

## Kids Discovery Plant-out 2023 Activities Report

The Kids Discovery Plant-out programme is a successful collaboration between Te Ara Kākāriki and Enviroschools and has been delivered to Selwyn schools for the past ten years. Students have the opportunity to take action to link their learning about native biodiversity in the classroom to restoring a native ecosystem close to their school. Through planting and monitoring days the students become tiaki tamariki, empowered to make a positive difference towards creating habitat for wildlife and improving the health of their local waterways and Te Waihora.

### Te Ara Kākāriki – Canterbury Greenway Trust

Lou Drage coordinates the Kids Discovery Plant-out programme, working with local partners to engage community with native restoration projects on public sites. Lou manages student safety and designs and delivers the plant-out and monitoring days.

Letitia Lum and Nicola Hely coordinate support from our wonderful partners and funders.

Te Ara Kākāriki provides all planting equipment and supplies, including eco-sourced plants and plant guards.

### Enviroschools Canterbury

Enviroschools is an environmental action based programme where young people are empowered to design and lead sustainability projects in their schools, neighbourhoods and country.

During a Kids Discovery Plant-out day students lead action to restore habitat for biodiversity. This action is carried out within the context of their whole school inquiry focus. Matt works with school staff to create activities on the plant-out day that allow deep connection with their Enviroschools theme area and provide opportunities for hands-on action.

Activities are led by enthusiastic experts and encourage students to investigate biodiversity present at the site, reflect on and problem solve issues and create something meaningful to the student.



## The programme

The Kids Discovery Plant-out day is a full day of activity. Activities offered in 2023 included exploring how Māori traditionally valued the area for mahinga kai gathering, searching for terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates and discussing what this can indicate about the health of the ecosystem, identifying trees that are important habitat for our native wildlife and participating in activities from the new EnviroSchools Nature Connections kits.

Te Ara Kākāriki Kaimahi for Nature Restoration Field Workers helped with Kids Discovery Plant-out days, leading activities, assisting with planting and sharing their enthusiasm for restoring native habitats.

## Native restoration sites

We work closely with government agencies to provide opportunities for local schools to engage with their local parks and reserves. Restoration sites are chosen for their proximity to the school, accessibility for use as 'outdoor classrooms' and opportunities for long-term engagement.



## Kids Discovery Plant-out 2023 – the data

In 2023 thirteen school groups participated in a Kids Discovery Plant-out day.

Collectively 900 students planted a total of 4,419 eco-sourced seedlings at sites throughout the Selwyn District.

### Kirwee Recreation Reserve

**Te Kura o Titoki / Kirwee Model School** were invited by Selwyn District Council to plant four native areas in the cemetery for whānau to remember their loved ones. 75 Year 4-6 students planted 300 seedlings and discovered some values of this area. With Matt they explored the waterway and were excited to find high sensitivity invertebrates living there. With Mike they searched for ngāngara / insects in maturing trees, learning about their important role in a healthy ecosystem. With Taua Daphne they considered the traditional uses of native plants, weaving an ika / fish from harakeke already growing at the site.

Supported by Selwyn District Council and Environment Canterbury

### Kakahu Park, Prebbleton

**Te Kura o Taumutu-kuri / Prebbleton School** were invited to continue their work restoring native habitat to a newly developed area of the park. 80 Year 4- 8 students made quick work of planting 400 eco-sourced seedlings on the west side of the park then enjoyed a sausage sizzle.

Supported by Selwyn District Council and Rātā Foundation



## Huritini awa, Stackwoods Bend

Beginning in 2017 Te Ara Kākāriki has been working with **Ngā Puna Tapuwai / Ladbrooks School** to restore habitat at Stackwoods Bend. This year landowner Richard Holyoake invited the students to extend their corridor of native habitat further along his river boundary.

74 Year 3-8 students planted 400 seedlings then walked the river track through the maturing forest. They were proud to experience the wonderful habitat that has resulted from their hard work.

Supported by Selwyn District Council and Trees That Count



## Lincoln Wetlands

Since 2019 **Te Puna o Ararira / Ararira Springs School** students have been assisting Selwyn District Council to restore riparian habitat to local waterways.

