

Sustainability Initiatives

Key Achievements Report

2025/2026

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Triangle Park Community Teaching Garden in Massey is one of three pilot food forest sites supporting community groups and marae to grow more trees, strengthen food security,improve soil health, and create climate-resilient neighbourhoods across Tāmaki Makaurau.

Message from the Group Manager



It is clear we are experiencing another year of impactful climate-related events across the country. At the same time Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland is still recovering from and adapting to the effects of the severe weather events of three years ago.

Social and economic pressures continue to be top of mind for people living in Tāmaki Makaurau, and yet – our experience is that thousands of people in our communities have continued to generously give their time, their expertise, and physical effort to protect and restore our environment for present and future generations.

Years of experience has taught us that the most powerful climate action does not originate in council offices. Instead, it begins in classrooms, marae, neighbourhoods and community spaces championed by the people who know their local places best.

Our role is simple: provide the support, partnerships, funding and tools that enable local leadership to flourish. By stepping back, we create space for communities to lead, to identify their own risks and challenges and to design their own fit-for-purpose solutions tailored to their unique circumstances.

As you read this year's report and take in each diverse story, you'll see that some strong themes emerge:

- There's a growing number of people getting involved in climate and environmental actions that make a significant difference.
- Young people are among the most effective leaders because they bring energy, ideas, talents, and can-do attitudes that motivate us.
- Supporting Māori-led action strengthens the resilience of Māori communities.
- Local Boards, led by their community voices, are increasingly seeing the importance of investing in sustainability initiatives.

These themes reflect our focus on enabling communities and young people, partnering to meet Māori aspirations, and making available the knowledge and experiences that prepare us for what lies ahead.

Every project in this report is different, but they all share the same thread: when we invest in people, they create stronger communities, healthier environments and a more resilient Tāmaki Makaurau for generations to come.

I hope these stories leave you with the same sense of optimism and inspiration they have given me.

Sincerely,

Sue Travaglia

Group Manager, Sustainability Initiatives

Group achievements

Over **$710,000** **funding** from partnerships and non-rates revenue **to deliver projects**

$2.7 million of local board **projects delivered** (up from $1.4million year prior)



Over **108,950** **Aucklanders engaged** in taking climate action

CO_2

An estimated **10,000** **tonnes** of **CO_2e reduced**

Over **2,500** people **calculated their carbon footprint using FutureFit.nz**

An estimated **98,000** **trees planted** by students through Trees for Survival

Over **9000** Aucklanders received **home energy advice**

Over **22,000** people participated in our Experience Centre programmes

Over **360** **community groups supported**

70% of Auckland **schools engaged** in sustainability

156,000 tamariki and students **in Enviroschools**

Over **28,800** Aucklanders **involved in cycling initiatives**

Our vision

Ko au ko te taiao, ko te taiao ko au.
I am the environment and the environment is me.

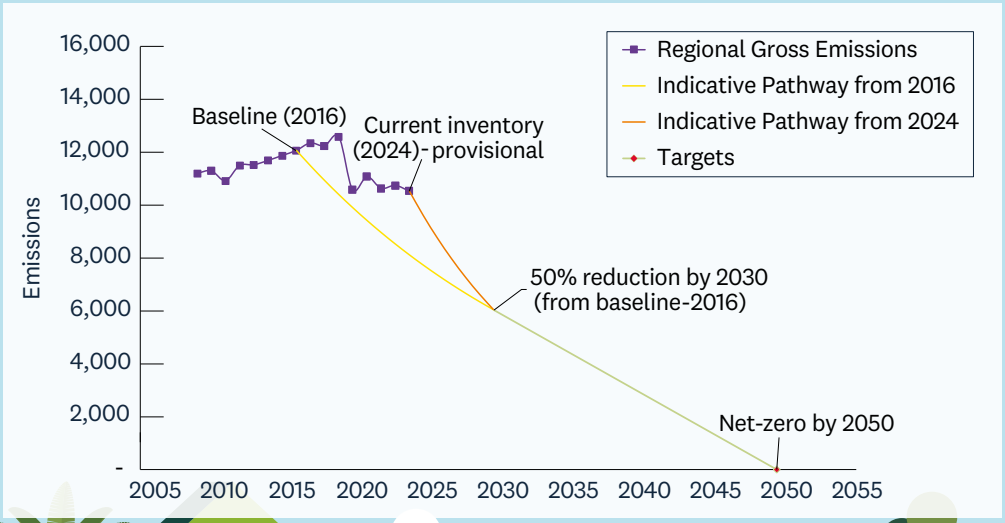
The leadership and actions of mana whenua, young people and communities have created a regenerative and resilient Tāmaki Makaurau for current and future generations.

