

Enviroschools Ōtākou

Enviroschools

Haratua
May 2025

Nau mai, haere mai

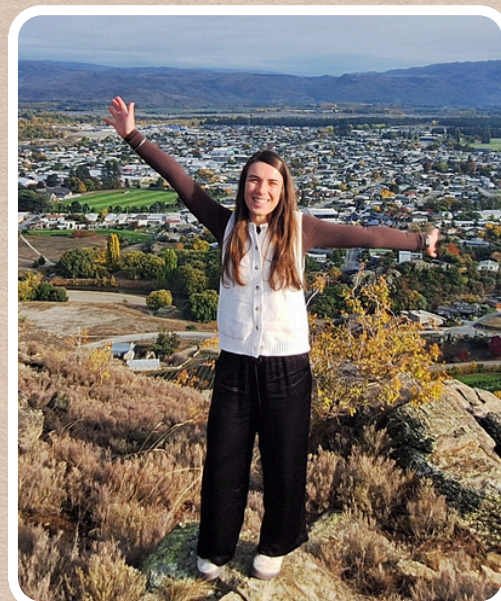
Welcome to our new team members!

In April, we were very thrilled to have two new team members for the Ōtākou Enviroschools team start working with us. These two team members have both started enthusiastically and we can't wait for everyone to meet them.

Lexie Davidson is joining the team as the new Regional Coordinator for Central Otago, supporting Leisa de Klerk, the Regional Coordinator Lead for Ōtākou. Lexie has a very strong background in education, having come from a primary teaching role and has been a people leader for the new curriculum over the last couple of years. Based in Alexandra with Otago Regional Council, Lexie will mainly support the Central Otago and Queenstown Lakes facilitators, Damian, Lucy and Nicky in their Enviroschools mahi. Leisa will continue to support the wider Ōtākou team as a whole, but will be based mainly in Coastal Otago with the Clutha, Dunedin and Waitaki Facilitators.

Megan Greer is joining the Dunedin Enviroschools Facilitator team based at Dunedin City Council and working closely with Jennie Upton and the wider Dunedin Enviroschools. Megan has been an Enviroschools key kaiako for her school before, and is passionate about bringing sustainability into the everyday life of schools. Coming direct from the classroom, Megan is excited to use her knowledge and skills from teaching into the Enviroschools kaupapa.

A very warm welcome to both Lexie and Megan from the wider Enviroschools whānau. We hope that you'll get the chance to meet them both kanohi ki te kanohi very soon!



Lexie Davidson, new Regional Coordinator for Central Otago and Queenstown Lakes stands in front of Alexandra, where she is based.



Megan Greer, new Dunedin Enviroschools Facilitator makes the most of a beautiful sunny autumn day in Ōtepoti.

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TOIMATA
FOUNDATION

KIA ORA KOUTOU

Kā mihi mahana ki a koutou

The first term of 2025 has been very busy with 5 hui to start off the year! These hui are a fantastic way for leaders and teachers at Enviroschools to get professional development and skills that they can share with their peers. The aim of all our hui is to encourage connection - with the whenua, with each other and the community as well as everything in between!

Our upcoming hui in term 2 are the popular Key Kaiako Teacher Hui. This year our Central Otago, Clutha, Dunedin and Queenstown Lakes teams are focusing on the refreshed holistic reflection process, giving kaiako the skills and knowledge to encourage their school to reflect. This is an exciting opportunity for all schools, regardless of whether you have reflected before, so be sure to register to save your space! We look forward to talking with you all about this exciting change at Enviroschools!

“Whāia te mātauranga hei oranga mō koutou. Seek after learning for the sake of your wellbeing.”

Leisa de Klerk
Enviroschools
Regional
Coordinator
Lead



Upcoming dates for Ōtākou Enviroschools

CENTRAL OTAGO/QUEENSTOWN LAKES

23rd May - Central Otago/Queenstown Lakes Teacher Hui
30th October - Queenstown Primary Hui Year 4-6

CLUTHA

3rd June - Clutha Teacher Hui
18th November - Clutha Primary Hui Year 7-10

DUNEDIN

12th June - Dunedin Teacher Hui
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



Ākonga at the Dunedin Secondary Hui pause and reflect together after writing their promise to the future in the sand.

Queenstown Ākonga present to Otago Regional Council

Queenstown Primary School ākonga had the opportunity to present to Otago Regional Council councillors at a council meeting in Queenstown on the 19th of March. The presentation gave the ākonga a chance to share with councillors their favourite enviro projects at their school and how much they value Enviroschools in their school.

Penny enjoys gardening and cooking, Sawyer enjoys recycling with paper, and Head Girl Jasmin is proud of the sustainable lunches at the school that are waste free and planting over 750 trees – they're hoping to get to 1,200 this year! Penny, Sawyer and Jasmin also thanked the Council for their support of the Enviroschools programme. Ka pai to the students for their mahi and commitment for a more sustainable Otago!



