



Evaluation of the Waikato Enviroschools Programme

June 2026



Report Information

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Tuku mihi ki a koutou katoa.

The evaluation team was comprised of the following people:

- Kate McKegg and Alicia Crocket

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Executive Summary

1. The Enviroschools Programme, “an environmental action-based programme where young people are empowered to design and lead sustainability projects in their schools, neighbourhoods and country”, has been operating in Waikato schools for more than twenty years. Funding from regional and district councils and local territorial authorities collectively supports a team of eight facilitators and a regional coordinator, hosted by the Waikato Regional Council, to support 172 Enviroschools across the Waikato.
2. The Waikato Regional Council, as part of its regular evaluation schedule, commissioned The Knowledge Institute to evaluate the last three years of programme delivery, focusing on how well the programme is delivered, how well outcomes are realised, and how well it provides additional value to the Council. These areas were explored to understand how future delivery could be further enriched.
3. The evaluation drew on the Waikato Enviroschools’ existing data collection (annual survey, monthly stories of action), alongside targeted new data collection (interviews and workshops) to answer the key evaluation questions. Key findings were synthesised across data sources, and evaluative assessments were made against the Critical Success Factors and Assessment Elements co-developed by Waikato Regional Council and Toimata Foundation.

Enviroschools’ delivery is highly effective

4. The evaluation found that Enviroschools’ delivery in the Waikato is highly effective. Across the ten assessment criteria for delivery, nine were rated as highly effective, meaning that all factors and criteria for success are evident and most are performing highly. The strongest area of performance is the facilitators’ ability to tailor the programme to meet the needs of students, teachers and schools. An area of growth over the past three years has been the adoption of a targeted approach to implementation in secondary schools, with several adaptations to meet the needs of the secondary school curriculum. A minor area for improvement identified was how the facilitators navigated the Enviroschools whole-school approach in schools where barriers to this approach exist.

Enviroschools outcomes are being well realised

5. Key outcomes of the Enviroschools Programme are being well realised in the Waikato, with six of eight assessment elements being rated as highly effective. Students feeling empowered to effect environmental action was the strongest outcome area, with clear evidence across all data sources. In addition, Enviroschools was highly effective at contributing to holistic sustainability actions and learning for sustainability in the curriculum. Finally, evaluation findings indicated that schools and councils had positive perceptions of the programme and its impact. A potential area for improvement is gathering whānau and community voices to better understand their perceptions.

Enviroschools is creating additional value

6. Over the past three years, the Enviroschools team has contributed to achieving other council outcomes by collaboratively developing effective environmental education resources with other council directorates within Waikato Regional Council, as well as with other district councils. The Enviroschools team are seen as the experts within Council for developing effective teaching resources for schools. In addition, the Waikato Enviroschools network creates opportunities to extend the resource’s reach and council messages to hundreds of schools across the Waikato.
7. To further enhance Enviroschools, continuing to extend its reach by tailoring the programme to specific contexts (e.g., intermediate schools and Rumaki Reo) and collaborating with other council directorates is beneficial. Further, ensuring facilitators have a deep and nuanced understanding of

resources, and are supported to navigate decisions about balancing the needs of schools that can't commit to deep holistic action with those that do.

The Enviroschools Programme is a high-performing, well-established programme that successfully maintains a high standard of delivery and strong realisation of outcomes whilst exploring adaptations to add further value to the programme and to the councils that fund it.

Introduction

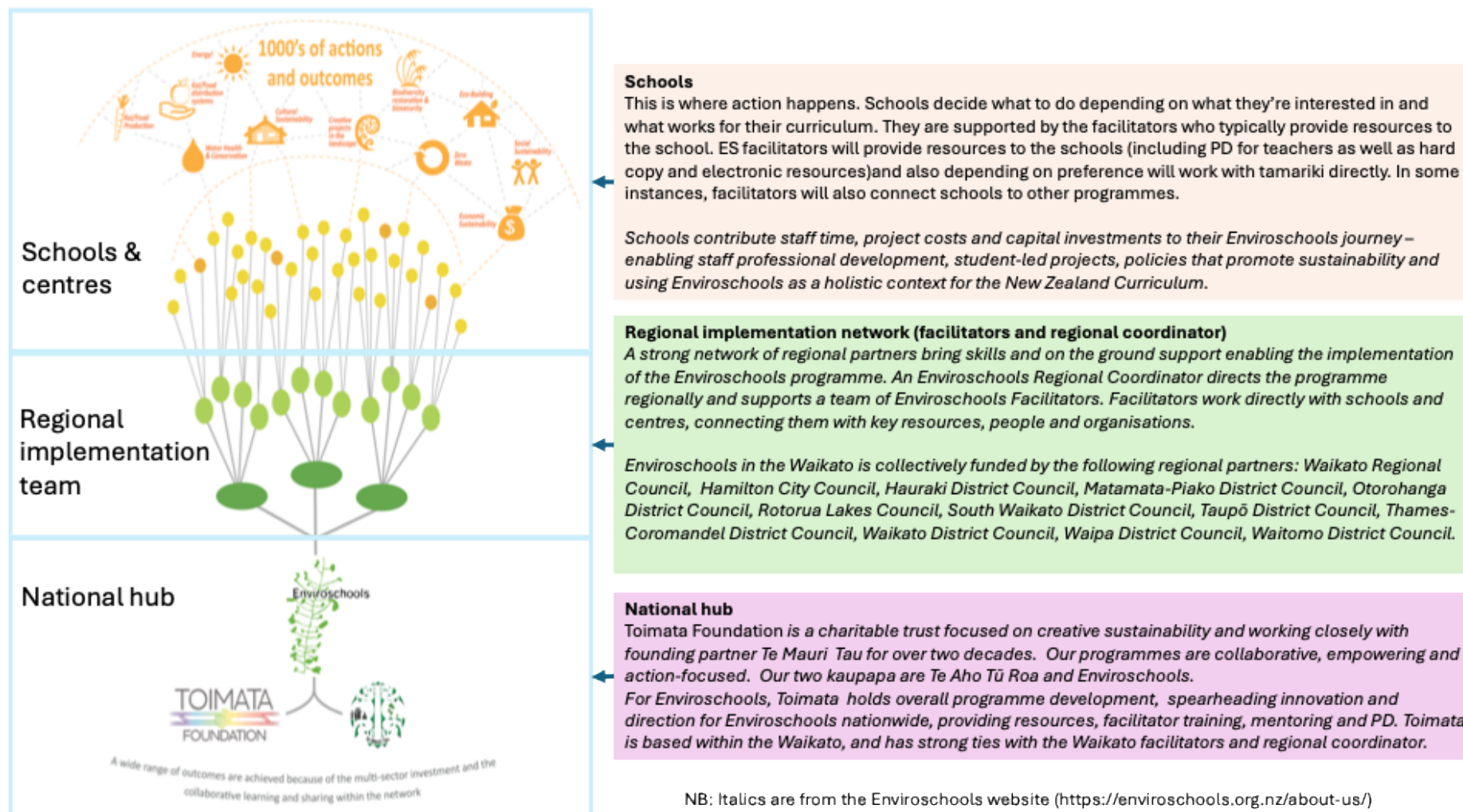
8. EnviroSchools is “an environmental action-based programme where young people are empowered to design and lead sustainability projects in their schools, neighbourhoods and country”.¹ It is a nationwide programme supported by Toimata Foundation, founding partner Te Mauri Tau, and a large network of regional partners, including councils and territorial authorities.
9. The EnviroSchools programme uses a networked delivery model, whereby a national hub supports regional teams in implementing the programme in ways that best meet regional needs. The structure of the programme is shared on the next page in Figure 1. The Waikato EnviroSchools programme has been active for more than 20 years, with 172 schools currently active. The programme is collectively funded by (Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton City Council, Hauraki District Council, Matamata-Piako District Council, Otorohanga District Council, Rotorua Lakes Council, South Waikato District Council, Taupō District Council, Thames-Coromandel District Council, Waikato District Council, Waipa District Council, Waitomo District Council). The collective nature of the funding provides economies of scale for the Waikato, reducing duplication and increasing the potential for collective impact across the region.
10. Waikato Regional Council provides 1.5 FTE regional leadership with a senior education advisor to coordinate the programme (0.8FTE) and contributions from the education team. This is alongside an annual grant fund and administrative support. In addition, there are an additional eight facilitators (4 FTE) to work with schools (primary and secondary) to deliver the programme. EnviroSchools is also delivered in Early Childhood Centres in the Waikato. But delivery in the early childhood education sector is out of scope for this evaluation because the facilitation resource is not provided by the Council.
11. Waikato Regional Council commissioned The Knowledge Institute to evaluate the Waikato EnviroSchools Programme between November 2025 and June 2026. The purpose of the evaluation is to inform Waikato Regional Council about the quality and effectiveness of current EnviroSchools delivery and to contribute to the Council’s decision-making on the programme’s future focus.
12. To achieve this purpose, four Key Evaluation Questions were developed. These questions are:
 - a. How well is the Waikato programme being delivered?
 - b. How well are the key outcomes being realised in the Waikato?
 - c. How well does EnviroSchools provide additional value, leverage and fertile soil for other Council outcomes?
 - d. What are the key learnings / How might we use the research insights to enrich the Waikato programme going forward?

