

Waikato ENVIROSCHOOLS



He mihi

Welcome to the Waikato Enviroschools newsletter.

As the cool autumn weather draws in, we're sending warm wishes for term 2. In this pānui, you'll find exciting events planned for this term and term 3, super seasonal resources recommended by our Enviroschools facilitators and inspiring stories from across our network.

We're excited to welcome Ōhaupō Primary School and Te Totara Primary School to the Enviroschools community – nau mai, haere mai ki te whānau. Also, huge mihi to Maeroa Intermediate School for your recent [Biosecurity New Zealand Kura Award](#) – congratulations! This is so well deserved and a testament to your ongoing commitment to the holistic restoration of your school gully!

Mihi miharo also to the successful schools in the most recent Enviroschools funding round. We can't wait to see your projects flourish and share your fantastic stories in upcoming newsletters! The Enviroschools fund will open again in term 3 so, if you have a project idea that needs funding, now is the time to contact your facilitator and start planning!

In term 1, we celebrated New Zealand Seaweed with a collaborative [webinar unpacking marine biosecurity education modules](#), and World Water Day with the ['Water of Life Encounters' event](#) in Tūrangi. We ran our online [Enviroschools 101 course](#) for new lead teachers and Enviroschools, and reinvigorated others at our [Re-energise](#) professional development day at Te Miro School. We've also just completed our Climate Summit for secondary students and are right in the middle of our annual Māra Kai Challenge. We can't wait to share some fantastic stories about those events soon!

Waikato Enviroschools is growing again! We're pleased to welcome Rachael Cheeseman to our facilitation team. Rachael will be working in the Thames-Coromandel and Waikato districts, supporting schools with a wide range of environmental education opportunities.

We hope this newsletter offers an engaging read. Please feel free to forward it to any interested colleagues.

Ngā mihi,
The Enviroschools team

Tā mātou mahi | What we do

Enviroschools is a nationwide programme supported by the Toimata Foundation, founding partner Te Mauri Tau, and a large network of regional partners, like us here at Waikato Regional Council.

Our vision is to create a healthy, peaceful, sustainable world through learning and taking action together.

It helps support early childhood centres and schools on their long-term sustainability journeys, teaching a generation of young people to value and nurture their natural environment.



14 regional partners

212 Enviroschools

50 ECE centres

162 schools

50,600 tamariki and students

**14% of early childhood
58% of primary and intermediate**

**43% of secondary
67% of composite and other**

3 collaborators

Waikato Enviroschools acknowledge our funding partners. Their ongoing input and funding is essential to the success of the Enviroschool programme throughout our region.



Ngā kaupapa e haere ake nei | Opportunities

For students

Kauri protection experience!

Experience the Wētā Workshop kauri model and virtual reality experience [Kauri Pou Kaitiaki](#) as part of Waikato Regional Council's [kauri protection education programme](#). Contact your facilitator to book your experience.

Garden Bird Survey

29 June - 7 July

Mark your calendars because the New Zealand Garden Bird Survey Te Tatauranga o ngā Manu Māra o Aotearoa is on its way. It's a fantastic chance to get students involved in collecting data. The more we know about our birds, the better we can protect them and te taiao (our environment) for the future. Find heaps of resources to support you as well as competitions and stunning images, [here](#).

World Environment Day

5 June

This year's theme is [generation restoration](#), so why not plan an action for your tamariki to restore an area in their local environment. You could:

- create a habitat for a native creature, like a [weta motel](#) or [lizard lounge](#)
- plant native plants
- feed the native birds (if you are making bird feeders please don't feed non-native birds, [check which food is good to encourage/ support natives](#) because feeding imported species gives native birds more competition)
- be a weed warrior by joining Kids Greening Taupō's [weed scavenger hunt](#).

Conservation Week

Term 3

We will be holding an exciting full day event for all Enviroschool students in the Coromandel and Hauraki districts at the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre in term 3. Schools will be offered the opportunity to showcase an achievement, action, plan for change, or discovery about caring for the environment or anything else they would like to share with other schools.

As well as sharing and celebrating and making those connections in the community, we will be introducing students and teachers to some amazing programme opportunities new to Enviroschools!

