

Hawke's Bay Regional Council – Environmental Education Highlights in 2023

Introduction – Hinerangi Price, Environmental Educator

As we begin the new year, it has been great to look back on 2023 and despite the challenges, what was achieved in schools and environmental spaces around our region has been uplifting.

We have welcomed new Enviroschools and Enviroschools facilitators, reflected on several schools Enviroschools journeys at Bronze and Silver with some amazing kura. Engaged in wai testing, cleaned up nature spaces, planted trees, created composting systems, invested in worm farms, held the Youth Climate Action Forum, and dug deep in many other ways caring for Papatūānuku.

Post cyclone, Sally Chandler, Team Leader and Community Engagement Advisor, was seconded into a cyclone recovery role for the year, and I stepped into Sally's position. Sara Shaw was employed for 6 months to back fill my position and we welcomed new Enviroschools facilitators Helen Howard – Napier/Hastings, Melissa Wiggins – Central Hawke's Bay and Jade Gehlhaar – Wairoa.

We have been spending time on the ground getting to know the Enviroschools community in Hawke's Bay. The focus has been on developing relationships and resources to encourage more environmental education opportunities across the region. We continue to support schools to commit to a long-term sustainability journey, where tamariki/students connect with and explore the environment, then plan, design and take action in their local places in collaboration with their communities.



Haumoana School visit local stream for wai testing.



Akonga tending to their māra kai at Haumoana School and Havelock North Primary School.

Our partners

We continue to liaise and work alongside Hawke's Bay councils wherever there is opportunity to do so. Activities in the last year have included:

- Waste minimisation action with beach clean-up community events at Waitangi Regional Park as well as riparian planting to enhance biodiversity.
- The new Waiaroha Water Facility in Hastings – supporting education resources and advising education facilitator on next steps.
- The education centre at Omārunui landfill – supporting future use of this centre with Enviroschools.

- Connecting with councils through enviro education opportunities in Hawke’s Bay schools – composting and plants in schools.
- Connecting with Napier and Hastings Youth Councils and supporting each other’s initiatives in the community.

We look forward to strengthening these relationships and looking for new opportunities in 2024.

Secondary Schools Environmental Education

With the role of a facilitator dedicated to this sector now in year two we are pleased to acknowledge our achievements as a real highlight this year. New relationships established and existing ones strengthened. This work has been validated with three local secondary schools signing Enviroschools agreements, Havelock North High School, Karamū High School, and Sacred Heart College. These schools will now be supported through facilitation and have access to our online resources. It increases our potential to reach 2,300 students, their teachers, whanau and wider community.

Rangatahi Environment Committee

This year started strong with an initial committee of 18 rangatahi. This included students from Karamū, Napier Girls’, Taradale, Havelock High, Taikura Rudolf Steiner, Central Hawke’s Bay College, Iona, and Woodford House.

They gathered support for environmental initiatives within their own schools, as well as taking part in other activities on behalf of the environment including Sustainable Coastlines Litter Survey, the Youth Climate Action Forum, and a clean-up at Waitangi Regional Park.

The Youth Climate Action Forum – brought rangatahi together from around the region to workshop climate action initiatives and develop a youth perspective, that was shared at the Joint Climate Action Committee hui at the end of 2023. This was well received, and next steps include sharing this vision across councils.



Rangatahi Environment committee 2023, from left: Sustainable coastlines litter survey with Karlie Lett from the National Aquarium of New Zealand, Schools Strike for Climate – student rally, Beach clean-up Waitangi Regional Park.

Hawke’s Bay Secondary Schools Environment Challenge

A successful second year for this initiative. From a starting line-up of seven schools, we finished with four finalists – the winners were:

- Havelock North High School – Attire to Inspire – clothing repurposing.
- Sacred Heart College – Pest control to enhance biodiversity and planting of native fern garden.
- Woodford House – School wide composting and worm farm system

- Karamū High School – veggie beds, worm farm and composting system

HBSS Environment Challenge presentations event 2023, Council Chambers HBRC



Secondary Schools Environmental Resources



A major project in 2023 has culminated in a new suite of environmental teaching web resources now available for local secondary schools. These place-based resources with NCEA standard links have been in development by our education team since July and have involved Regional Council scientists and local secondary teachers.

These resources are also another way to demonstrate the value and benefits of looking after our environment and highlighting the important work that HBRC undertakes.

Hastings Girls High School students at Pekepeka Wetlands

The resources can be found here – [Secondary Schools Environmental Resources](#)

New in 2024

Hawke’s Bay Secondary Schools Enviro Careers Programme

Launching in Term 2 2024 this programme will provide opportunities for local youth to engage with HBRC careers through classroom sessions, workshops, mentorship sessions, and in-house and field work experience.