Evaluation approach

13. The evaluation approach drew on the Waikato EnviroSchools’ existing data collection to reflect on the programme alongside some new targeted data collection to answer the key evaluation questions.

¹ Description taken from the EnviroSchools website (<https://enviroschools.org.nz/>).

Figure 1: Structure of the Enviroschools Programme



Evaluation framework, methods and judgements

14. The evaluation used a participatory approach and drew on the evaluation-specific methodology that underpins the Waikato Regional Council's internal evaluation methodology.
15. The evaluation combined new data collected from Enviroschools teacher interviews (3), Council staff interviews (8) and facilitator workshops (2) with existing survey data and monthly stories from Enviroschools Waikato. The methods and approach were agreed upon in a collaborative scoping phase between the lead evaluator and the Waikato Enviroschools Regional Coordinator.

Evaluation Framework

16. The evaluation criteria were based on the Critical Success Factors and Assessment Elements co-developed by Waikato Regional Council and Toimata Foundation.
17. The rating scale used to make evaluative judgements with the data about 'How well' something is happening is drawn from the Waikato Regional Council evaluation building blocks guide and the 'factors of success' for regions developed by the Toimata Foundation².

Rating	Descriptor
Highly effective	All factors and criteria for success are evident and most are performing highly
Consolidating effectiveness	Most factors and criteria for success are evident and the majority are performing well
Developing effectiveness	Some factors and criteria for success are evident with good performance in some areas, and other areas still developing
Emerging effectiveness	Establishing factors and criteria for success, with lots of support still needed.

18. The rating scale above has been adapted from the one usually used by the Waikato Regional Council because the nature of Enviroschools means achieving exemplary performance with no weaknesses is too high a bar to reach. The Enviroschools programme's scope is intentionally broad and open to interpretation by the school and students, and allows programme delivery to be influenced by societal trends. As such, Enviroschools adapts over time and responds to external factors and trends that influence what happens and the degree of success at each school. This ongoing adaptation is essential for the programme to remain relevant and meaningful to context - a key to the long-term success of Enviroschools.
19. Enviroschools delivery is also influenced by the level of support at each school. Where there is limited leadership support for the programme, there is typically less action. Changes in the level of support are often linked to key people within a school moving on or to other conflicting pressures, meaning that environmental sustainability isn't seen as critical at that time. These cycles of higher and lower action are common in many programmes such as Enviroschools.

² 'Evaluation Building Blocks, Hātepe Arotakenga He Tātakinga, Waikato Regional Council, Policy Series 2015/06, 2015.'. See appendix for Toimata Foundation's factors of success

Data collection methods

20. There were five sources of data collection for this evaluation. These are detailed in the table below. New targeted data collection specific to this evaluation consisted of interviews and workshops. In addition, we drew on four years of data from the Waikato Enviroschool's existing data collection.

Table 1: Data collection methods

Data source	Participants
Teacher interviews	3 online interviews 1 intermediate, 1 primary, 1 secondary
Council interviews	8 interviews (mix of online and in person) 2 senior leadership 6 council employees who have worked on projects with the Enviroschools team
Monthly stories (reported and published online)	276 stories from 2022 – 2025 inclusive
Facilitator workshops	Two workshops covering three topics - Reflecting on annual data and engagement with schools - Value proposition of Enviroschools - Innovation in Enviroschools
Annual survey of schools (2023-2026)	173 respondents from 2022 – 2025 inclusive

21. Data from all five data sources were synthesised to inform findings for the four key evaluation questions and to make evaluative judgements against the assessment elements.

Findings

22. This section shares the findings of the evaluation. It draws together information from the different data sources to provide evaluative judgements that answer the key evaluation questions. First, this section identifies how well the Waikato Enviroschools programme is being delivered. Second, it discusses how well the key outcomes are being realised in the Waikato. Then, it explores how well Enviroschools is supporting other council outcomes before finally identifying key learning from this evaluation that could inform future programme development.

KEQ1: How well is the Waikato Programme is being delivered?

23. Overall, the Waikato Enviroschools programme is performing at a very high level, with nine of ten delivery assessment elements rated as 'Highly effective'. Evident strengths are the way facilitators tailor the programme to meet the needs of the students, teachers and schools. An area of tension noted in the evaluation was navigating the whole school approach of Enviroschools in schools where barriers to this approach existed.

Table 2: Evaluative ratings for assessment elements for KEQ 1

Assessment element	Evaluative rating
Teachers felt inspired by facilitators	Highly effective
Teachers were connected to relevant resources and opportunities	Highly effective
Teachers felt the approach taken by facilitators was appropriately tailored to their schools needs	Highly effective
A whole school approach is evident	Consolidating effectiveness
Enviroschools guiding principles are evident in the delivery model	Highly evident
Facilitators were able to tailor to school need	Highly effective
Facilitators felt they had the tools to be successful	Highly effective
Teachers are enabled to empower students and teachers to engage in Enviroschools	Highly effective
Reflective practice is an integral part of the programme (school, facilitator, operational)	Highly effective
Innovative practice is evident in the operational model	Highly effective

Teachers are inspired by facilitators and connected to relevant resources and opportunities tailored to their needs and those of their school.

24. Enviroschools facilitators are highly effective at inspiring teachers. Being inspired by facilitators is a strong, common theme across all interviews conducted for this evaluation. Qualitative feedback in the annual survey also highlighted teachers' appreciation for facilitators and their role as a source of inspiration. Participants reported being inspired by the facilitators because of their:
- Content knowledge (e.g., environmental science, how to influence environmental action and sustainable school-wide change)
 - Sector knowledge (school systems, curriculum and educational pedagogy)

- Passion and willingness to help

25. Teachers spoke about how approachable the facilitators are and about the strength of their relationship with them. They highlighted how much they value the work with facilitators to prioritise action, deepen learning and support collaboration. Teachers and facilitators noted that primary, intermediate and secondary schools have different characteristics that influence how EnviroSchools is delivered. Evaluation findings highlighted the way the facilitators tailor their support to the specific contexts of each school system. For example:

- The facilitator asks what the lead teacher is working on and then provides relevant support.
- At a school with new staff, the facilitator ran a professional development session to introduce the EnviroSchools programme and explain how it was implemented at the school.
- A school just starting its journey has worked with students to develop a vision for EnviroSchools at the school, and the facilitator is helping that vision be realised.

[Name of facilitator] asks “how can we support the work you’re doing in school” and then I’ll just throw her the things that we’re doing and she says “Yep, we can support that particular thing, and we can get you some resources”.

School interviewee

26. Facilitators agreed they had strong relationships with the teachers and worked hard to tailor to the school’s and teachers’ needs. They are highly sensitive to changes within schools and have actively adapted their approaches and resources to meet schools’ evolving needs. For example, providing Padlets with digital resources and explicitly linking activities to the new curriculum.