We invite you to start thinking about what your school group/ envirogroup might like to share with other schools, and how you could share that mahi. A similar event is also being planned for Kirikiriroa Hamilton. Dates have yet to be finalised. Contact your facilitator for details and to discuss your ideas.

For teachers

Caretakers hui

30 May, South Waikato location TBC

Calling all our hardworking caretakers and groundspeople, you're invited to share the 'wows' and 'woes' of your work. Learn how the Enviroschools kaupapa has resources and networks to support your mahi, and enjoy a friendly morning tea with your peers. Register your unsung heroes on the ground [here](#).

Exploring and connecting with our local resources

10 June, 10am-2.30pm, Kauaeranga Visitor Information Centre

Enviroschools Hauraki Coromandel, in collaboration with the Department of Conservation, is offering a day of professional development for teachers to learn how to lead their own learning at the Kauaeranga Visitor Information Centre. We'll be introducing the Tiakina Kauri, Kauri Protection Programme, and exploring nature connection in the ngahere or in your kura. Register [here](#).

Literacy and nature webinar series

12 and 18 June

NZAAE has been working with Linda Jane Keegan and various authors to deliver two sessions focusing on literacy and nature. The first session is [Storytelling and Empathy](#) with Gavin Bishop, Isobel Joy Te Aho-White and Kate Parker, and the second is [Curiosity and Creativity](#) with Giselle Clarkson, Rachel Haydon, Valetta Sówka and Rachel Clare.

Freshwater biosecurity education webinar

20 June, 3.30pm

Join us for an exciting webinar where we'll learn about the importance of freshwater biosecurity and unpacking our new education resources on the subject. We'll cover the threats posed by invasive species like koi carp, and share fun, interactive materials that will inspire your students to protect our precious freshwater ecosystems. Register [here](#).



He tīwhiri | Quick sustainability tips

Let the lawn grow wild (or at least some of it)

Wild lawns enable water conservation, attract pollinators, support biodiversity, enhance soil stability, save fuel and more! If you're exploring Living Landscapes this term, check out this [fabulous TED talk](#) on the key concepts from a North American perspective.

Warm and well-ventilated classrooms

To keep your classroom warm and well-ventilated on cold days, don't have the windows cracked open continuously – it doesn't exchange air efficiently but does let warmth leak out.

Instead, keep windows closed and periodically open them wide for two minutes. This method allows moisture and stale air out, fresh air in, and the warmth stored in thermal mass (furniture, etc.) doesn't get lost, so the room will warm up again quickly!

For more tips on healthy indoor spaces, check out our Ecological Buildings theme area.

Autumn colours

For a class energiser that also supports nature connection, students can [discover the autumn leaves](#). Can they find a rainbow of colours? Can they create a pattern or mandala? Do native trees lose their leaves in autumn? There are lots of great questions to explore.

Ngā hua | Our stories

Time to stand and stare

Sometimes we need to make time to slow down and reconnect with what matters – to savour the simplicity of a calm connection to nature.

Staring up at 10-acre stand of kahikatea trees tends to have that effect on people. And it's where teachers on our recent Re-energise professional development day found themselves during a full day observing the amazing Te Miro's bush school programme.

The aim of the programme is to spend as much time outside as possible, slow down, observe, be curious and connect with nature and each other. Each week, for two hours, the whole school walks down to the kahikatea on the neighbouring farm.



A chorus of chatter marks the journey to a small style, signalling the start of the leafy grove. As soon as they cross the threshold, though, silence falls, and a bounty of birdsong rises to take its place.

It's how they do things at Te Miro. The children know they are entering a special place and are calm and respectful, comfortable and confident being, learning and playing in the bush.

Reflecting on the day, teachers involved observed that it provided "great information and experience without it being overwhelming or overloaded". They loved the "authentic learning with our native environments, not simply about our native environments". And they went away re-energised to "get outside more, slowing down and being present and peaceful".



Thinking inside the box

Students at Ngutunui Enviroschool loved getting out and exploring the rocky shoreline of Whaingaroa Raglan.

They learnt about species identification and recorded what they found using Marine Metre²'s quadrant-based methodology.