Our context

Latest figures show that Auckland's gross emission continue to plateau post-COVID 19 and are just under 10 per cent lower than the 2016 baseline. The biggest areas of opportunity for Aucklanders to reduce emissions are in the areas of transport, food, and energy choices.

Overall, as shown in Figure 1 however, there is still a lot of work needed by everyone across Tāmaki Makaurau to achieve our goals of halving emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2050. For information on how you can play your part: visit **Auckland Climate Action**.

Figure 1. Auckland's annual gross emissions.



Delivering on Auckland Council's strategic priorities

1. **Auckland Plan 2050**
   We are committed to reducing emissions and ensuring we are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

2. **Long-Term Plan**
   Responding to climate change, improving our water quality and natural environment, delivering for Māori designed with Māori.

3. **Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan**
   Delivering on the Community priority of the plan through contributing to halving emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2050 and preparing Aucklanders for the impacts of climate change**.**

4. **Environmental Services Delivery Plan**
   Deliver programmes and services, and empower Aucklanders to improve the state of our natural environment and take climate action for the benefit of current and future generations.

5. **Sustainabilty Initiatives Strategy**
   Tūwhitia te hopo, mairangatia te angitū.
   Cast away fear, and elevate success.
   Enabling Auckland leaders.
   - We enable the aspirations of environmental and climate action leadership through funding, capability building, tools, resources and opportunities to network.
   - We frame our work through a regional kaupapa that is locally and socially relevant, and community-led.

6. **Sustainability Initiatives performance measures**
   - number of Aucklanders engaged in taking climate action
   - percentage of schools engaging in sustainability action programmes
   - carbon emissions reduction (measured by CO_2e avoided).



Wao hua (food forest) at Te Piringatahi o te Maungaarongo Marae, West Harbour.

1. Growing community-led action

This year, we supported Local Boards to increase investment in sustainability programmes by 88 per cent, backed young people to lead 32 resilience projects, and funded 18 community-led projects that engaged 17,450 Aucklanders.

We continued to build the capability and capacity of community leaders and organisations to lead on climate action. Ongoing support provided to four Ecohubs across the region has enabled them to develop successful projects in transport, food and energy. Our support of Tāmaki Makaurau Community Climate Action Network has seen it grow to 90 organisations sharing information and collaborating on initiatives.

We also identified new opportunities to extend our reach into Auckland communities: partnering with Te Maara Kai o Wirihana, Auckland's largest community-led urban farm to help build local community food resilience; supporting Pacific People's youth leadership; and we developed partnerships with AA and Auckland Golf, supporting their sustainability aspirations.

When we support communities by providing them with tools, resources and a platform to lead, they deliver.



Local board investment

This year, we helped local boards increase support for their communities, lifting investment in Sustainability Initiatives programmes by 88 per cent to deliver over 81 projects. Supporting cycle skills classes in six Local Board areas, fruit trees in Manurewa schoolyards, native seedlings along the Tāmaki River, and providing space for rangatahi to find their voice as leaders in Ōtara.

Local Board Plans, developed with communities, give the people who live there the ability to set the direction for where their funds are invested. This year a fairer funding model addressed historic inequities - and local boards chose to put more into climate and environmental action.

New programmes included a collaboration with Auckland Transport delivering community programming across six local board areas.

By the numbers

- **81** local board action projects delivered, up from 57 projects
- **19 of 21** local boards supporting sustainability initiatives programmes
- **16** active-transport projects delivered, up from 6 projects
- **28,883** participants in local board funded active transport initiatives.



