

ENVIROSCHOOLS

TE TAI O POUTINI - WEST COAST

Creating a healthy, peaceful, and sustainable world through learning and taking action together.

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26





Kia ora koutou.

As I reflect on the past year, I'm filled with gratitude for the enthusiasm, commitment, and creativity shown by our schools, early childhood centres, learners, and community partners across the West Coast. Together, we've continued to deliver learning experiences that connect young people with their local environment and empower them to take meaningful action. We've also welcomed two new schools into the Enviroschools West Coast network, growing our community from 23 to 25 schools and centres. This growth reflects the increasing commitment to sustainability and caring for the environment across our region.

One of the highlights of the year has been spending more time with classes through a range of Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) activities. Seeing students engage with their local places and develop a deeper understanding of their environment is always a reminder of the value of hands-on learning.

Supporting educators has also remained a key focus. Through our teacher professional development opportunities, we've been able to connect educators, share ideas, and build confidence in weaving sustainability and place-based learning into curriculum activities and school life.

Looking to the future, I'm encouraged by the strong relationships we're continuing to build, particularly our new partnership with the West Coast Regional Council. Working together will add to the support we can offer schools and create even more opportunities for students to connect with their local environment, develop new skills, and contribute positively to the future of our region.

Thank you to our funders, partners, schools, and communities for your continued support. Your investment enables Enviroschools West Coast to foster learning that is meaningful, locally relevant, and lasting. I look forward to building on this year's achievements together.

He mihi nui,

Lauren Kelley
Regional Coordinator and Buller Facilitator

National Overview

Enviroschools is a nationwide network with over 1,650 schools and early childhood centres empowering learners of all ages to build resilient, connected communities through learning and taking action together. Toimata is the national body for Enviroschools and works with a large network of regional partners. Early childhood centres and schools commit to a long-term sustainability journey, where tamariki (students) connect with and explore the environment as part of their curriculum, then plan, design and take action in their local places in collaboration with their communities.

Local Overview

There are **25 Enviroschools on the West Coast**, 9 in Buller, 7 in Grey, and 9 in Westland district. This is 48% of all the schools and early childhood centres in the region. We reach around 26% of the regional population through our work with students, staff and school whānau.

We are supported by all three district councils and the Department of Conservation. West Coast Regional Council has become a partner for the 2026/27 year. Enviroschools Te Tai o Poutini has two local part-time staff employed by Toimata with funding from our regional partners.



Our Guiding Principles – Ngā Mātāpono

Empowered Learners participate in genuine ways in their community. They feel connected to the whenua and support each other as a learning community to create meaningful change and hopeful action.

Learning for Sustainability is a holistic, action and future-focused approach to learning, that engages our whole selves and addresses all aspects of our local and global environment.

Honouring Te Ao Māori acknowledges the intrinsic relationship of tangata whenua with this land and their insights, knowledge and ways of being in relation to the taiao.

Respect for Diversity is celebrated, and all forms of identity and ability are respected to foster a society that is fair, peaceful and cooperative. Cultural traditions and practices from all people are experienced, valued and appreciate.

Sustainable Communities act in ways that nurture all aspects of nature, including people, now and in the future. By working together and supporting each other we create safe, healthy, equitable and thriving communities.



The Enviroschools programme is specifically designed to meet multiple local government outcomes and is supported by 80% of New Zealand councils.

Through our five guiding principles and holistic, longterm approach, we foster sustainability and connectedness in the community and empower young people to participate in a meaningful way taking action for the future. Practicing our kaupapa of creating a healthy, peaceful, and sustainable world, Enviroschools contribute directly to West Coast councils' community, environmental, and waste reduction outcomes.

During the year, Facilitators worked with our local Enviroschools (early childhood, primary, composite, and secondary) across the region, delivering **100+ facilitated visits**. Support ranged from one-off workshops and field trips to ongoing mentoring with established Enviroschools, including regular engagement with groups such as Hokitika Primary's Taiao Warriors student enviro group.