Today, 80 Year 5-8 students worked hard to plant 300 seedlings along the waterway. The students investigated how Māori traditionally valued the wetland for mahinga kai gathering and how they moved through the place. Students constructed mōkihi using korari / flax stalks and used sustainable gathering and packaging techniques to gift some rongoā rākau.

Supported by Selwyn District Council and Rātā Foundation



## Te Pae o Ahuriri

Te Ara Kākāriki are restoring a substantial biodiversity habitat within the 250ha Ahuriri Reserve, an area of Environment Canterbury endowment land. Starting in 2021 over 20,000 eco-sourced seedlings have been planted to establish a kahikatea -matai forest, with tōtara on drier areas.



**Te Kura o Makonui / Springston School** students are assisting throughout the project with annual plant-out and biodiversity monitoring days. Today, 40 Year 6-8 students planted 300 seedlings along the waterway, close to Neills Road. They investigated rongoā rākau, searching for plant species that were traditionally used to treat illness. They also enjoyed constructing mōkihi from flax stalks and launching these into the waterway.

Supported by Department of Conservation, through Kaimahi for Nature funding

## The Willows, Waimakariri River Regional Park

Beginning in 2015 **Te Kura o Papatahōra / West Melton School** students have been working with Environment Canterbury and Te Ara Kākāriki to restore native habitat. Known as 'Kowhai Sanctuary' to these tamariki, the project plans to restore an understory of native vegetation, resulting in improved habitat for wildlife and a future seed source for dispersal through the park

Supported by Environment Canterbury, this year 70 Year 5 & 6 students planted 350 seedlings.



## Lakeside Wildlife Management Reserve

**Te Kura o He Puna Karumata / Leeston Consolidated School** students first assisted with native restoration at this Department of Conservation reserve in 2014. The Kahuria te Waihora Restoring Nature project is restoring large scale habitat to this reserve and a number of other sites beside Te Waihora.

34 Year 4 Waiwhio tamariki worked hard to plant 200 seedlings. They investigated invertebrates in the maturing ngāhere, finding a rich diversity of pollinator and decomposer species. They searched for trees that are especially valued by wildlife for food and shelter.

Supported by Ellesmere Sustainable Agriculture Inc. (ESAI) and Department of Conservation



## Burnham Golf course

**Te Kura o Tiori / Burnham School** were keen to assist the golf course with their native planting project. Despite the cold wind 70 Year 0-4 students worked hard to plant 400 seedlings. Matt supported activities at school so students could learn more about nature and traditional connection to place.

Supported by Selwyn District Council and Environment Canterbury.



## Huritini awa, Tai Tapu Walkway

Starting in 2012 with the creation of Tai Tapu Bush, **Tai Tapu School** have worked hard to restore a corridor of native vegetation along the Huritini awa.

Today 47 Year 5 & 6 students worked hard to plant 300 riparian species along the river bank. They investigated which fish and invertebrate species are living in the awa. At Tai Tapu Bush, they explored why manu are so valued for pollination and seed dispersal in this ngāhere and created cosy nests from natural materials. With their kaiako they participated in nature connection activities from the Enviroschools kit.

Supported by Selwyn District Council and Rātā Foundation

## Te Motu Huritini o Ahuriri

**Te Kura o Tauhinu / Lincoln Primary School** students have been restoring indigenous vegetation along the Huritini awa since 2020.

Today 88 Year 5 students planted 400 eco-sourced seedlings to extend the bird sanctuary. The students enjoyed exploring how Maori traditionally valued the Ahuriri area for mahinag kai, investigating rongoā rākau and constructing mōkihi beside the wetland.

Supported by Selwyn Waihora Water Zone Committee, who included funding for this sign.



 **Te Kura o Tauhinu / Lincoln Primary School**  
**Biodiversity Restoration Site**  
Te Motu Huritini o Ahuriri

Lincoln Primary School is being assisted by the Kids Discovery Plant-out programme, a collaboration between Te Ara Kākāriki and Enviroschools Canterbury.