27. In addition, facilitators work hard to help teachers prioritise action and find resources that suit the school’s needs. Their ability to tailor is grounded in the relationships facilitators have with the schools.

“It’s about the relationship between facilitators, schools and lead teachers. The deeper you get, the more you understand and can tailor”.

Facilitator workshop

28. Facilitators are highly adaptive and have been responsive to the recent changes at schools. They are highly effective at connecting teachers to relevant environmental education resources and opportunities to extend reach, both within the Waikato EnviroSchools network and the national EnviroSchools network. All schools we spoke with gave examples of how EnviroSchools facilitators provided relevant support and opportunities that were directly linked to what they wanted to focus on for their EnviroSchools programme. Teachers noted the value of the resources offered by facilitators and the connections the facilitators have helped them make with local groups and events. They highlighted the value of the cluster meetings but also acknowledged that they were hard for them to attend regularly due to competing demands.

29. More recently, there has been recognition that there are further opportunities to share the experience and environmental education resources with students in Māori medium. Kura Waitii facilitators (Pou Taiao) have been working closely with EnviroSchools facilitators to understand how environmental education resources are delivered and how they can be meaningfully adapted for Rumkai Reo. For example, key EnviroSchools education such as freshwater biosecurity have been translated and added to the House of Science box. Kaiako can then deliver the resource themselves. The next step is to build collaboration and utilise the EnviroSchools network to access rumaki reo and connect facilitators with Pou Taiao to enhance Mātauranga Māori knowledge to enhance the learning experiences for ākonga and deepen the knowledge of all facilitators.

30. It is important to locate these findings within the context of a resource-constrained programme. While the evaluation rated these assessment elements as highly effective, their effectiveness

depends on facilitators' ability to engage with teachers and schools. Monthly survey data show that two-thirds (66%) of lead teachers have engaged with their facilitator to a moderate or high degree in the previous year. Further analysis of these figures and a workshop with facilitators identified a trend of intensive facilitator support in the early stages as the programme starts, and again when a school is looking to shift more intentionally into whole-school engagement. But between these two points, the facilitator often steps back to allow the school to consolidate their action and learning before moving on to the next step. This is an intentional approach to encourage schools to lead their own journey and actions that connect to their vision. So, not interacting with a facilitator does not necessarily mean that schools are not engaging in action.

Empowering students to engage in Enviroschools is a key approach of lead teachers, which is enabled through facilitator support

31. Enviroschools facilitators are highly effective at enabling teachers to empower students to engage in the programme. This rating reflects the facilitators' skill in working with different teachers across different contexts to support engagement and action.
32. Empowered students and leadership are strong themes throughout the monthly stories. As are other personal development impacts such as real-world learning and critical thinking; behaviour change and skill acquisition; new skills and learning; and teachers and wider school staff development.
33. Interviews highlighted the way facilitators support teachers to deliver classroom resources, work with the Envirogroup to decide on action and help teachers develop the skills to support students to engage in the action learning cycle.

Students benefit from a sense of self-efficacy; they can actually think of something, plan and do, consult and see, in a real-world project. Students love that, and they can't wait to move their projects forward and be a part of that... It is a unique experience to do action learning, and the Enviroschools facilitator has helped us to create those opportunities

School interviewee

Enviroschools is being delivered in a range of ways that support a whole-of-school approach

34. There is variability in the extent to which Enviroschools is being delivered using a whole-of-school approach. As such, the rating for this assessment element was 'Consolidating effectiveness'. Almost half of the respondents to the annual survey reported that their school was at a stage in the Enviroschools Journey that incorporated whole-school engagement.
35. Recently, the Waikato Enviroschools team have developed a deeper understanding of what the whole-of-school approach means in practice. This is enabling facilitators to better explain this concept to teachers. The Enviroschools whole-of-school approach integrates sustainability into the life of the whole school. At the heart of the approach is the action learning cycle, encouraging a process of exploration, decision-making, design, action and reflection. The approach covers four key areas:
 - Place – Wāhi
 - Practices – Tikanga
 - Programmes – Kaupapa Ako
 - People and Participation – Tangata.
36. A whole-school approach was most evident in primary schools, but both intermediate and secondary school interviewees shared examples of integrating Enviroschools into classroom learning and

school-wide practices (e.g., waste management) that suited their needs. In addition, the monthly stories highlighted the links between Enviroschools and the curriculum. This was corroborated by the annual survey, where 63% of schools reported that environmental sustainability was integrated into the curriculum.

Enviroschools is no longer seen as just something that I do, because every student and every teacher in the school has had an interaction with facilitators and the resources and is actually doing the learning"

School interviewee

37. The Enviroschools team highlighted the tension they navigate between going broad and engaging with many schools to support one-off or lighter-touch actions, and going deep and working intensively with a smaller number of schools to build momentum for whole-school practice. This tension is a function of limited resources and the need to make intentional decisions about where to allocate them. The Enviroschools team are aware of this tension and constantly reflects on how they balance the needs of schools who want to go deep while also supporting schools who wish to be engaged to a lesser extent.

Enviroschools' guiding principles are well understood by teachers and facilitators and underpin delivery.

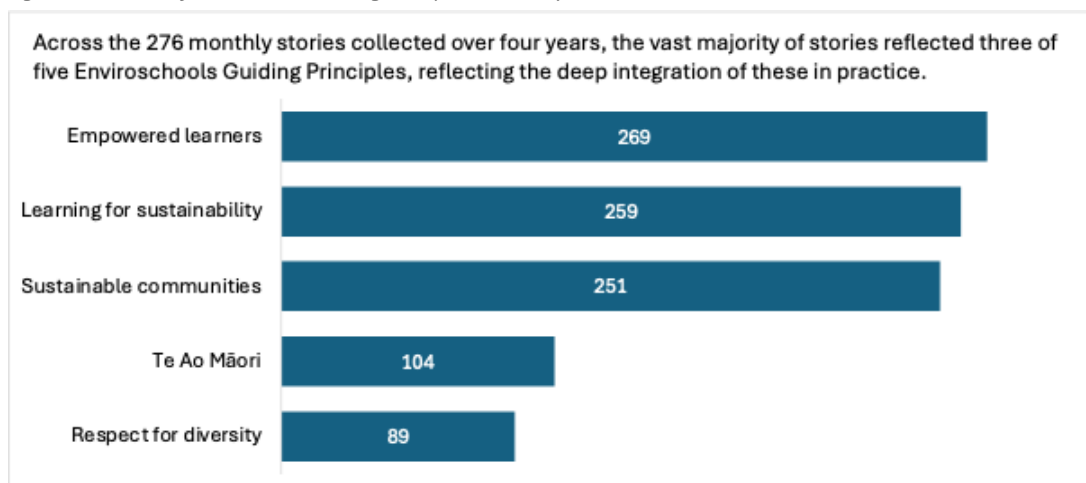
38. Enviroschools' guiding principles provide a framework to enable holistic sustainability actions. The guiding principles are:
- Empowered Learners
 - Learning for sustainability
 - Honouring Te Ao Māori
 - Respect for diversity
 - Sustainable communities
39. Many of these guiding principles are already reflected in other assessment elements covered in this report, but given the primacy of their role in Enviroschools, it is valuable to identify explicitly where they are evident in the delivery.
40. Evaluation findings indicate that the guiding principles are well understood by facilitators, teachers and schools. One school mentioned the value of the 'Honouring Te Ao Māori' principle for their work to foster connection and networks with local hapū and iwi. Similarly, the sustainability actions described by the schools are firmly focused on empowering learners, learning about and for sustainability action, supporting sustainable communities and respect for diversity. For example, schools gave examples of actions that supported neurodiverse learners and celebrated local culture.

The Māori perspectives and those five guiding principles gives such a natural context to bring that in to education. When we first came here it was tricky in our community to celebrate te ao Māori, and there have been a few barriers have broken down and I feel like this gives us that real context to acknowledge, celebrate and learn from practices in the past.

School interviewee

41. The monthly stories also highlight the presence of guiding principles in the last three years of delivery, with many stories linked to each (see Figure below). In addition, the analysis of the stories' content demonstrated clear themes of empowered learners, learning for sustainability, sustainable communities, and honouring te ao Māori.