25

Enviroschools
(+2 in 2025/26)



2,400

tamariki taking
action for the future



reaching

26%

of the regional
population



100+

Facilitated
school visits



Map showing regional spread of
participating Enviroschools
(starred), July 2026



Learning and Action Summary

The Enviroschools programme has a holistic approach that enables schools and centres to engage in a variety of learning and action each year that strengthens long-term sustainability, knowledge and change.



Theme/Topic

School support, activities/visits

Living Landscapes

20+ Activities and learning involving biodiversity, habitat restoration, trapping and native tree planting

Nature Connection

15+ Opportunities for students to experience nature and connect with their local places through facilitated exploration activities

Zero Waste

6+ waste minimisation initiatives including waste audits, beach litter awareness and waste sorting systems

Water of Life

10+ Freshwater and marine ecosystem focussed sessions including stream health monitoring, holistic view of catchments and the importance of clean freshwater

Māra Kai & Food Systems

10+ activities supporting school gardens, composting, food resilience and sustainable food systems

Te Ao Māori

Woven throughout the programme with place based learning, connections with local hapū and pūrākau, Matariki and the Awa Arahura event we organised

Professional Development

35+ sessions for teachers including workshops, staff reflection & goal setting meetings, curriculum planning support and regional networking opportunities



By District:



There are 9 Enviroschools in Buller - 7 of the total 9 schools (78%), 1 of the total 4 early childhood centres (25%), and The Nurture School, a local bush school.

- Karamea Area School
- Granity School
- St Canice's School
- Westport North School - NEW!
- The Nurture School - NEW!
- Maruia School
- Reefton Area School
- Reefton Early Learning Centre
- Sacred Heart School



There are 7 Enviroschools in Grey - 4 of the total 14 schools (29%), 2 of the total 8 early childhood centres (25%) and the education centre at Shantytown which reaches many schools each year.

- Barrytown School
- Paparoa Range School
- Grey Main School
- Paroa School
- Kidsfirst Kindergartens Karoro
- Wild Places Education
- Marsden Valley Education Centre



There are 9 Enviroschools in Westland - 6 of the total 12 schools (50%) and 3 of the total 4 early childhood centres (75%). Westland High School and South Westland Area School have recently joined our network.

- Hokitika Primary School
- Westland High School
- Kidsfirst Kindergartens Hokitika
- Active Explorers Hokitika
- Harper Park Early Learning Centre
- Kaniere School
- Kokatahi-Kowhitirangi School
- Sout Westland Area School
- Haast School

Funding Summary

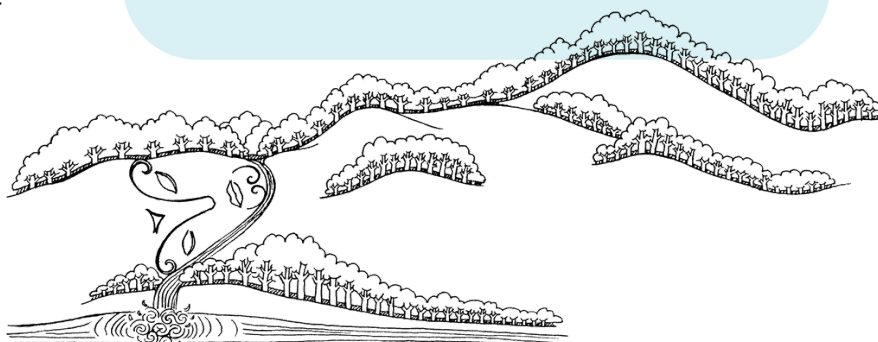
Buller District Council

Funding Received 2025/26: \$43,000 + GST

Confirmed Funding 2026/27: \$47,000 + GST

Funding agreement up for renewal in 2027

Thank you for your support from the Waste Disposal Levy Funding. We look forward to your continued support in the future as we grow together.



Making an Impact - Our Highlights

Growing our network

This year we welcomed two new schools into the West Coast Enviroschools network, both in Buller District.

Westport North School has a passionate team of kaiako and students keen on learning in their local environment. They have a beautiful māra kai on the school grounds and a hard-working garden group that looks after the māra as well as cooking and sharing the mahi, learning and kai with fellow students.