QPS ākonga (from left) Jasmin, Sawyer, Queenstown Mayor Glynn, Penny and Key Kaiako Susan after their presentation.

How to start thinking about the Refreshed Holistic Reflection process for your school



Why we have changed

The Enviroschools Holistic Reflection Process shifted away from an awards-based language around 16 years ago, but retained the staged-based approach with the three levels labelled Bronze, Silver and Green-Gold. Reflection is meant to be a celebratory formative evaluation process and is an integral part of the Action Learning Cycle, helping us to make sense of our experiences, deepen our learning and gain direction for the journey ahead.

The original intention of the Holistic Reflection was to create a meaningful, holistic, celebratory and honest reflection at a moment in time. A snapshot of your school. With the staged-based approach, reflection became an endpoint, rather than a space to launch into the next round of observing, learning, exploring, deciding and acting.

What has changed

The stage-based approach and the Bronze, Silver and Green-Gold labels is no longer part of reflection.

The reflection process is much more simple and follows the Enviroschools Action Learning Cycle, specifically Reflect on Change.

What has stayed the same

There continues to be support from the facilitators in co-constructing an authentic and locally specific holistic reflection for schools.

Reflection is an energising, inspiring and satisfying way that an Enviroschool can acknowledge people and practices, affirm community connections and ultimately deepen the sustainability journey.

Celebration is still a critical part of the process! There will continue to be opportunities for councils, funders and partners to join in on the celebration of a reflection.

How to start thinking about Holistic Reflection for your school

In Ōtākou, we have created our own resources to support you with co-constructing holistic reflection with the facilitator. This includes our Ki Uta Ki Tai | Mountains to the Sea resource to jumpstart the ideas for reflection for your school. This is just a template for how Ōtākou is connected wherever you are, and draws on the parts of Otago that we can all relate to. We will be providing access to this as we develop our resources across the region.

The key approach for holistic reflection will be for kaiako, tamariki and community to reflect on their own journey focusing on the Enviroschools Guiding Principles, your goals and next steps. Reflection will be an important step for bringing people together, celebrating what has been done in the school, and starting the next steps.

We encourage schools creativity. Some schools may choose to plant a tree on their grounds as a representation of that snapshot of time in their sustainability journey. Some schools may create a digital forest. Some may represent their journey with a mural of an awa showing that the process is continuous. Certificates can still be given and we have incorporated the Ōtākou Ki Uta Ki Tai design into the certificates so it is as local as possible.

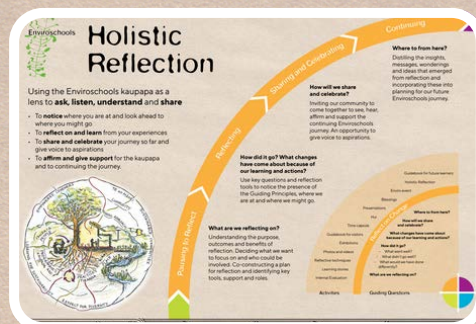
We really look forward to seeing schools grow under this new process!



Ki uta ki tai | The Mountains to the Sea is a key part to the Ōtākou Holistic Reflection process as it works as a metaphor for the journey schools undertake while reflecting.



Celebration is still key, but so is the planning and succession. If done with the next ākonga to step into leadership roles in mind, Holistic Reflection can help schools with keeping the momentum running and will support projects that become a part of the everyday within the school.



New resources and support around the new reflection process are available to key kaiako to communicate the new process to key stakeholders in their school, as well as start planning their reflection.

Ōtepoti Secondary Hui



Our Dunedin Senior Secondary Hui on the 7th of March was an absolute blast, despite the cold and rainy day!

Enviro Leaders from 6 secondary schools in Ōtepoti got the chance to connect and collaborate with each other for the environment in our wider community. From learning the history of St Kilda and St Clair beach to following in the footsteps of a local sea lion and having fun under the sea with virtual reality, the day was packed full of opportunities to challenge ākonga to take the next steps in their schools.

A big thank you to Jim Fyfe from Department of Conservation, Paul Pope from Sinclair Wetlands, and Hannah Drury from the Marine Studies Centre for their presentations and support throughout the hui. A massive thank you to Qa-t-a Amun from Heart Foundation and Tess Mackay for their logistical support on the day too.



Jim Fyfe from the Department of Conservation leads ākonga on a journey of one of Dunedin's local seal lion mums from ocean, over roads and parks, back to the ocean.

The Big Dig at St Joseph's School, Oamaru

Ākonga of all ages at St Joseph's School in Oamaru have buried their rubbish in a hole at their school to learn about what decomposes and what doesn't.

The whole school project aims to teach ākonga about waste management, the differing kinds of environmental impact of rubbish, and the importance of being mindful about what we use and throw away.



Ākonga start the dig to bury their rubbish which they will uncover in Term 4 to see what happened.