Figure 2: Presence of Enviroschools Guiding Principles in monthly stories.



Reflective practice is strongly evident at all levels of the programme

42. Enviroschools has a strong ethos of reflective practice, which was most evident in how action learning cycles are used in the school setting. Each interviewee provided examples of how students benefited from the action learning cycle – teaching them about collaboration, trial and error and cumulative solutions that build over time with multiple actions.

Because of that action learning cycle, where they go through those four stages, they're actively involved in that inquiry process. So they're looking at alternatives; they're doing some research, and everything is so consultative; it's not like you're box-ticking; it's genuinely collaborative. It normalises that you're not going to find the answers. You'll research something, and you'll try something and it might be a complete flop, but that's OK because you'll take something out of it and go again.

School interviewee

43. Evaluation evidence also highlighted the strong reflective practice demonstrated by facilitators in all aspects of their work. In the evaluation workshops, the facilitators engaged deeply with the annual survey findings, reflecting on what the results suggested about their delivery and how they might use the information to adapt their practice. Further, Council interviewees who worked on projects with the facilitators highlighted the facilitators' ability to go through their own action learning cycle when developing resources and facilitation tools for delivery in schools. Interviewees spoke of trialling and refining the resources to ensure the key messages were conveyed authentically and were appropriate for the student age and delivery model.
44. Significant effort is being undertaken by Enviroschools and Kura Waitii to reflect on the translation of English-medium environmental education resources into Te Reo. Careful attention is being paid to localising the Te Reo, and pūrākau are also being used to ground the resources in Te Ao Māori and Mātauranga Māori.

Innovative practice and collaboration is supporting success and extending the reach of Enviroschools.

45. Innovative practice within Enviroschools is strongly evident. It is enabled by reflection and the passion of the Enviroschools team to empower sustainable actions across the region. In the three years since the last evaluation, the team has made substantial innovations that have extended Enviroschools' reach and increased engagement in the programme.
46. Alongside enhancing existing activities (e.g., the Climate Summit shifting to the EnviroLeaders Summit and the ongoing development of online/digital engagement), this evaluation identifies three main areas of innovation that have supported the effective delivery of Enviroschools in the region.
 - Working collaboratively within and across local Councils to develop new and impactful resources
 - Developing action and resources to suit different audiences e.g., secondary school settings, bush school
 - Adapting resources to align with recent changes in the curriculum to ensure they are easy for teachers to implement.
47. Firstly, the team has been working on a series of collaborations with different directorates of the Waikato Regional Council and with other Territorial Authorities to create and extend sustainability messages and resources. These projects are discussed in more detail later in KEQ 3, but in short, this work has produced several new and engaging school resources across a range of topics that are being widely delivered to Enviroschools in all sectors, and at all stages of the journey.
48. In addition, there is innovation within Council through the collaboration between Enviroschools and Kura Waitii, including the translation of resources into Te Reo for use in Māori-medium and Rumaki Reo. There is emerging potential in this innovative collaboration for further development of resources to reach more Rumaki Reo, Kura, and bilingual units
49. Secondly, the Enviroschools team has intentionally focused on extending the programme's reach into new areas, for example, secondary schools, bush schools and Rumaki Reo. Previously, in secondary schools, the siloed nature of these limited the depth to which Enviroschools could be delivered. More recently, with new expertise in the team, a suite of resources and engagement tools has been developed that aligns with the needs of the secondary sector. For example, specific activities that explicitly align with subjects and credits, as well as a recent initiative to connect food technology teachers and students across Hamilton to encourage waste-free food tech practices. Similarly, the team has been developing a bush schools kit that uses nature connection ideas to increase engagement with these schools. The programme's reach into Rumaki Reo and also bilingual units is now being considered, with the possibility of using a Reo Māori-speaking facilitator to deliver environmental education resources. A WRC freshwater and marine biosecurity project is underway that will explore collaboration opportunities between Kura Waitii and Enviroschools networks. This includes the sharing of knowledge, resources and skills to reach ākonga in bilingual units. A WRC freshwater and marine biosecurity project is underway that will explore collaboration opportunities between Kura Waitii and Enviroschools networks. This includes the sharing of knowledge, resources and skills to reach ākonga in bilingual units.
50. Finally, the team has been working closely internally and with the national Enviroschools team to ensure that resources and practice align with the needs of the new primary school curriculum. The new curriculum has a narrower, more prescriptive approach that does not readily align with the Enviroschools kaupapa. In addition, due to significant changes in the curriculum, primary teachers have less time to develop units outside the core subjects. To ensure that sustainability education can continue, the team has been expanding and modifying Enviroschools resources and practices in two ways. Firstly, to make them easier for teachers to pick up and deliver without additional planning, and to ensure they are explicitly linked to the new curriculum requirements and objectives.

KEQ 2: How well are key outcomes being realised?

51. Overall, the key outcomes desired by the Waikato Enviroschools are being well realised, with six of eight assessment elements being rated as highly effective. An area of strength was students feeling empowered to effect environmental action, with strong evidence of this across all data sources. A potential area for improvement is the gathering of whānau and community voice to better understand perceptions about the programme.

Table 3: Evaluative ratings for assessment elements for KEQ 2

Assessment element	Evaluative rating
Students felt empowered to effect environmental action	Highly effective
Success is celebrated and shared to inspire the network	Highly effective
Enviroschools supports learning for sustainability in the curriculum and decision making	Highly effective
Holistic sustainability actions are evident in Enviroschools	Highly effective
Community views Enviroschools as making a positive difference to schools	Consolidating effectiveness (because of limited community voice in the evaluation)
Council views Enviroschools as making a positive difference to their council	Highly effective
Community views Enviroschools as making a positive difference to their community	Consolidating effectiveness (because of limited community voice in the evaluation)
Individuals view Enviroschools as making a positive difference to them personally	Highly effective

Students are empowered to take part in environmental action

52. Collectively, all evaluation data sources highlighted that students and schools are highly engaged in environmental action with strong evidence of student empowerment at all levels of schooling. The monthly stories and interviews highlighted the range of environmental action that is occurring. The most common action was environmental restoration, with impacts recognised in the following areas in particular: waste reduction and resource reuse; habitat restoration and biodiversity; and waterway health awareness and action.
53. Evaluation findings highlighted the depth of student empowerment to effect this action. This appears to be related to how Enviroschools is being delivered, engaging students in decision-making about what action to take and how to implement it. Interviews demonstrated that empowerment and leadership increased with age. Examples highlighted the responsibility that some primary students are taking to contribute to planning and decision-making, with this leadership being fully realised at secondary school, where students are taking responsibility for the development and delivery of an initiative with the support of the lead teacher and facilitator.

They learn the process of making decisions. They're weighing up different options and are deeply involved in setting criteria; they get a vote and can back it up. It's not just like we want a ... can we have it? They're aware of the costings, and they've become so much more aware of the big picture. They develop leadership skills; they learn to jump in and say "Have you thought of...". They're not shy about putting forward their ideas, and their communication skills develop, too; for example, they have to present their ideas to the Board.

