

Waikato ENVIROSCHOOLS

He mihi

Welcome to the Waikato Enviroschools newsletter.

We know term 3 is incredibly busy for many schools. We hope you can take 10 minutes to have a cuppa and enjoy catching up with everything that's happening in the Enviroschools community, including inspiring stories from local schools, fantastic resources for students and information about the upcoming Enviroschools fund.

Congratulations to Te Kauwhata School for their Holistic Reflection last term. It has been wonderful to welcome new Enviroschools Orini Primary, Rototuna Junior High, Pūriri School, Coroglen School, and Te Kūiti High School – nau mai, haere mai ki waenganui a tātou!

Term 2 saw the return of our annual Climate Summit for secondary students. Enviroleaders from Thames High School, Hauraki Plains College, Morrinsville College, Te Aroha College, Paeroa College, Waikato Waldorf School, Onewhero Area School and Fairfield College spent three busy days at the Aratiatia Community Marae exploring climate change and identifying meaningful action projects. You can check out [this video](#) and [read more here](#) to see what it was all about.

We also had an amazing showcase of culinary talent and gardening knowledge at our 2024 Māra Kai Challenge! Six teams from Woodstock, Southwell, Mātangi, Hukanui and Onewhero schools shared their skills and wowed our judges (Sara from Enviroschools and Kate from Garden to Table). Check out [this video](#) of the Cook Off Day.

[Here](#) you can see how Ōtaua School and Horotiu School celebrated their in-school Māra Kai Challenge.

We hope this newsletter offers an engaging read. Please feel free to forward it on 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. 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.

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

14 regional partners

215 Enviroschools

**50
ECE centres**

**166
schools**

**52,800
tamariki and students**

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

**49% 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 Conservation Week

2-8 September

Join us for fun and inspiring days to celebrate Conservation Week 2024. These interschool events are designed to bring together groups of students from schools and multiple community experts from around the Waikato to learn, be inspired and celebrate action for nature. Please register your interest before 20 August.

3 September – Fairfield Project, Kirikiriroa Hamilton (fully booked)

5 September – Lake Moananui, Tokoroa

5 September – Kauaeranga Visitor Centre, Thames

If your school is unable to organise or attend an event for Conservation Week but wants to be part of the kaupapa, check out [these ideas](#). We've created this resource to help make it easy to celebrate and take meaningful action with whatever time, capacity and resources are available to you.

For Teachers Enviroschools fund

21 August - 2 October

Waikato Regional Council's Enviroschools Fund assists Enviroschools with environmental projects, providing one-off grants to initiatives that directly enhance and/or benefit the environment or provide environmental education.

Applications can be for up to \$5000. Contact your facilitator for advice on the application process and check out the process to apply, [here](#).

Connection to Place PLD

24 October, 3.30 - 5pm, online via Zoom

In this professional learning and development session, we will explore building authentic, meaningful relationships with the local community, iwi, hapū, and marae. We'll discuss linking local knowledge, history and connection to place across various subjects and curriculum areas, and we'll hear inspiring stories from schools with diverse approaches to engaging with this kaupapa. Register [here](#).

Kūmara wānanga

Workshop 1: Wednesday, 11 September, Te Parapa Garden, Hamilton Gardens, 3.30-5.00pm

We will be holding a series of workshops in term 3 and 4 to help grow understanding and skills in the cultivation of kūmara – with cultural context and hands-on learning.

Our first workshop will be held towards the end of term 3, with local experts sharing their knowledge and stories and some practical tips on getting started growing your own plants. This will be followed up in term 4 with a planting workshop at a community garden.

The workshops will be based in Kirikiriroa Hamilton but resources from the workshops will also be shared online. Register your interest [here](#).



Ecological Building Challenge

Term 4

To celebrate Outdoor Classroom Day (7 November), why not challenge your students to be creative and explore natural building materials outdoors? Check out the [ecological building theme area](#) for ideas on everything from model making and hut building to animal shelters and nature connection activities. Or why not take inspiration from [this video](#)?

Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori

14 - 21 September

Check out these [resources and ideas](#) for bringing more reo Māori into your classroom.

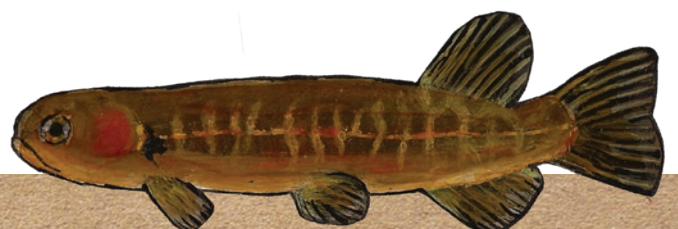


Call for research participants

Sarah McCarrison is seeking educational leaders, who have an influence over the decisions made in New Zealand schools, to be involved in her research project at Massey University. The leaders would participate in a 45-minute individual interview to support her Master of Education degree. You do not necessarily need to be a principal or deputy principal to participate.

This research aims to contribute to the broader effort of addressing global environmental challenges by equipping educational leaders with the knowledge and tools to foster eco-literacy and sustainable practices within their institutions.

For more information, please email sarahmccarrison77@gmail.com or course coordinator Dr Philippa Butler at p.j.butler@massey.ac.nz.





NZAE biannual conference

Tuesday, 1 October, online via Zoom (registrations open in August)

This conference's presentations will highlight the latest environmental education research in Aotearoa New Zealand. You can register to attend one or both sessions for opportunities to network and share.

Morning session: Stories of Hope and Action, 9am-12.30pm

Inspiring keynotes and case studies from Aotearoa educators and rangatahi.

Afternoon session: Research Spotlights, 1.15pm-4pm

Presentations highlighting the latest environmental education research within Aotearoa (see call for proposals below).

This event is free for teachers, students and NZAEE members. Registrations will open in August, when more details about speakers will be provided.

Call for proposals

Enviroschools are invited to submit a proposal for a 30-minute online session. NZAEE is particularly interested in stories about hope and action.

Proposals of 200 words or less should be submitted by 18 August to Chris Eames at c.eames@waikato.ac.nz.

He tīwhiri | Quick sustainability tips

'Shake and fold' like Joe Smith

Have you heard of Joe Smith's 'shake and fold' technique? It transforms hand drying into a fun and eco-friendly activity! He's made a [video](#) that we recommend watching with your students.

After washing, give your hands 12 vigorous shakes to shed excess water, then fold a single paper towel in half to finish drying them. This simple yet effective method dramatically reduces paper towel use, empowering students to make a big impact with a small change. We hope this tip can be particularly helpful for those schools where paper towels are one of the big solid waste challenges.



Ngā hua | Our stories

Could gully restoration put the tuna back in Rototuna?

Enviroleaders at Rototuna Primary School have been learning about fresh water, including how to tell if a stream is healthy and the factors that can impact water quality.

The school's name, Rototuna, means lake of eels, and the Ngāti Wairere whenua used to be abundant with them. The school even named their buildings after the different waterways tuna move through during their lifetimes.

With the taonga species being so special to the area and school, they were excited to get down to their school gully to do some testing. They checked water clarity, temperature, velocity and pH levels, and conducted an assessment of the habitat for living creatures, too.

They didn't find eels this time, but they hope that, through their gully restoration, they might be able to bring them back someday soon. If you're interested in carrying out a similar inquiry with your students, please let your facilitator know as we have stream study kits available to borrow.



Hauraki College investigates waste



Hauraki College may be new to Enviroschools, but they're diving in with enthusiasm and energy. In their first meeting, students filled in Enviroschools Facilitator Jo about the current waste situation at their school and how they want to drive change.

Using the zero-waste theme area and looking at case studies, they decided a good starting point would be to conduct a waste survey to better understand students' thoughts and behaviours around their waste system, and to do a waste audit to better understand what and how much the school adds to the landfill each day.