Marine Metre² is a citizen science project with the mission of making New Zealand the country that has the best-understood coastlines in the world.

The rangatahi found lots of interesting critters, collecting valuable data about the biodiversity, distribution and abundance of local seashore species.



Rangatahi share Enviroschools journey with council



In April, student leaders from Morrinsville College and Elstow-Waihou Combined School presented to councillors at Matamata-Piako District Council.

The students presented the current Enviroschool actions they're undertaking.

Morrinsville College is new to the Enviroschools programme and their enviro-leaders have been investigating waste issues and solutions.

Elstow Waihou, meanwhile is continuing its journey and pursuing next steps following their recent reflection. They're creating a native planting plan to provide a noise barrier against a busy road on the border of the school, and councillors were interested to hear the progress they'd made.

The students were all courageous, articulate, inspiring and a credit to their schools. If you have young leaders in your kura who would like the opportunity to speak to their councillors at an upcoming meeting, please get in touch with your facilitator.



Road to abundance

The community kai-way, we reported on back in February is now delivering a bumper crop.

The school-driven project at Gudex Court in St Andrews transformed land originally designated as a roadway and turned it into a space for the community to grow fresh vege.

Thanks to the weekly mahi from staff and students at Te Au o Tamatea St Andrews Middle School, the under-utilised green space is now flourishing.

There were some wonderful tomatoes, chillis, silverbeet and basil collected, and 11.5kg of taputini kumara too!

The students unearthed 15kg of Ōwairaka Red, and 0.5kg of mystery potatoes that no one could remember planting!

In total, 27kg of fresh kai was harvested, with the largest kumara weighing in at a whopping 1.7kg.

Residents from the neighbouring area have already been coming to share the abundance, and the projects will now shift up a gear to grow the involvement of the wider local community.



Quality investigation

Geography students at St John's College Hamilton were eager to dip their toes into a stream study to assess the health of the Ohinemuri River at the base of the Coromandel Peninsula.

They looked at various water quality and ecology indicators, from clarity and nitrates to macroinvertebrate populations.

Students surveyed four different sites to deepen their understanding of the ways land use can impact our waterways.

While many were immersed in the mahi, thankfully no one fell in!



Caretakers talk trash and find treasure

As pillars of the school waste management ecosystem, they play a unique role in supporting improvements and making change stick.

The discussion provided valuable insights for all involved into what other caretakers do to solve waste issues and what options are out there.

It was great to hear the interests and stories from a peer group with plenty in common. And despite the groans of empathy at their shared challenges and bugbears, there was plenty of great experience and advice.

The session continued with presentations focused on reducing waste to help stimulate ideas the caretakers and groundskeepers could take back to their schools.

Waste Administrator Shannon Hansen from Taupō District Council offered ideas about composting to reduce green waste to landfill. Jenni Scothern-King from Enviroschools shared a quick quiz about drains and water use. And Rachel and Heidi from Kids Greening Taupō led a walk around the school grounds, sharing fun facts about native plants (and their inhabitants) and the school planting projects they had been involved with.

The group proceeded to the nearby community garden to see how the volunteers manage their compost and worm farms. They then wrapped up with kai and a reflection, feeling heard, inspired and enthusiastic for another workshop next year.



He rauemi | Resource spotlight

Matariki

As we approach Matariki, you might find inspiration from the ways other Enviroschools have celebrated and reflected at this special time of the year. There are many [stories and ideas on the Enviroschools website](#). We also love the resources on the [ep.education](#) website as well as those in [Te Kete Ipurangi](#).

Ngā ringa hāpai | Enviroschools Waikato schools facilitation team



Back row, left to right, Anna, Michelle, Sara and Adrienne; Front row, left to right, Alex, Jenni and Jo. Circle, Rachael Cheeseman

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Find out more

enviroschools.org.nz

Check out the great selection of national news, resources and ideas in the team area. To register, head to 'team area login' and click 'register'.

Please note that you will need your school/centre's MoE number to complete the registration process. You can find this at educationcounts.govt.nz.

Waikato Enviroschools Facebook

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Join our friendly and supportive closed forum to share inspiration, thoughts, learnings and more.



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