“I enjoyed the whole entire thing start to finish. I learnt so much about biking on the road. I will definitely apply this knowledge at home. Thank you!”

Orewa College student, BikeReady training delivered by Harbour Sport.

Mana Ora Youth Resilience Programme

Many young people care deeply about climate and environmental challenges yet have few opportunities to put their ideas into action.

The Mana Ora Youth Resilience Programme gives them the chance to lead hands-on projects that build resilience, skills and confidence, by providing tools, resources and access to expertise. Their environmental leadership and local connection reaches across schools and out into their communities.

Across 32 schools, students delivered practical projects - planting, restoration, monitoring and resources - that improved their school environments and helped them see how they can contribute to their communities and their futures.

By the numbers

- **7,512** students empowered through practical climate resilience projects
- **32** schools delivered youth-led projects
- **454** community participants, including whānau, teachers, experts and local leaders.



“My understanding of building youth resilience to climate hazards has changed significantly. It is about helping them feel empowered to take action within their local environment.”

Teacher, View Road School, Pukekohe.

Community Climate Catalyst Programme

Community-led climate action scales further when the leaders delivering it have the capacity and confidence to lead.
The Community Climate Catalyst Programme builds that capacity, unlocking barriers, supporting local delivery, and empowering residents and community groups to drive down emissions and build resilience.

The programme currently provides ongoing support to four regional EcoHubs to build their organisational leadership for climate action and utilise their networks to enable more community engagement.

The hubs have successfully leveraged their local knowledge and relationships to build successful local climate initiatives in areas such as transport, food and energy. They also support other local groups to do the same: Kaipātiki Project helping community houses deliver food resilience; Waiheke Resources Trust supporting increased energy resilience through the Electrify Waiheke project; and Beautification Trust and EcoMatters supporting community Bike Hubs.

Alongside this, the programme also supports the Tāmaki Makaurau Community Climate Action Network who give organisations regular opportunities to connect, collaborate and grow, using their collective platforms to amplify community effort and voices in local decision making.

Reach and impact

- **68** community organisations engaged to lead on climate action
- **3000** people reached through Different Dinners initiative which involved community partners such as Diabetes Foundation and three EcoHubs organisations, with participants now averaging 1.8 more plant-based meals a week, with an estimated 280,000 meals and 303 tonnes of emissions avoided annually
- **4** EcoHubs funded to deliver and lead local climate action.



Manurewa kai resilience

Kai/food security is a pressing issue in Manurewa made more urgent due to climate change risks. At Te Maara Kai o Wirihana, an urban farm at Manurewa High School and South Auckland's largest high school, 200 students planted 350 fruit trees, while three local primary schools also built thriving gardens. Over 500 students are now helping strengthen their communities' food security and learning how to grow their own food.



500+ students

Click here to see more

Lalaga Ōtara leaders

Lalaga creates a space where rangatahi grow confidence and leadership through weaving together culture, creativity and connection. 48 students attended a leadership wānanga; over half went on to lead action in their schools and communities – creating a community mural, restoring waterways, and driving waste minimisation.



48 future leaders

Community Day – ECE to Community Cluster

Preschoolers model climate leadership for all ages. Tamariki planted 520 native trees along the Tāmaki River and grew hundreds of vegetables from seed, gifting four trays of surplus seedlings to 21 local schools and organisations.



520 native trees

New partnerships

Auckland's transition to electric vehicles is gaining momentum, but misconceptions can remain a greater barrier than cost. To help motorists make informed choices, we partnered with the AA to introduce an interactive EV quiz at six high-traffic Warrant of Fitness centres. Collectively, these locations receive around 3,000 visitors each month, allowing us to share practical information with people already considering their vehicles and future transport options.

We then extended the campaign into Auckland's golfing community by repurposing the quiz through partnerships with Auckland Golf and Winger Motors. Two in-person activations, supported by an online campaign, connected us with a network of 24,000 golf club members, an audience more likely to be in a position to consider alternative vehicle options.