They conducted the audit with the support of Lucci Hennah, from the Thames Seagull Centre, and Facilitator Jo. The students were amazed to discover how much rubbish they could divert from landfill – which they did by taking their recyclables down the road to a new community recycling centre that had just opened!

With the information from the survey and the waste audit results, the students held an interactive educational session at the whole school assembly later that week.

Now the students are brainstorming different ways they could effectively make sustainable changes. If you're interested in carrying out a similar inquiry with your students, please let your facilitator know as we have waste audit kits available to borrow.

Nature connection at Kio Kio Camp



'Keen To Be Green' students at Tatuanui School

At Tatuanui School, the Keen to be Green (KTBG) students have transformed their native bush area into a vibrant, interactive sanctuary. With guidance and support from learning assistant Brenda Wratt, these dedicated students work during their lunchtimes to care for their native bush.

Visitors are welcomed by a notice board with seasonal displays, currently featuring frog-related information and jokes, and students have just built a small pond for a frog they spotted recently.

The bush is also home to an elaborate bug hotel made from recycled materials, as well as organic bug hotels created simply by arranging large piles of logs, sticks, flax and weeds.

The plants, birds, insects and fungi are flourishing in the native bush, and KTBG (and staff) are always coming up with creative ideas to make the area a special place to be.

This year, they worked together to create a blindfold trail. Student Ella explains: "Using a blind fold, students hold on to rope which guides them through the bush."

The passion and commitment of the KTBG students means they have created a space they are clearly proud of. It's a demonstration of love for learning and genuine student empowerment.



In a stunning scenic reserve near Kāwhia, Kio Kio School's Rimu class were recently connecting with the whenua, learning all about bush ecology and beach care.

Enviroschools Facilitator Anna Cunningham provided support for the camp experience, running a series of nature connection activities for the students. The sessions were designed to encourage the students to slow down, explore the ngahere using all of their senses, and maybe notice something that they hadn't noticed before.

The students relished the opportunity to connect to te taiao. Contact your facilitator if you would like support planning your school camp.



Creative and colourful bottle cap mural



The rangatahi at Tīrau School have been building on their Crocodile Garden project over the past few years. With the support of their lead teacher, Richelle, they decided their project this year was going to be creating a bottle cap mural for the māra kai entrance.

During term 1, they started design visioning, looking at their local place and history, what they loved about Tīrau township and their school, and what was unique to their community. They acknowledged the cabbage trees as part of their school logo, the corrugated iron designs that Tīrau has become famous for, and the Ōraka Stream that runs through a local reserve.

In term 2, they put their ideas into action. Family and friends had been collecting bottle caps from milk bottles and fizzy drinks, and hundreds of these were then screwed onto painted plywood. It was a laborious job, requiring concentration and focus. Other students joined in on the process before and after school, and during wet lunchtimes.

The finished result is an impressive display of perseverance and patience – it's a welcoming bright addition to the māra kai entrance.

Creating an outdoor classroom at Waikato Montessori

Waikato Montessori students and teachers have a vision: bringing the natural bush environment to their school to support outdoor learning.

Students had seen the impact of planting kōwhai to attract tūi. They've also been involved in the Trees for Survival programme for a number of years, so know the incredible results of planting trees.

They wanted to create a dedicated area at school that would allow them to access a bush environment at any time and take their learning outside. The vision was to transform a disused driveway into an outdoor classroom and ngahere.



Elstow-Waihou's solution to noise pollution



The sun was shining for Elstow-Waihou Combined School's recent planting day – a culmination of lots of learning, planning and preparation.

In 2023, the school underwent a holistic reflection. One of the next steps identified was addressing the noise issue from heavy traffic on the school fence line. What could be a great outdoor learning space was limited by the volume of noise from the road.

Enter the keen Envirogroup to brainstorm ecological building options for a sound barrier! They worked hard on researching appropriate native plants to create a green wall that would reduce noise and increase biodiversity.

Students mapped out the site, and calculated how many plants and how much mulch they would need to order. On the planting day, the school gathered for karakia and waiata before getting to work, planting and mulching around approximately 250 trees!