The Nurture School is a forest school that grew from the belief that connection through meaningful learning is the foundation for great education. Nature serves as their classroom, with children learning outdoors each day. Their approach is inspired by international best practice, yet grounded in the Buller landscape and community partnerships.

We have enjoyed their enthusiasm and the collaborative approach they both take towards teaching and learning together.



Getting to know the Awa Arahura

In February we had an incredible day out at the Awa Arahura with Te Rua and Sons Pounamu Trails. We were blessed with stunning weather and a strong turnout of passionate kaiako from across Te Tai o Poutini, all coming together to learn, reflect and deepen our understanding of place. Te Rua and his family shared a generous and powerful kōrero - grounding us in pūrākau, local history and the wairua of the Arahura.

This event was made possible with funding from the Sargood Bequest.



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BEQUEST
ACCESS • PARTICIPATION • INSPIRATION



Dialing up our facilitated class sessions

Over the past year, we have dialled up our facilitated class programming, delivering more than 60 sessions with classes and student enviro groups. Topics have included nature connection, growing kai, freshwater, understanding ecosystems, and te ao Māori.

These hands-on, outdoor learning experiences connect with the curriculum and put the Enviroschools kaupapa and Guiding Principles into practice. Through modelling Enviroschools resources, engaging students in practical activities, and encouraging exploration, we have fostered students' curiosity about the environment and supported the development of leadership skills.

Measuring waste, maximizing impact

Several Enviroschools have focussed on waste over the past year. Grey Main School and Active Explorers did whole school/centre waste audits with Grey Main including waste reduction and art with recycled materials in their whole school action days. Haast, Barrytown, and Paroa schools have continued their Sustainable Coastlines beach clean up mahi and Paroa School worked with Grey District Council to design and put up beach signage encouraging the community to keep the beach clean for everyone.

We have a Zero Waste teaching kit and a Waste Audit kit that we loan out to schools.

Making a splash

Students from Sacred Heart School in Reefton made a splash with some hands-on water activities in August. They explored the water cycle and discovered just how little of Earth's water is fresh, safe and available to drink. They even found out how much water is inside us. A highlight was the field trip to a local creek where they found all sorts of freshwater critters like mayfly and caddisfly

larvae while learning how to monitor stream health.

It was a fun, eye-opening day – and a great first step toward planning out their own sustainable water-saving system!





Community Health Day

South Westland Area School enjoyed a wonderful community health day in August with the whole school coming together with whānau and community to take part in a range of hands-on learning experiences.

Students rotated through activities, learning the skills of planting and caring for native trees, while also exploring the importance of restoring local habitats. Senior students stepped up to share presentations on adolescence, offering their peers insights into this important stage of life. Te Whatu Ora supported the day with engaging sessions on health and wellbeing. It was a day full of learning, teamwork, and connection – a real celebration of community spirit in action.



Reflecting and goal setting

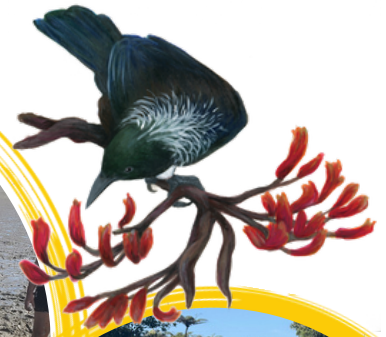
We have continued to focus on supporting schools to reflect, celebrate progress, and plan for the future as an important part of our facilitation, with a growing number of schools participating in these annual sessions. Through dedicated reflection and goal-setting, teaching staff gain the opportunity to look back on achievements, identify challenges, and explore next steps together. Using the Enviroschools context, these conversations help schools recognise their strengths, identify shared goals and ideas, and develop meaningful actions, connections, and priorities that will continue to strengthen their Enviroschools journey. It also helps us identify how we can best support them over the following year.



Mountains to Sea Learning

In February, year 7-8 students from Westport North School took a deep dive into the Orowaiti Estuary. Together with DOC rangers, they carried out marine metre squared investigations, identifying species and observing the variety of life found within the estuary ecosystem. The visit provided a valuable opportunity to connect classroom learning with real-world experiences. It was also a chance to have some fun in the mud!