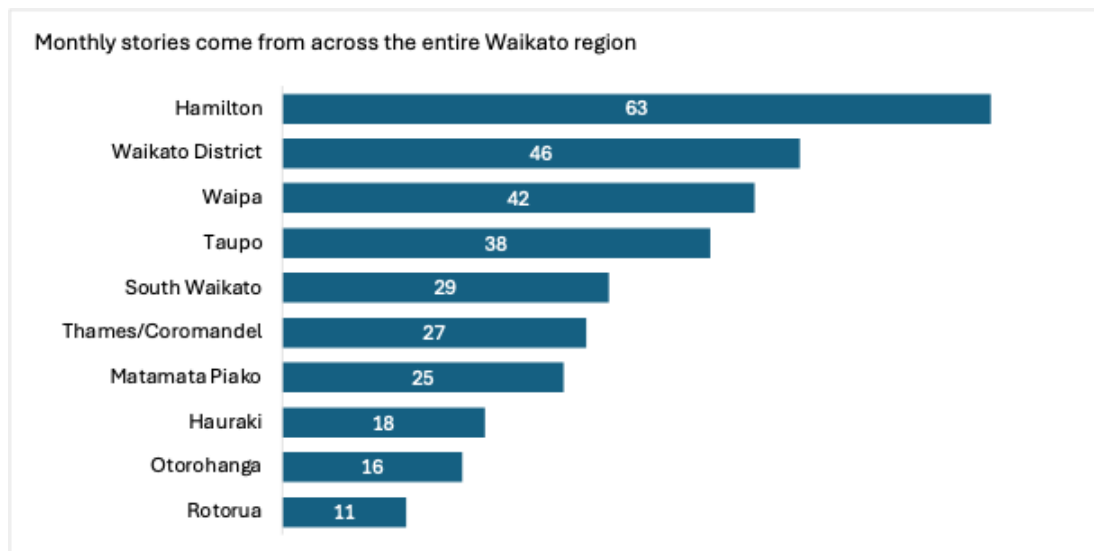
School interviewee

54. A challenge raised in the interview about student empowerment at intermediate schools is that because students are only there for two years, it can be difficult to enable student empowerment to the same level as primary or secondary. This is a known challenge, and one that is somewhat addressed by Enviroschools facilitators supporting appropriate project scoping and by linking in-class learning with out-of-class learning, such as school camps. Evaluation evidence indicated that the facilitators are supporting intermediate schools to support student empowerment as best they can.

Enviroschools' success and learning are shared across the Waikato network as well as more broadly to inspire others.

55. The Enviroschools team has demonstrated highly effective performance in this area. They have put substantial effort into this, and it has been a clear area of growth since the last evaluation. A large number of rich, descriptive stories have been developed by the facilitators across the region (276 between 2022 and 2025). Many of these stories have been published on the Enviroschools website, in Council communication media, and on social media. The stories highlight many multi-school events and actions, as well as individual school action and learning. This suggests active and engaged communication across the network that supports learning and inspires action.

Figure 3: District involved in the action detailed in monthly stories.



56. In addition, the facilitator team has collaborated more within their team, sharing ideas and co-developing resources more systematically, ensuring that ideas and actions from across the Waikato are shared. This supports cross-pollination of ideas and strengthens the overall work of the Waikato network. The Enviroschools team are also involved in the nationwide Enviroschools network, which has been a useful platform for sharing ideas and hearing others' ideas so these can be passed on to inspire the Waikato network.

Enviroschools plays a fundamental role in ensuring that learning for sustainability is present in the curriculum at all ages and in school decision-making.

"Enviroschools is so integrated with literacy and numeracy. You can do something for a week and bring in so many curriculum areas. It just makes sense; it's time-efficient when there are so many demands on teachers."

School interviewee

57. Enviroschools has been rated as highly effective for this assessment element. There is strong evidence that Enviroschools is effectively supporting sustainability in the curriculum and decision-

making. Interviewees were doing this in various ways, but Enviroschools' tailored approach ensures that, whatever the context, learning for sustainability is embedded in the curriculum. For example, the primary school we interviewed always has a sustainability module in its curriculum, which influences its decisions about what is taught and when. Similarly, the secondary school interviewee acknowledged that while much of the action occurs through the EnviroLeader group, the lead teacher is integrating sustainability into the curriculum through an options course for one senior year level and as a unit in social studies in the junior school. The Enviroschools facilitator's work has supported the development and integration of these.

They [ES facilitators] know how to support initiatives that no one else is able to do"
School interviewee

- 58. The annual survey indicated that 72% of respondents integrated sustainability into the curriculum to a moderate or high degree. In addition, 58% of survey participants reported that they link Enviroschools into home learning to a moderate or high degree. This high proportion is enabled by the facilitators' work to tailor offerings and adapt resources to meet teachers' needs and the curriculum.

Holistic sustainability actions are strongly evident across the network.

- 59. There is strong evidence from the monthly stories, interviews, and annual survey that holistic sustainability actions are being implemented across the region. The tailored approach of Enviroschools means that holistic actions are not uniformly present across the region and depend on the level of engagement the school can maintain. However, the evidence suggests that schools seeking to implement holistic sustainability actions can generally do so.
- 60. Almost half of the annual survey participants (47%) reported that cultural and social sustainability is being integrated into the curriculum to a moderate or high degree. Economic sustainability was less well integrated, with 28% of respondents reporting that it was integrated to a moderate or high degree. Similarly, the monthly stories showcase the broader ecological and social systems influenced by a range of holistic sustainability actions.

Figure 4: Integration of broader sustainability concepts into curriculum 2022-2026

Cultural and social sustainability concepts were integrated into the curriculum to a moderate or high degree in nearly half (47%) of school survey respondents.



- 61. It is important to note that, given the current fiscal environment and pressures within the school sector, there are many barriers to holistic sustainability actions in schools. The way the Enviroschools team recognises and accommodates these helps overcome some of these barriers (for example, by

adapting resources to align with the new curriculum). However, barriers beyond Enviroschools' control limit some schools' ability to implement holistic sustainability actions. Some examples mentioned by interviewees were that comparatively fewer teaching resources are available in small rural schools, which do not easily allow for attendance at events or teacher planning time; that the short duration of intermediate school requires balancing which holistic sustainability actions are realistic; and that, at secondary school, there are often fewer students interested in action. This finding reinforces the need for targeted strategies in Enviroschools planning.

Enviroschools is positively perceived by individuals, communities and councils

62. All data collected for this evaluation strongly suggest positive perceptions of ES among individuals, the council, and the community. There is, however, limited direct data from the community on their perceptions of the programme, which should be kept in mind when reading this section.
63. Exploring the value proposition of Enviroschools at a workshop highlighted a range of ways the programme creates value for different population groups, with the potential to foster a positive perception of the programme (See Appendix). This section shares the information gathered during the workshop to develop the value proposition and indicates evaluation findings that correlate with each aspect of the value proposition.

Individuals, namely students and school staff

64. The Enviroschools value proposition indicates that students gain value from the programme through developing skills and capabilities, experiences, understanding and personal and social outcomes. The monthly stories, in particular, highlight more than 250 examples of students developing skills and capabilities and increasing their experience and understanding. There is less information about social and personal outcomes, but the strong thread of student empowerment present in Waikato Enviroschools is likely to support the realisation of a range of social and personal outcomes (e.g., increasing confidence, sense of belonging, feelings of hope and self-efficacy and supports engagement at school). In addition, one interviewee highlighted the impact of students engaging in solutions to real-world problems and the benefits these provide for students as they grow older.

Enviroschools offer such depth and a rich context for learning, it's authentic, it's not something that is abstract because they see the cause and effect. It's lifelong, and it exposes children to things that they're going to come up against as adults that they might not otherwise be exposed to. How can we expect our children to value something when they don't experience it?

School interviewee

65. The Enviroschools value proposition suggests that teachers and school staff gain value from Enviroschools through curriculum and pedagogy development, professional development and practice, as well as access to Enviroschools resources and opportunities for networking. In addition, one interview in particular highlighted behaviour change in an individual and the caretaker's journey from a reluctant composter to someone now convinced of the benefits and committed to maintaining the system.