The plants have yet to reach their full noise-cancelling potential, but the area looks amazing and the peace and tranquillity it offers will only continue to grow.

A small group of year 7 and 8 students worked together on designs, and Principal Diane Bhana put together a successful application to the Waikato Regional Council EnviroSchools Fund to help bring the vision to life.

Work began in term 4 last year, building up the soil, removing unwanted plants and reusing garden elements like edging. Reflecting on the progress, one of the students, Annabelle, said: "It's a transformation! It looks really cool and I'd like to do schoolwork out here."

It's clear the students are feeling very proud of the area and are looking forward to spending more time learning outside. "It will be really nice to do maths out here and bring books out here to read," they said. "It's nice and calm and quiet. You're not always surrounded by people who keep talking. We can hear the tūi."

Principal Diane says: "We learned that, with determination and creative vision, our barren gravel area could become a beautiful native area. We could transform something that was quite unused into an accessible and educational spot."

He rauemi | Resource spotlight

Introducing Rachael

Rachael Cheeseman has recently joined the Waikato EnviroSchools team! As well as facilitating at schools in the North Waikato and Thames Coromandel, she's here to help Waikato schools access two exciting biosecurity education resources.

With biosecurity threats to our unique ecosystems becoming more significant, these resources are designed to equip students with essential knowledge for environmental protection. You can read a little about the programmes below. If your school is interested in having Rachael come to facilitate either of these fantastic biosecurity education programmes, please email rachael.cheeseman@waikatoregion.govt.nz or get in touch with your facilitator.

Kauri Protection Education Programme

This engaging learning experience is designed for students aged 8 and up. The programme includes a range of educational tools, such as an incredible [virtual reality experience](#), hands-on activities, and a Wētā Workshop kauri model. Each 90-minute session is interactive and immersive, providing students with essential skills to help combat kauri dieback disease. Find out more about the programme [here](#), see it in action [here](#) and contact your facilitator to book your experience.

Freshwater Biosecurity Guardians

Designed with busy teachers in mind, these two new and complimentary freshwater biosecurity modules require minimal preparation but deliver rich learning outcomes and fun creative activities. Students will gain a solid understanding of freshwater biosecurity and develop predator management skills in the process. Rachael is here to assist teachers keen to explore this kaupapa and bring Freshwater Biosecurity Guardians to life.



INTRODUCING FRESHWATER BIOSECURITY GUARDIANS



Ngā ringa hāpai | Enviroschools Waikato schools facilitation team

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Back row, left to right: Sara, Alex, Cami

Middle row, left to right: Michelle, Anna, Jenni

Front row, left to right: Rachael, Jo, Adrienne

Find out more

enviroschools.org.nz

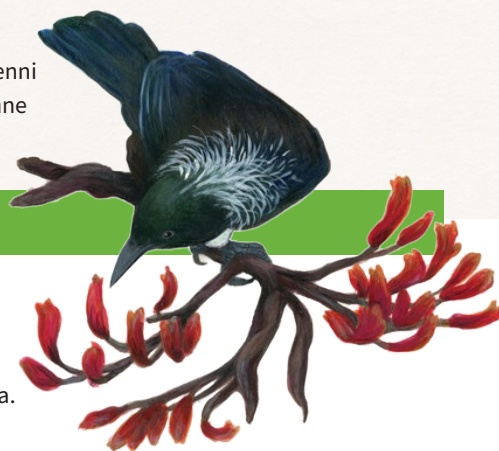
Check out the great selection of national news, resources, and ideas in the team area. To register, head to 'team area login' and click 'register'.

