!

Throughout the day, students discovered how water connects everything — our rivers, oceans, wildlife, food systems and communities. Through hands-on activities and conversations, they explored how we can all act as kaitiaki (guardians) of our waterways and natural environment.

One of the most powerful parts of the day was seeing students from different schools connect, share ideas, and learn together, strengthening their confidence to take environmental action back in their own schools and communities.



*Waitaki Primary Hui ākoka learn how the water cycle impacts all of our lives and what we can do to have healthy water with Dunedin Facilitator, Jennie Upton.*

## Waitaki Secondary Hui inspires

"Inspiring", "Loved" and "Enthusiastic" were the words of the day at the Waitaki Enviroschools Secondary Hui on the 27th of Feb!

Enviroschools secondary students from Waitaki Boys, Waitaki Girls and youth council members from St Kevin's College, came together to plan environmental projects in their schools to take action and inspire others.

Looking at their values and the ripple affect this has on others; learning more about biodiversity, waste, community and energy; and chatting with their local - and national - Enviro Leaders helped to provide a complex web of support for what they plan on achieving this year. Buzzing from an incredible presentation from Tara Shepherd, UNESCO Youth Ambassador, secondary students used the momentum to inspire their peers.

Well done and thank you to each and every student who came and participated in the day, and a huge mihi to Chantal, our wonderful Waitaki Enviroschools Facilitator, for all her organisation for the hui!

## Enviroschools learning for Clutha Valley School

A whole school field trip to Owaka Museum and Pounaweia was a great way for Clutha Valley School to strengthen their Enviroschools journey in February.

Every year, Clutha Valley School has a whole school field trip that gets their ākoka into the wider Clutha community, learning more about how our sustainability actions affects beyond their school borders.

This year, 94 ākoka turned up to Owaka Museum for fun and learning and finished off the day with a scavenger hunt at Pounaweia.



*Ākoka show off a crab they found in a shell while exploring the Pounaweia beach.*



*Enviro Leaders and Tara Shepherd get the chance to share their thoughts and encouragement with other ākoka.*

# Enviroschools Ōtākou

## Enviroschools actions captured!



Ākoka at Musselburgh School take a closer look at the future monarch butterflies eating their way through the swan plants in their food forest.



Secondary ākoka at the Dunedin Secondary Hui take a quick break while planting at Ōtokia Creek, supporting the local trust in their activities.



Key Kaiako from Dunedin Enviroschools got the opportunity to meet experts from around the city in February.

## Enviroschools Ōtākou Tīma



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