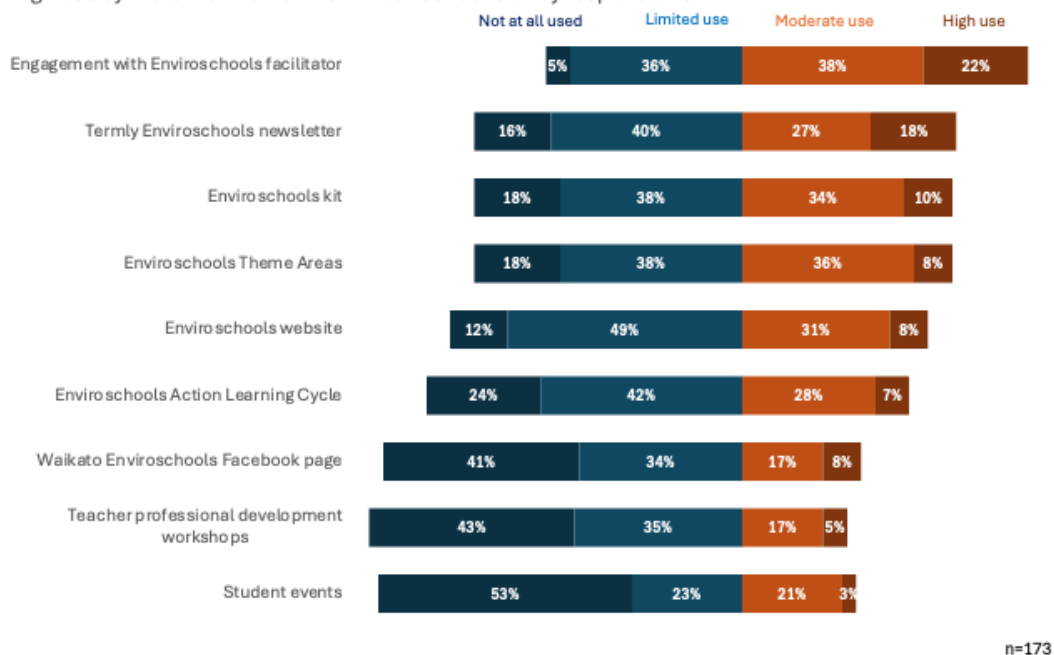
Our caretaker struggles a bit with change. But we asked him to empty our foodwaste bins for all of last year, that was the only change we asked of him and he did really well. He called me last week and excitedly said to me "I just wanted to tell you, with adding those extra bins in hospitality and the breakfast club, that's bringing the volumes up a lot and I've got two full bins! I think we're going to have a great year together making food waste".

School interviewee

66. As noted earlier in this report, the resources teachers have accessed through Enviroschools are well used and tailored to their requirements in ways that other programmes may not match. Annual survey data demonstrated that 99% of respondents have used at least one Enviroschools resource in the past year. On average, each respondent reported using 6 of the 9 resources listed in the survey. While there is evidence that teachers appreciate the networking and professional development opportunities available to them, interviewees identified that they struggle to attend these activities regularly. This is reflected in the relatively low proportions of survey respondents engaging with professional development workshops to a moderate or high degree.

Figure 5: Degree of use of Enviroschools resources 2022-2026

Engagement with Enviroschools facilitator was the only resources that saw moderate or high use by more than half of the Annual School Survey respondents.



Communities

67. The Enviroschools value proposition suggests that communities gain value from Enviroschools through connections and collaboration, developing skills and learning and inspiring change through action and shared vision. While this evaluation had limited direct insight from communities, whānau voice collected by one school signalled that Enviroschools is perceived positively and is seen as encouraging change and inspiring community action. Whānau appreciate what Enviroschools teaches students and themselves, particularly regarding looking after nature and the value of waste management practices.
68. Interviewed schools recognise the value of Enviroschools in connecting with their communities. Some examples of this connection are community partnerships with local businesses, parent helpers in classroom learning or on trips, and supporting local whānau through distributing food from school gardens. One interviewee shared that Enviroschools supports a range of initiatives, for example, planting days, that have connected schools and communities for many years.
69. Several interviewees in rural communities reported being careful when navigating conversations and activities related to natural resource use and sustainability practices. They recognised that different whānau had different views and worked to keep conversations respectful and inclusive of all perspectives, keeping the door open to further conversations.

Councils

70. The value proposition identifies three ways councils gain value from Enviroschools: community connection and engagement; strategic alignment and policy implementation; and operational and communication benefits. The next KEQ deals exclusively with the value of Enviroschools to the councils that fund the Waikato Enviroschools programme. But overall, there was very strong evaluation evidence of positive perceptions of Enviroschools within the councils we spoke with.
71. Council interviewees corroborated these aspects of value for the council. They noted the effectiveness of Enviroschools in engaging the community positively and proactively about the environment and the use of natural resources, and the opportunity to share council messages in a different way. Several interviewees noted that Enviroschools helps them achieve their strategic objectives, such as expanding the reach of an educational resource, engaging with young people, gathering meaningful data, and furthering sustainable resource management. They noted that Enviroschools long-term nature and its history here are critical to achieving this.

A huge part of the value that Enviroschools brings, is that they are already connected into the school network. I've talked to people who do similar education work in other ways. And it always comes back to, well, can you try to connect the teacher in with this... I think [without Enviroschools] we would have just been another person in a long queue of people trying to tell teachers about this thing that we've done"

Council interviewee

72. Finally, some interviewees identified the value of Enviroschools for supporting connection across the different directorates and councils, reducing the impact of silos. One interviewee also believed that the work they were doing with Enviroschools was helping to break down barriers to the community engaging with the council, noting that the Enviroschools project was an opportunity to share more about what their part of the council could do for communities.

KEQ3. How well does Enviroschools provide additional value, leverage and fertile soil for other Council outcomes?

73. Overall, this evaluation identified that the Waikato Enviroschools programme is highly effective at providing additional value, leverage and fertile soil for other Council outcomes.

Table 4: Evaluative ratings for assessment elements for KEQ 3

Assessment element	Evaluative rating
Expertise and experience of Enviroschools facilitators provides additional value to Council by leveraging expertise and knowledge and funding for other Council programming and delivery.	Highly effective
The Waikato Enviroschools network provides a fertile ground to support other Council outcomes.	Highly effective

The expertise and experience of Enviroschools facilitators are being well utilised to support other Council programming and delivery.

74. Enviroschools facilitators are highly effective at using their skills, experience and expertise to support other council programming and delivery. In the past three years, the facilitation team have worked collaboratively with other council directorates and other territorial authorities to develop and deliver a suite of resources and sustainability actions in schools.
75. Doing this collaborative work with the council on one-off events is immensely valuable, but needs to be balanced with the core work of Enviroschools - to enable holistic sustainability actions. This is a

constant tension and reflects working in a resource-constrained environment. The Enviroschools Regional Coordinator is conscious of maintaining this balance and supporting one-off events, whilst also leaving space and time for deeper work in schools where appropriate.

76. Critical to the success of these collaborations are the facilitators' passion and enthusiasm alongside their comprehensive education, environmental and facilitation skills, experience, and expertise. In each instance, a series of topic-specific messages needed to be shared. The facilitators adhered to these messages when developing learning resources and teaching support appropriate for the target audience and easy for teachers to implement.

Having a trusted internal connection through to the school network is so important. Otherwise, you are having to relearn how schools work, how you engage with them, what does or doesn't work. So it creates that connection to other parts of Council to enable that and provide advice and direction.

Council interviewee

77. As a result, there is now a range of environmental education activities that schools are taking up, directly linked to specific council objectives and messages for the community. All interviewees shared that the work would not have happened without Enviroschools, or uptake would have been lower because it wasn't as tailored to the target market. Council interviewees were clear that the Enviroschools team's educational expertise was absolutely crucial to developing pedagogically sound resources that teachers and Enviroschools facilitators can easily deliver and that engage students of all ages.
78. Another positive aspect of this collaboration is the inclusive, welcoming approach exhibited by the Enviroschools team. This approach creates the conditions to easily and effectively span cross-directorate work within the council and enables cross-pollination of ideas and relationships. Further, Council benefits from the facilitator's links to the national network and from learning from what has and hasn't worked in other regions.
79. The Enviroschools team has limited capacity to deliver the programme in bilingual units. At present, they are limited to intentionally integrating appropriate kupu Māori into their sessions, particularly in communities with high Māori populations. However, through an innovative collaboration with Kura Waitii and key directorates, Freshwater toolkits and resources have been translated into Te Reo, and Enviroschools and Kura Waitii facilitators are shadowing each other to understand delivery in different language contexts. There are also plans for other kits on Kauri Dieback and Marine Biosecurity to be translated and delivered in Rumaki Reo, Kura and bilingual units. The benefits of working together, utilising the resources, experience and reputation of Enviroschools, and the networks and relationships Kura Waitii has with Kura and other Māori medium schools, are highly valued.
80. Finally, interviewees noted that Enviroschools' involvement made the work more cost-effective and efficient. Several interviewees noted that because Enviroschools operates within council structures, it has a similar way of working, which reduced the need for extensive early-stage negotiation about how to work together.