The programme will provide exposure for youth to the innerworkings of council and help promote pathways to council employment, as well as leadership in environmental action in the community. Over the course of the programme, secondary students will gain skills and confidence around career choices as well as develop work readiness and an awareness of expectations in the workforce.



Water testing at local awa

The Local Environmental Action Fund (LEAF)

This fund supports schools, non-profit and community groups with environmental projects that reflect sustainability initiatives and biodiversity benefits.

Leaf Fund recipients 2023-24 year

- Wairoa Primary School – \$598 towards construction of school bottle greenhouse using repurposed glass bottles.
- Karamū High School – \$696 towards school Māra kai
- Carlyle Kindergarten – \$380 towards kindergarten garden growing project

- Taradale East Kindergarten – \$750 towards water conservation project
- Eskdale School – \$750 towards school native tree restoration
- Mahora School – \$750 Rongoa area with school Māra kai
- St Columba’s Church – \$750 towards Climate Action Community event
- Hastings Intermediate School – \$750 towards Ahu Māra project
- Lakeview Kindergarten – \$629 towards Te Ngahere Ōtaia
- Best Start Havelock North – \$650 towards Kaitiakitanga in Action
- Ruakituri School – \$750 towards Māra Kai
- Maraekakaho Early Childhood Centre – \$618 towards Community Vegetable Garden.

Eskdale School students native planting project



Enviroschools Facilitator Reports 2023

Central Hawke’s Bay Enviroschools Facilitator - Melissa Wiggins

Having been part of the team for approximately six months it has been a major push to connect with our Central Hawke’s Bay Enviroschools. We currently have 11 including three kindergartens.

While they are all at different levels of engagement I have enjoyed getting into these lovely kura and meeting the teachers and tamariki.

Highlights in 2023

Discovering great connections within the Central Hawke’s Bay community, with local groups and experts providing support and in some cases I have been able to strengthen those relationships further. In term 4 I have run water testing with Argyll East School and Elsthorpe School at their local awa with plans underway with 3 other schools keen to do this in term one.

My monthly newsletter is a way of sharing information between our local schools and keeping them informed as to what is available, like funding opportunities through the Regional Council LEAF fund. I have also created a private Facebook page for Principals, teachers, and whanau to see up to date information and a place to share ideas and photos. The thinking behind this is for our Central Hawke’s Bay schools to help each other and work together, rather than in isolation.

I have been building connections within the wider Environmental Education community. The Garden to Table programme is already successful within Hawkes Bay. Jo Moorhead, who leads the programme, and I are hoping to encourage Central Hawke’s Bay Schools to see the value in her kaupapa and join up.

It has been great to see the likes of Pamū (previously Landcorp), landowners and community support Elsthorpe School with their learning opportunities. In Term 3 Richard Scott a parent of the school and manager of Te Apiti Station, organised for students to do an enquiry around a local waterway running from a catchment on their property. This created an opportunity for Central Hawke’s Bay District Council, myself as the Enviroschools Facilitator, Iwi and community members to share their knowledge with the children.

I was fortunate to source Manuka seedlings from Comvita and distributed by Tukituki Land Care to share with our schools. These were very well received.

Seeing how successful the hives are at Sherwood School, and hearing interest from other schools wanting hives, I have been in contact with Kintail Honey.

Challenges 2023

With several schools having a change in principal and staff, the momentum and focus on Enviroschools has dropped. To re-inspire, motivate, and support these schools I have scheduled sessions to unpack “Me and My Environment” in term one.

Plans for 2024 include

- Encouraging greater use of our online resources
- Plan for a CHB ‘enviro day’ incorporating the wider community and businesses.
- Undertaking national Enviroschools training
- Maintain regular contact to share this incredible kaupapa and deepening Enviroschools experience’s for both myself and the regions schools.

Success for me in 2024 will be to see more Central Hawke's Bay Schools signing up to the incredible programme that is EnviroSchools NZ.

Napier / Hastings EnviroSchools Facilitator - Helen Howard

I am loving being part of the Hawke's Bay EnviroSchools team having joined six months ago. In my Rohe there are 22 EnviroSchools and I have touched base with them all. Schools appreciate the support of facilitation to help them reach their Sustainability Goals and guide them through the EnviroSchools process. I have been sending out regular pānui and have been able to connect some of the schools with local groups and experts.

Highlights in 2023

I have facilitated two EnviroSchools Silver Reflections which was a learning process for both myself and the schools involved. Te Kura O Pakipaki reflected in September which was a wonderful day of the ākongā sharing rongoā, planting to the Maramataka, and their inspiring Atua wearable arts with their kura whānau.

Napier Central School held a Reflection Day in November where the ākongā shared a variety of activities that have been happening across the school this year including - predator trapping, māra kai and fruit trees, a Garden to Table programme and specialist recycling. Representatives from the BOT and PTA and Predator Free Mataruahou and Garden to Table were present to share in the school's successes. I was supported by experienced Facilitators from Te Tairāwhiti.