To date, more than 2,000 Aucklanders have completed the quiz, with 100 expressing an interest in switching to an electric vehicle.



2,000 quiz entries

Climate grants

Demand for community climate funding keeps growing. 18 grants totalling $382,126 supported community-led projects that engaged over 17,000 Aucklanders, enabled an estimated 364 tonnes of emissions reduction, and leveraged 9,000 volunteer hours.



$382,126 funded



Students board the bus with their HOP cards during the Climate Action Adventure Race.

2. Scaling initiatives for greater impact

This year, we scaled initiatives in response to community need and provided hands-on, practical opportunities for more people to take action.

Building on the successful pilot of The Adaptation Game (TAG) we extended the reach of this initiative, engaging 39 organisations across the region in conversations to learn about climate risk or share place-based knowledge. 23 community facilitators were also trained to lead future TAG sessions.

To maximize recent infrastructure investments, we collaborated with Auckland Transport, to launch 10 new community cycling projects that engaged 28,000 people to build their confidence in using active transport.

The successful Sustainability Challenge Adventure Race series also introduced two new delivery models to engage young people: a Climate Action Adventure Race and a Bilingual Sustainability Adventure Race, delivered in Te Reo Māori and English.

We continue to find opportunities to partner with others and scale the work to meet the growing demand from our communities to take action.



The Adaptation Game (TAG)

Communities need practical, accessible tools to support them to start conversations about climate risk and explore practical solutions together.

TAG makes climate change tangible and empowers communities to take meaningful, collective action to adapt to a changing climate and supports community cohesion. Using their local context the game supports communities to identify the most relevant climate risks and consider different scenarios. TAG use was scaled this year to a greater number and diversity of community groups such as disability groups, iwi, art and sports clubs and local resilience networks, and was used in the Waiheke Local Board Climate Plan refresh.

By the numbers

- **121** participants – community members and local leaders
- **39** community organisations involved
- **23** facilitators trained to lead future sessions.



“There were also maps of like flooding events, which was quite eye opening and realising where places flood. It didn’t actually translate until I was shown a map, and you could see people’s housing flooding.”

Community member.

Sustainability Challenge Adventure Race

Running since 2010, the adventure race series has connected students with our regional parks through interactive sustainability challenges, run in collaboration with delivery partners.

Building on this successful model a new Climate Action Adventure Race has been developed which saw 120 students travel the city by public transport, completing challenges at bike workshops and food forests, building confidence to use public transport and learning about climate action. 92 per cent reported at least one follow-on action, and 42 per cent reported using public transport more since the race.

We also delivered our first ever Bilingual Sustainability Adventure Race delivered in Te reo Māori for kura Māori students to explore and learn in te taiao (the natural world).

By the numbers

- **2,132** young people and adult participants
- **25** schools and **8** kura Māori engaged
- **5** Sustainability Adventure Races delivered
- **62** delivery partners.



Watch now

Active modes – activating council infrastructure

Auckland Council and Auckland Transport have built cycling infrastructure across the region. These initiatives help people to safely commute, explore Auckland and build the confidence to ride. Over 10 new community cycling initiatives including: women's learn-to-ride classes, Pride rides, e-scooter safety lessons and a relaunched e-bike loan scheme - helped Aucklanders from diverse backgrounds ride with confidence. More than 28,000 Aucklanders took part.

Growth in student-led action

Our annual survey shows growth: over 21,850 students took part in our sustainability activities. 86 per cent of activities are student-led. 88 per cent of schools surveyed are engaged in zero waste initiatives, and 86 per cent are focused on food security.

Projects with Parks and Healthy Waters

Partnering across the council whānau with Parks and Healthy Waters, supported by the Natural Environment Target Rate, gives young people authentic roles in large-scale, long-term regeneration of te taiao. Through this investment, and our partnership with Trees for Survival, more than 98,000 native plants have been planted across the region, involving over 200 schools.





Potters Park Learn to Ride class.

3. Working alongside Māori leadership

This year, we continued to partner with mana whenua and marae to support them to achieve their aspirations for te taiao, their whānau, rangatahi and tamariki mokopuna.