You operate in a similar environment, with similar levels of reporting and efficacy and everything else. There's that trust too. Not having to be too prescriptive or bureaucratic about how we work together because we know they're already operating under similar conditions as us.

Council interviewee

81. Similarly, interviewees believed that Enviroschools represented better value for money because they are not a private organisation required to maintain a profit margin. They were confident that their

money was spent on developing and delivering the best possible product rather than on organisational overheads.

The reach and effectiveness of other Council outcomes are being extended through collaboration with the Waikato Enviroschools network.

82. As already noted, the collaborations between Enviroschools and other directorates within Waikato Regional Council and other Territorial Authorities have enabled the Council's messages to be delivered more broadly and effectively. The size and networks of the Enviroschools programme and the facilitator team, with its passion, experience and expertise, clearly provide fertile ground that creates the conditions to facilitate and enhance the Council's ability to do more with what it has.
83. More specifically, several interviewees noted that Enviroschools' work was crucial to developing initiatives that met their operational objectives, which in turn fed into the council's strategic priorities. The Enviroschools network supports not only the development process but also ensures that environmental education resources are introduced and continually delivered to new students and schools across the region, with adaptation and tailoring as needed for new audiences. This extends not only the quality of the outcomes achieved but also their longevity.

We were lucky; we got to come in and say, "Hey, we've got this great idea", and they ran with it. Within our team, we don't have the resources to contact the schools. We don't have the networks to do the emails, and we would have had to employ a facilitator to deliver it. It would have been really hard to get it off the ground [without Enviroschools]

Council interviewee

84. Another way that Enviroschools provides fertile ground for supporting other Council outcomes is by generating consistent messages and initiatives across the region, spanning a range of local territorial authorities. The Enviroschools network is broad; this breadth supports the effectiveness of the outcomes achieved, as councils can be sure that the same messages are being delivered across the entire region and into many Territorial Authorities. For example, one interviewee shared that a direct result of the Enviroschools programme was the integration of students' artwork into biosecurity signage across the region. They noted that the signs featuring student artwork have not been vandalised in the six months they have been in place, compared with more generic council signs that have constantly required replacement. This is an excellent example demonstrating how working with Enviroschools has tangibly supported other Council outcomes.
85. Finally, Enviroschools is a long-term, trusted programme with strong links to schools and communities and is perceived positively by most people. Council's ability to leverage the relational capital of Enviroschools to amplify its messages is a powerful multiplier in supporting the realisation of other Council outcomes.

Education and regulation are not distinct from each other, they overlap. At the end of the day it's all about supporting, enabling, directing good decisions about the use of the natural environment, which is hopefully going to achieve our long term outcomes.

Council interviewee

KEQ4. What are the key learnings? How might we use the research to enrich the Waikato programme delivery going forward?

86. Since the last evaluation in 2023, the Enviroschools team has implemented learnings from the previous report by developing more comprehensive and robust regular data collection, embedding remote facilitation, and working to more systematically share ideas among facilitators in the

network. As a result, the programme is adapting to better meet the needs of new contexts. EnviroSchools recognises the importance of continuing this development.

87. Other key learnings from this evaluation are:

1. Tailoring the programme for specific sectors increases the programme's reach and better meets the needs of schools and students. There has been a big push into secondary schools over the last three years, and there are now likely to be benefits to considering options for better meeting intermediate and rural needs. For example, sharing learning across the team about remote facilitation practice, so facilitators can connect remotely with schools more effectively. Other considerations may be developing remote student clusters, so schools and students can still benefit without having to attend events in person. They can also potentially connect with other schools using a remote cluster approach.
2. More consistent communication with teachers about aspects of the programme, such as the whole-of-school approach, is likely to be supported by continuing to support facilitators to engage more deeply with the rich EnviroSchools resources and content. The new handbook is also likely to help with this.
3. The collaborative work EnviroSchools and other Council directorates and district councils have done over the past three years has been highly valuable, and there are likely to be opportunities to explore and extend options for collaboration and shared delivery with other Council directorates and district councils. Sharing the evaluation findings widely within the Council is likely to increase the potential for the uptake of this collaborative, shared delivery type of work. The co-funded contracted services model allows for flexibility to respond to opportunities presented by the local governmental network. This has allowed the programme to grow and extend the number of facilitators and schools reached over time, and add funded environmental education projects as a complementary opportunity to Waikato schools.
4. Support for the extension of EnviroSchools into Rumaki Reo is a key opportunity to enrich both the programme and those it reaches. The value of EnviroSchools' developing relationship with Kura Waitii is likely to support future benefits for Rumaki Reo students, Council and the programme.
5. In a resource-constrained context, and one where schools also have many competing needs, there is a tension between being able to facilitate deep engagement with schools and extending the reach of the programme to a wider number of schools. A key learning is that facilitators need support to recognise that this tension is ok, and that decisions about breadth and depth can be an opportunity to enhance the programme's flexibility. At the same time, maintaining space for deeper work is important, where this kind of engagement is wanted by schools. One way of managing this tension is to continue to develop professional development options for teachers that they can do at their own pace, in bite-sized pieces, when they have time. There is an opportunity to communicate the impact of EnviroSchools through sharing the value proposition with school leadership.
6. The EnviroSchools stories of impact are a rich resource and full of insights for schools, councils, and others. Making better use of these stories is worth exploring. Continuing work on the website and communications will help ensure schools can see themselves in the programme. Sharing this learning with co-funders will continue to build support for Environmental education and maintain commitment to long-term sustainable change via the EnviroSchools process.

Conclusion

88. EnviroSchools is a strong programme. It continues to perform highly. It's well-trusted and valued by many stakeholders and is at a point where it can push into new spaces while keeping the existing spaces maintained and functioning well. The leadership of the Waikato Regional Council's programme has been pivotal in realising new potential and possibilities for ongoing innovation and development.
89. The value propositions for EnviroSchools to students, teachers, schools, whānau, community and the Council are strong and reinforce the ongoing importance of the programme in supporting a wide range of community outcomes and aspirations.

Appendices

Rubric for assessing WRC's Enviroschools programme

Highly effective	All factors* and criteria for success are evident and most are performing highly
Consolidating effectiveness	Most factors and criteria for success are evident and the majority are performing well
Developing effectiveness	Some factors and criteria for success are evident with good performance in some areas, and other areas still developing
Emerging effectiveness	Establishing factors and criteria for success, with lots of support still needed.

*The factors for success for regions have been developed by Toimata Foundation and are referenced below. The criteria for success have been developed specifically for WRC's evaluation of Enviroschools.

Successfully running the Enviroschools Programme in a region

Enviroschools is a nationwide programme run through schools and kindergartens/ECE centres that supports children and young people to plan, design and create sustainable and resilient communities. Toimata Foundation is the national support agency for the programme. The Foundation provides national management and direction, professional development, programme development initiatives, networking opportunities, resources and evaluation.

Enviroschools is implemented regionally, along regional council boundaries. It is a facilitated programme supported by a network of people working for a range of different organisations. The success of Enviroschools in your region and your schools/centres relies on commitments, partnerships and making the programme locally relevant. Coordinating the Enviroschools Programme with existing programmes and agencies is essential. Ultimately, the success of Enviroschools lies with people who have the passion to make it happen.

There has been conscious collaboration over a number of years between a range of organisations. Participating organisations have also found there is value in working collaboratively and being part of a nationally supported programme. Each brings expertise and commitment to empowering young people and creating a sustainable future for Aotearoa, New Zealand. Changing attitudes and ways of living is not a quick fix; rather, it requires people to be involved in a range of projects and processes over time. Through sharing experiences with each other, sustainability practices and actions deepen over time.

Each region has a Regional Coordinator (RC) and Facilitators who guide and support a group of Enviroschools. The structure varies between regions, but in general, the RC is an employee of the Regional Council and the facilitators are employed by, or funded by, a range of agencies. Over many years, the factors that underpin successful implementation of Enviroschools in a region have become apparent. These are outlined below. They are the basis for how this section of the guide is structured.