**Enviroschools**

Funding has been received from  
**Selwyn Waihora Water Zone Committee**

**In 2020, our students began restoring the natural ecosystem along the banks of the Huritini awa to:**






**Provide** additional habitat for our native birds, invertebrates, lizards and fish.

**Contribute** to a vibrant corridor of native vegetation for birds to move freely along.

**Make** a riparian strip to filter toxic run-off and sediment, which will improve water quality.

**Prevent** algal growth and help aquatic creatures survive as plants shade and cool the water.

**Connect** students to their environment as they learn to be tiaki tamariki, taking care of our place.

**To find out how to get a project like this under way in your local area, visit [kakariki.org.nz](https://kakariki.org.nz)**

SIGN DESIGN: KOPARACREATIVE.CO.NZ

## McHugh's Forest Reserve

**Te Whenua Kōkōwai / Darfield Primary School** students have been invited by Selwyn District Council to create a corridor of native forest along the north-east side of the forest. Starting in 2021 the council have cleared woody weeds ahead of the school's restoration planting. The native forest will provide a seed source for natural regeneration within the aging conifer plantation.

Today 105 Year 2–4 Kōwhai tamariki planted and mulched 400 seedlings. The students explored connections in the forest ecosystem, participating in a bird food plant treasure and searching for ngāngara / insects in the forest.

Funded by Selwyn District Council, Rātā Foundation and Trees That Count



## Tawera Reserve

**Tī Poe Tī Kōuka / Springfield School** students have been working hard to restore native vegetation at school and at their local reserve since 2017.

35 Year 0-6 tamariki worked hard to plant and guard a total of 289 seedlings. Low growing species will create a lizard habitat beside the new school playground and taller species will infill the forest canopy at Tawera Reserve. The students considered the role of birds in pollination and seed dispersal and constructed bird nests. They enjoyed creating and launching traditional mōkihi into the water race.

Supported by Central Plains Water (CPW), Rātā Foundation and Trees That Count



## Glentunnel School bike track

**Te Kura o Mātai Rangatira / Glentunnel School** students have been restoring native vegetation to the area since 2016, both at their school site, at Joyce Reserve and Hororata Golf Course.

This year, an exciting new bike track provided an opportunity to extend the native area behind the school and 102 Year 0-5 tamariki worked hard to plant 380 seedlings.

This year's school-wide learning theme is *Our People, Our Place*, getting to know our whenua's history and the people who have shaped it. Students investigated connections between the plants, wildlife and traditional values.

Funded by Rātā Foundation and Trees That Count



## Teacher Feedback from 2023 Kids Discovery Plant-out days

Teachers from all schools rated their school plant-out day as excellent on the teacher evaluation form.

When asked for their comments;

**Kirwee teacher** Liz Carston said “This gives the starter for children to continue in our Learning Through Play & Inquiry model”.

**Prebbleton School** teacher Chris McDermott said “the students found it a valuable and rewarding experience. The day’s organisation was exceptional, and as an Enviroschool it provided a wonderful opportunity for our ākonga to take our learning from school and make connections with our local community. We would like to thank Te Ara Kākāriki for the chance to be involved in such a positive experience”.

**Ladbrooks School** kaiako Ali Duncan said “So awesome as usual. What a privilege to be involved. You guys rock! Arohanui”.

**Ararira Springs School** kaiako Larissa Jay said “A wonderful opportunity for all the students to experience and encouraging sustainable practices. Our focus this year has been about sustainability and this day linked with nutrition, food for thought and Māori medicine”.

**Springston School** kaiako Wendy Hamlin said “Another great day – thanks team for all your mahi organising such an awesome day. Really enjoyed seeing how our plants have grown and it was terrific to add to this special place with more plants today. Ka pai!

**Leeston Consolidated School** kaiako Carol Davison said “Well organised and relevant information. Planting is a practical skill and important for the environment. The activities make it interesting and were appropriate for the age group. The day supported our ongoing study of the Waiwhio awa – the plant and animal life that support this ecosystem”.



## Teacher Feedback about 2023 Kids Discovery Plant-out days

**Burnham School** kaiako said “Great programme to be part of. Very accommodating for in-class and planting due to weather. Amazing support from staff. Well equipped, well thought-out. Thanks so much!”