Clutha Primary Hui



Scrumptious apple pie and apple juice was on the menu for Clutha's Primary Harvest Hui at the end of March! The day, organised by Clutha Facilitator, Scott Martin, made the most of the apple season.

Ākonga from six schools in the Clutha District came together at Waitahuna School for a fun filled day of apple harvesting, plant propagation, beekeeping and connection to the atua through our whenua. Starting the day with a beautiful powhiri from Waitahuna School, ākonga got the opportunity to learn, climb, peel and press apples, take a breath and get close to bees.

This hui was a part of our Living Landscapes theme area with a particular focus on habitat zones, the whenua and knowing the local ecosystem. Ākonga showcased all our guiding principles but in particular, Sustainable Communities where we act in ways that nurture all aspects of nature, including people, now and in the future. By working together and supporting each other we create safe, healthy, equitable and thriving communities.



Beekeeping was a big hit with ākonga learning the skills and finding out how to make honey.



Ākonga celebrate their efforts making apple juice in an apple press after harvesting, peeling and cutting apples.



Schools in action

Schools are full steam ahead with many projects and actions happening every day. Check out these amazing photos we've been sent from schools!



Ākonga at Clinton School check out stream health and do some riparian planting to support the future health of their stream.



The Enviro Group at Wakatipu High School has been exploring how recycling is managed at school and recently installed additional recycling bins with the help of their Council.



High school students from two of our Enviroschools in Waitaki, Waitaki Girls' High School and Waitaki Boys' High School, joined the conversation with Ethically Kate as they discussed the successes and challenges of having a public sustainable lifestyle and how important it was to follow your own values and to gather like-minded individuals to work on projects collectively.

Central Otago / Queenstown Lakes Secondary Hui

Secondary ākonga from Central Otago and Queenstown Lakes secondary schools got the opportunity to learn new skills to motivate and inspire their peers for environmental action in March!

The new Enviro Leaders at Cromwell College, Dunstan High School and Wakatipu High School came together in Cromwell to learn from local experts and give them ideas about what actions they are wanting to achieve this year, as well as build sustainable projects that will outlast them for many years. Ākonga learnt more about Adopt-a-Drain, Repair Cafes, Worm Farms and social media marketing as well as the history of Lake Dunstan, once a gorge before the Clyde Dam was built.

Leadership skills, planning, history and role playing were also part of the day thanks to the great facilitator team of Damian (Wānaka), Jennie (Dunedin), Lucy (Central Otago) and Nicky (Queenstown). A huge thank you to Lake Dunstan Boating Club for the wonderful venue, Simon Williams for the incredible photos, and to the teachers who brought the ākonga for the day!

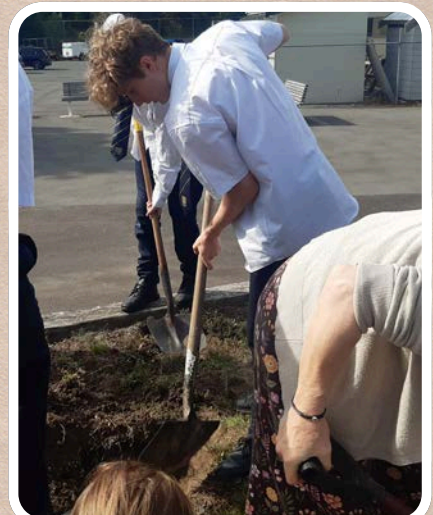


Being blindfolded and reliant on others for information showed ākonga the value of leadership as a part of the important skills learnt at the Secondary Hui in Cromwell.

Getting Ready for Winter Planting

During their Envirogroup, Bayfield High School ākonga got busy repurposing cups, decorating them with new designs and colour, ready for their next life. These will then have microgreens planted in them - microgreens are fast becoming an essential part of urban and home gardening, as well as a staple for many restaurants because they're so easy to grow.

Ākonga then dug out their garden bed in preparation for planting. They were helped by the wonderful Task Force Green who supplied the tools for digging and helped dig out a rather large fennel plant that had taken root.



Digging in for the school garden was hard work, but now the space is ready for some winter crops!

Enviroschools Ōtākou



Term 2 kanohi ki te kanohi for the Ōtākou tīma

Whakawhanaungatanga, connection and planning was the order of the day for our Ōtākou Enviroschools Facilitators Hui at the end of April, as we head into the next round of Hui in the region - these ones aimed at Teachers and the refreshed Holistic Reflection process.

The Hui was also an opportunity to welcome our two new team members, Lexie and Megan - Megan on day 2 of her role! - as we deep dived into all our Enviroschools kaupapa. Just missing Jolene Barclay, our fabulous ECE Facilitator in Clutha, it was a positive space to take our next steps forward as a complete team!

A big thank you to Dunedin Community House for the amazing space we used, and to Precinct foods for the wonderful catering. Kā mihi nui!



An almost complete team photo! The colourful Ōtākou tīma made the most of a day of connection, planning and conversation while together in Ōtepoti Dunedin.

Enviroschools Ōtākou Tīma



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