Key factors for success in a region ...	Support from TF (in addition to this guide)
1. Develop and maintain a clear regional direction and leadership It is essential to develop a vision for where the programme is going regionally and see this as part of a nationwide process. It helps to have: • A written strategy for the region • Planning sessions with your regional team (this could include facilitators and staff from regional partners) • An annual calendar for Enviroschools	Regional Coordinator Meetings for networking, sharing and collaborative programme development Regional visits to assist with planning and partnership building Submissions to Council plans
2. Bring together a range of organisations to work in partnership Working in partnership and building on existing roles within organisations supports efficient use of resources and helps to create benefits wider than any one organisation can produce. Key partners in many regions include: Regional Council - provide coordination and regional programme development City/District Councils - fund facilitation for schools Kindergarten Associations - provide facilitation for kindergartens Other agencies, such as DoC, complementary EE/EfS programmes and sustainable businesses can contribute expertise for specific events or projects.	
3. Foster a network of schools and centres committed to a long-term journey A strong regional network of Enviroschools is supported by a number of things that include: • Robust processes to select and bring on new schools or centres. • Providing opportunities for participants to share experiences, deepen their knowledge and support each other. • Supporting all participating Enviroschools to regularly undertake a holistic reflection process. • Robust processes to check-in with schools/centres that are no longer engaged (may result in them being taken off our national database of participants).	Enviroschools resources to guide the process National Hui opportunities for schools and centres to share and learn from each other.
4. Provide quality facilitation support based on the needs of schools/ centres Enviroschools was consciously developed as a facilitated programme and over many years participating schools and centres have sighted their facilitator as their most valuable resource for the programme. So supporting facilitators is a key to the overall success of the whole programme. This includes: • Effective selection process for Facilitators • Regional networking and peer support for Facilitators • Regional and inter-regional professional development for Facilitators that complements what is provided nationally • Process to match school/centre needs with annual facilitation hours and skills/knowledge of individual facilitators	Facilitator Training Workshops Introduction to Enviroschools and Deepening Practice National Hui and sector Hui (e.g. Secondary and ECE) Mentoring and Support service for Facilitators Facilitator Facebook group
5. Maintain momentum and develop regional profile Having a buzz around the programme and participants being aware that they are an important part of a bigger movement is important. It helps all participants to feel there is real value in being part of Enviroschools. Ways that Regional Coordinators can support this include: • Creating a strong regional identity for the programme • Taking opportunities for raising profile • Sharing stories and celebrating successes • Recognising each partner's contribution and thanking people • Regional newsletters • Updates to the Enviroschools website	Enviroschools Visual Identity Guide - enabling each region to develop a consistent identity in their own way. Enviroschools website – as a place to share inspiring stories Communications package for use with schools and centres Available on website

Enviroschools Value Proposition

These notes come from a workshop in December 2025 with the Waikato Enviroschools team and senior leadership within Toimata. Attendees were asked to brainstorm what they perceived as the value of the Enviroschools Programme for different population groups.

Value for Students

Key areas of value include:

- **Skills and capacities:** Students gain value by developing a range of new skills, including **leadership skills** that will be useful and important in their and our collective future. They are supported and encouraged when they are passionate to become leaders for change. They gain a connection to the environment, develop a mindset of love and care for nature, learn how to be a caring person, practice kaitiakitanga, and build confidence to take action for the environment. They are supported in becoming self-aware and reflective about their learning.
- **Experiences and understanding:** The program provides students with **new experiences** and fosters a broader understanding of various perspectives and the world they live in. Students benefit from authentic, relevant, and **local real-world learning**, which deepens their **understanding of the local environment and the world**. This also helps them contribute positively to the environment and the world.
- **Personal and social outcomes:** Enviroschools helps students build **confidence** and a **sense of belonging**. It gives them **hope** and lowers eco-anxiety. It **increases student engagement** and fosters a sense of belonging and purpose. The program promotes a **love of learning**, offering fun and enjoyment, and supports students in making **important behaviour changes**.

Value for Teachers and Schools

Key areas of value include:

- **Curriculum and pedagogy:** Enviroschools helps teachers teach complex topics that support authentic, deep learning, integrated with the curriculum. Teachers learn alongside their students and are provided with inspiration, new ideas and content that is **contextual, local, authentic, and meaningful**. Teachers develop cultural connections to Te Ao Māori.
- **Professional development and practice:** Teachers gain value through professional development, opportunities for **reflection on practice**, and professional questioning. The network helps them develop relationships, improves their well-being and confidence, and supports their agency and engagement. They are supported when they don't feel like the expert.
- **Resources and networking:** Teachers connect with other schools, and connection/whanaungatanga with other teachers and staff is encouraged. They gain **access to tools, resources, and networks**. The program enables them to connect with other teachers and work in partnerships, utilising practical, real-life contexts for learning. The value also includes supporting teacher retention.

Value for Whānau and Community

Key areas of value include:

- **Connections and collaboration:** The network facilitates community **collaboration**, offering tools and processes for working together, solving big problems, and developing connections to local groups, expertise and services, such as Council and the Department of Conservation (DOC). It supports members to engage in partnerships and in planning and doing projects

together. It strengthens relationships by connecting communities to schools. The program fosters a sense of **pride** in schools and communities.

- **Skills and learning:** EnviroSchools provides opportunities for children to learn and inspire others, including whānau, whom they can teach and model sustainable practices and **skills** at home. It also offers increasing **food security and literacy**.
- **Action and shared vision:** The network **inspires change** within the community, creating a ripple effect of sustainability. Furthermore, the program helps create a shared vision, capacity, and resources.

Value for Council

- **Strategic alignment and policy implementation.** The program offers Councils direct support in achieving their high-level objectives and vision:
 - It helps Councils deliver on waste minimisation objectives, local government act outcomes, and achieve statutory requirements.
 - It helps achieve **quality outcomes**, such as improved water quality and reducing waste, for the Council and provides evidence and feedback for policy development and planning.
 - The Network is a vital resource **for long-term behaviour change** regarding sustainability, giving future rate payers an understanding of the value of the environment, resources and community, and how to look after our place.
- **Community connection and engagement.** EnviroSchools strengthens the Council's relationship with the local community:
 - It helps Councils establish and maintain **good relationships and partnerships**, especially with schools and their communities.
 - It serves as a valuable **delivery mechanism** for Council projects and initiatives, facilitating work alongside and with communities and whānau.
 - The network helps Councils effectively **engage with and across various sectors**.
- **Operational and communication benefits.** Operationally, the programme increases efficiency and aids in critical messaging and communication to the community:
 - The network provides significant **leverage**, allowing Councils to make efficient use of resources and staff time to "**do more with less**".
 - It supports buy-in from various stakeholders.
 - It provides **good news** stories to share with the broader community and helps communicate **key messages** related to the environment, such as waste, water, biodiversity, infrastructure, and other Council priorities.

Value for Government

- **Strategic outcomes and delivery systems.** The network offers the Government a powerful tool for large-scale engagement and policy implementation:
 - It functions as an effective **delivery system** that can engage across various departments and settings.
 - It is considered **value-aligned** and provides a measurable **return on investment**.
 - The network focuses on the **long-term view for sustainable change**.
- **Educational and curricular support.** EnviroSchools directly supports governmental responsibilities in education and environmental literacy:
 - It helps the Government **deliver the curriculum** and meet Ministry goals.

- It provides **resources for all schools** on environmental and sustainability education for less resource.
 - The program supports the **embedding of environmental education**.
 - It **educates society in sustainable living** and environmental matters.
- **Societal and future generations.** The value extends to improving social conditions and ensuring future sustainability engagement:
 - It helps improve health and well-being.
 - The network is instrumental in creating community connectivity and a **citizenship that is empowered, engaged, aware and environmentally literate**.
 - By **empowering young people**, it ensures that future generations will be empowered voters who can engage in kōrero and decision-making about issues that affect us all. They will also know how to look after Papatūānuku and effect positive change for everyone.