**Lincoln Primary School** kaiako Georgie Willetts said “Really enjoyed the raft building and medicine. Very different and great! Thank you”.

**Darfield Primary School** teacher Jane Logan said “As always an amazing day in our local plantation. Such a hands-on, interactive experience. Planning, organisation and content excellent. Teachers and students enjoyed the new nature connection activities. Bus travel to and from is so appreciated. Ka pai team”.

**Springfield School** Principal Keri Steele said “We always enjoy how enthusiastic and motivated your team is when they work with us. All activities are relevant and purposeful. Ka pai tō mahi”.

**Glentunnel School** Principal Ed Trotter said “As a kura we always look forward to this event and thank Te Ara Kākāriki for working with us in partnership for the betterment of the environment and manu. Ākonga learn so much from this event and our community benefits hugely in the process. Thank you for your partnership over the last 8 years, and for those who sponsor this very worthwhile learning and action activity”.



## Monitoring Sessions

Each year a group of Enviro-Club students from each school visits their native restoration site to monitor how the ecosystem is developing. The students learn skills to observe and record plant survival and the presence of native bird, invertebrate and fish species. Students also learn to take photo points as a way of tracking plant growth. An iNaturalist site has been created for each school and students are guided to upload monitoring data and ask experts to identify any unusual species found. While on site students also do hand weeding and problem solve issues.

### Monitoring results from 2023

- April, **Springfield School** 16 students
- April, **Ararira Springs School** 22 students
- May, **Glentunnel School** 19 students
- June, **Lincoln Primary School** 28 students

Recorded 96.4% survival rate of their plants  
Recorded 93.00% survival rate of their plants  
Recorded 95.00% survival rate of their plants  
Recorded 94.20% survival rate of their plants

Average plant survival rate after approximately nine months is **94.65%**



## Bioblitz sessions

Students are supported to investigate bird, invertebrate, fungi and plant species at their restoration site.

All species found were recorded on the site's iNaturalist project, empowering students with knowledge so they could better understand and protect biodiversity.

### Southbridge School

#### Bioblitz of their school grounds

100 students from four classes

### Leeston Consolidated School

#### Bioblitz at Waiwhio awa / Irwell River

86 Year 3 & 4 Waiwhio tamariki

### Springston School

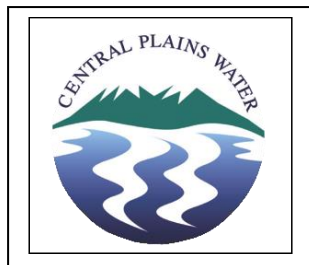
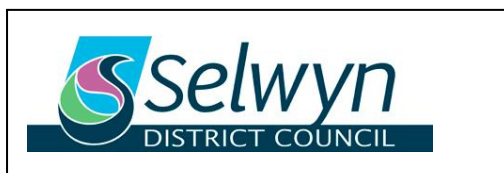
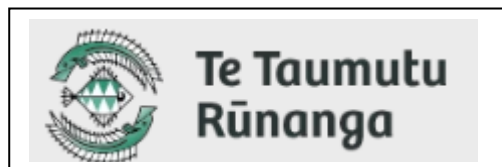
#### Bioblitz at Te Pae o Ahuriri

14 Year 5-8 students from ECO/ BUILD team



## Thank you to our Funders

We are extremely grateful for the support of our funders and partners, who allow us to deliver the Kids Discovery Plant-out programme to schools in the Selwyn District.



## Programme Facilitators

Lou Drage - Te Ara Kākāriki Kids Discovery Plant-out Coordinator

Matt Stanford - Enviroschools Waitaha Facilitator

## Ngā mihi, Thank you to our fantastic Activity Leaders

Ash, Becs, Anna, Marcus & Doug, Te Ara Kākāriki Restoration Field Workers

Aunty Daphne O'Connell, Te Taumutu Rūnunga marae

Mike Bowie, Entomologist

Denise Ford, Senior Biodiversity Specialist at Selwyn District Council

Brad Smith, Environment Canterbury Park Ranger

Gary Boyd, Kahuria Te Waihora Project, Department of Conservation

**Fundraising and planning** Letitia Lum & Nicola Hely, Te Ara Kākāriki Coordinators