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

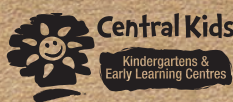
Waikato Enviroschools Facebook

facebook.com/groups/waikatoenviroschools

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



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Ideas for action this Conservation Week

Build a wētā hotel
to provide safe habitat for this native species

Build a bird feeder
that offers [food sources for native birds](#)

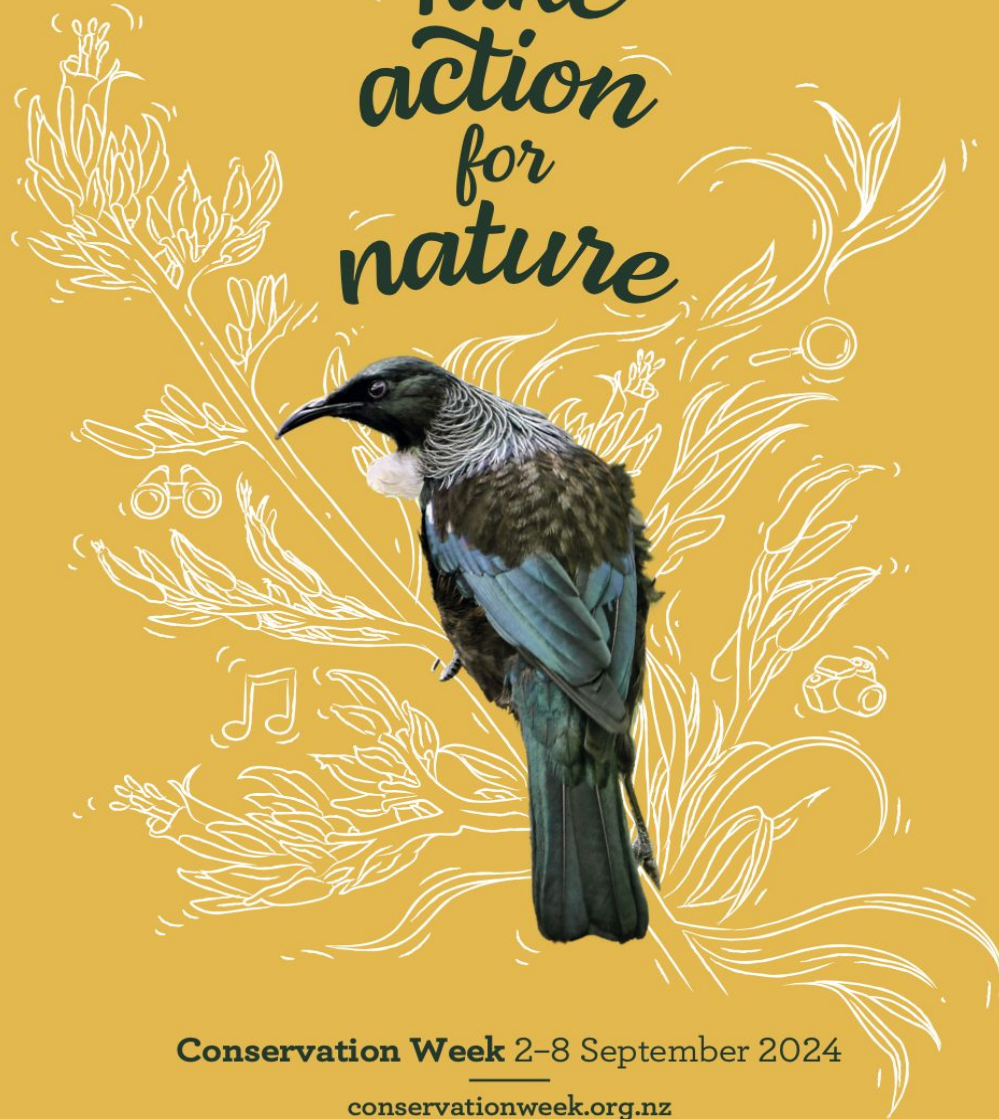
Plant native trees

Pest trapping
to protect native species

Organise a litter pick

Remove [weeds](#)
from your local gully

Take
action
for
nature



Conservation Week 2–8 September 2024

conservationweek.org.nz

Ideas for action this Conservation Week

Scatter flower seeds
that will grow into [food sources for bees](#)

Take part in a [citizen science project](#)
to help grow our collective ecological knowledge

Encourage others to take action
by sharing resources and ideas

... don't forget to share your mahi on the [Waikato Enviroschools](#) Facebook page!