The estuary visit was followed up with a day on the Denniston Plateau in May to discover a completely different ecosystem. The follow up visit brought the concept of *ki uta ki tai* (mountains to sea) to life, as students learned how the wider water catchment influences the biodiversity and ecology of streams and rivers all the way to the coast. We were joined by staff from the West Coast Regional Council. Students enjoyed exploring the plateau and Whareatea Creek, learning about roroa (great spotted kiwi), and discovering how predator trapping helps protect our native wildlife. Despite the chilly weather, everyone was excited to spot native skinks in the rocky landscape and koura in the stream!



Partnering with Regional Council

We're excited to celebrate a new partnership with the West Coast Regional Council. By working together over the year ahead, we hope to create even more opportunities to support schools and centres across Te Tai o Poutini to connect with their local environment, empower young people, and build more sustainable communities.

This partnership reflects a shared commitment to nurturing environmental stewardship, strengthening community connections, and supporting meaningful, place-based learning that has lasting impact.

A heartfelt thank you to the West Coast Regional Council for their support, collaboration, and shared vision.



WEST COAST
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Tracking for nature and the community at Lake Kaniere

Tamariki from Kaniere School have been working with the Lake Kaniere Property Owner's Association to set up tracking tunnels to monitor predator control as part of the fight to protect native wildlife. They're learning first-hand the 'how' and 'why' of caring for our precious taonga – ngā manu. We're so proud of these young guardians stepping up to care for their local environment and fostering a sustainable community.

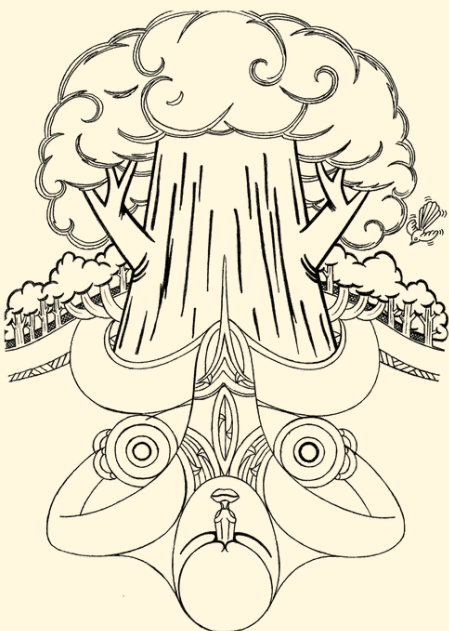


Inspirational hikoi

Our teacher professional development this year has focussed on inspiration and connection. As well as the Awa Arahura experience, in February we also facilitated a trip for kaiako from Grey and Westland districts to explore the thriving learning spaces at our two newest Enviroschools in Kawatiri/Westport – The Nurture School and Westport North School – and the community māra kia run by Te Hā o Kawatiri.

In June, we visited Hinewai Reserve on Banks Peninsula – an inspiring place that demonstrates what can happen when nature is given the opportunity to regenerate. We also visited Ladbroke School, where we saw firsthand the impact of a 10-year restoration journey and what an embedded Enviroschool can look and feel like in practice. Over two days, we explored native forest restoration, place-based learning, ecological thinking, and ways of deepening our connection to te taiao. It was a powerful reminder that meaningful change takes time, patience, and a long-term vision.

Alongside practical ideas, these trips also offered valuable time to connect with other educators, share experiences, and reflect on how these learnings could be woven into our own schools and communities.



Ngā mihi nui

A big thank you again to our regional partners, supporting organisations, participating schools and educators for your ongoing commitment to the Enviroschools kaupapa. Together, we are empowering young people to shape a more sustainable future, and we look forward to strengthening these partnerships and continuing this journey together in the year ahead.



Connect with us

We aim to keep our schools and community up to date with Enviroschools activities and opportunities. Please sign up to our pānui (newsletter), which is sent out once per term, by clicking the link below or using the QR code. You can also follow our Facebook page, [Enviroschools Te Tai o Poutini](#).



[Click here to sign up to the West Coast - Te Tai Poutini Pānui](#)

For more information about the Enviroschools programme, visit

www.enviroschools.org.nz.

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