Other action I have initiated included three schools attending a composting wānanga with Hastings District Council; two connected with a local dotterel protection group for talks and field trips to visit the local population of birds; and two schools undertook water testing at a local awa.

I have also been building connections within the wider Environmental Education community. Jo Moorhead from Garden to Table and I ran a Rēwena Bread Bug Wānanga at Haumoana School in late October which was attended by kaiako from six different EnviroSchools. It was a great opportunity to connect with them in a group situation and also with

each other to teach them some Science learning and matauranga Māori that they could take back to their classrooms.

I am also in contact with Heidi from Predator Free Mataruahou who has been working closely with Napier Central School and I have recommended to two other schools that they might want her to come in and present to the ākongā about trapping etc.

I have been able to collect native rākau from the Napier City Council nursery at Waiohiki and deliver them to three different schools, and also deliver vegetable seedlings from the community group Magic Beans to five different schools for their māra kai.

I have also referred schools to funding opportunities available through both the LEAF fund and Te Puni Kōkiri.

Challenges 2023

For different reasons some schools are not as engaged as they once were. To help with this I have arranged two teacher only days with two of these kura as an opportunity to re-invigorate sustainability action and remind them all the great opportunities EnviroSchools as to offer.

Two kura who have ākongā with intellectual and/or physical disabilities which brings its own set of challenges. I am looking forward to strengthening relationships with these kura to bring about connections that will be beneficial for both schools.

Plans for 2024 include

- Encouraging Enviro Groups to share their mahi with the wider school community
- Encouraging greater use of EnviroSchools online resources
- Hold an EnviroSchools cluster hui to highlight the transition to schools kaupapa
- Look to have another Principals and Lead Teachers Breakfast hui
- Attend EnviroSchools kaupapa training in March
- Supporting several schools looking to reflect on their EnviroSchools journey in the year ahead

Wairoa Enviroschools Facilitator – Jade Gehlhaar

I currently have nine schools enrolled as Enviroschools in Te Wairoa district. I have had high engagement with only three of these schools for the most part of this year, due to the cyclone's aftereffects. I have also spent a small amount of time helping and touching base with two of the ECE centres in Te Wairoa, specifically the North Clyde, Nga Tamariki, as they were greatly affected post cyclone.

Successes

Regardless of the barriers we have had, I have had good communication with most of the schools and they are showing a lot of interest engaging in 2024. While deepening the Enviroschools kaupapa has been challenging, this hasn't stopped some awesome things happening in the schools. We have been able to start planning for projects and tying Enviroschools resources into the school curriculum.

I have established some positive relationships and have had positive feedback about what we have achieved so far in the journey. We have started hands-on projects and discussed what our students and staff would like to achieve in 2024.

I have established a Facebook page to be able to share parts of Wairoa Enviroschools journey, which I am hoping to utilise a lot more in 2024, and hopefully use as a tool for the schools to inspire each other.

In Summary

2023 was a steady year with some growth and new activities being launched. We will build on these achievements in 2024 and look forward to being a key player in the environmental education space across our rohe for many years to come.

We will share the work of our Councils whenever we can and sharing the stories of our wonderful kura will be a priority to focus on.

Finally, we welcome Sally back to the team and we both wish to thank all our funders, facilitators, akonga, kaiako, partners, and collaborators. It takes a team.

I orea te tuatara ka patu ki waho

A problem is solved by continuing to find solutions.

HBRC Education Hub

I have made connections to the local nursery and there have been conversations around connecting to local marae, to be a part of new planting projects and community events that come up in the future.

Challenges

Challenges, especially for our rural schools have included access, flooding and staff shortages. We also have new builds in town, and a lot of staff changes over the district. Another aspect is that the cyclone has affected a lot of people in their personal lives and homes, and so they are not as engaged with any programmes outside of general schoolwork.

Goals for 2024

I want to focus on getting in and building relationships, especially with schools I have not had much engagement with so far. I understand why some of our schools just didn't have the capacity in 2023 but are showing interest in picking up in term one. Setting up a regular schedule of school visits over the term is the aim. Look to understand their barriers and find solutions.

The main town schools have asked me to be there a lot more to hit the ground running in term one, to facilitate and help with picking up older projects that have fallen away. I would love to have the schools meeting, exploring how each will be doing different projects and sharing knowledge.

I also want to encourage more community-based projects, learning and supporting each other.



Enviro Education Team August 2023, from left - Hinerangi, Helen, Melissa, Jade and Sara.

Collection of Hawke's Bay EnviroSchools and environmental education initiatives in the community and schools 2023.



Enviroschools Te Matau-a-Māui