We supported Te Aroha Pā Marae, Ngāti Rongo to host a te taiao wānanga for 200 rangatahi grounded in pōhiri, cultural practice and hands-on learning.

Through Mātātahi Taiao and the Resilient Marae programme we continued to support rangatahi leadership including marae-based climate planning alongside kaumātua and enabled marae to advance their response to climate change through environmental restoration, community preparedness, and adaptation initiatives to build resilience.

Our support of Māori medium education initiatives grew, through delivery of the first bilingual sustainability adventure race, Tapora School continuing a restoration effort years in the making, and Arohanui Special School weaving te ao Māori through their nature-based learning programmes.

Mā te Huruhuru ka rere te manu – Adorn the bird with feathers so it can soar.

Partnering with mana whenua multiplies our collective effectiveness creating enduring environmental outcomes for current and future generations.



Te Aroha Pā Marae – Te Taiao Wānanga

Learning alongside mana whenua creates meaningful connections between students, their local marae and te taiao. This wānanga created that experience through pōwhiri, cultural practice and hands-on workshops on the marae.

Hosted by Ngāti Rongo, the wānanga brought rangatahi and kaiako together for freshwater and marine education, ecological restoration, pest control, traditional games and weaving strengthening their understanding of te taiao and kaitiakitanga.

By the numbers

- **200** rangatahi hosted at Te Aroha Pā Marae
- **6** schools involved
- **10** delivery partners.



“There were many highlights. The workshops were engaging, and the pōhiri and marae aspects were a great learning opportunity for our tamariki.”

Participating kaiako.

Mātātahi Taiao and Resilient Marae

These programmes partner with mana whenua and mātāwaka to reconnect people to whenua, strengthen rangatahi leadership, and build resilient marae - grounded in Te Puāwaitanga o Te Tātai a priority in Te Tāruke ā Tawhiri | Auckland's Climate Plan. They offer a fundamentally different approach to resilience, framed by cultural reconnection and whenua-based priorities.

Rangatahi led wānanga and restoration projects as well as contributing to marae-based climate planning alongside kaumātua and iwi. Marae developed taiao action plans, food-resilience projects and infrastructure improvements - with 'resilience' defined by iwi mana whenua and marae.

"Resilience looks like many different things. That's the biggest thing with this mahi – it's about what we, the marae, the whānau, want to do."

Miriama Wilson, Puukaki Marae Chairperson.

By the numbers

- **8** marae-led taiao and resilience initiatives
- **3** iwi-led kaupapa taiao
- **20** rangatahi Māori in Mātātahi Taiao kāhui
- **12** whakapapa to Iwi Mana Whenua
- **24** rangatahi māori-led climate action projects.



Manukau Harbour biodiversity monitoring

Better biodiversity data helps iwi, council and community groups care for the Manukau Harbour. This new programme involves young people in gathering it.

40 Year 11 and 12 science students became the first ever to record bird survey data at Green Bay Beach - observing spoonbills and oyster catchers and sampling the invertebrates that signal a healthy ecosystem. All findings are reported to local iwi Te Kawerau ā Maki and Auckland Council, beginning a multi-year monitoring programme.

By the numbers

- **40** Year 11 and 12 high school science students.
- **First group ever** to record bird survey data at Green Bay Beach.



“It was amazing to see the variety and huge numbers of birds living in our neighbourhood. Highlights were the royal spoonbills and the oyster catchers.”

Green Bay High School student.

Te Tauwhaiwhai-a-Tāwhaki – Bilingual Sustainability Adventure Race

The first-ever Bilingual Sustainability Adventure Race brought kura Māori students together to explore and learn in te taiao – immersed in te reo Māori from the opening to closing karakia. 184 ākonga (students) and pakeke (adults) from 8 kura Māori took part, with 25 partner organisations and mana whenua involved.

Trees for Survival – Tapora

In partnership with mana whenua and Tapora Land and Coastcare, Tapora School students have planted 7,284 trees since 2017 – 794 in 2026 alone - supporting a long-term restoration vision led by the community.

Arohanui – Active Whakapapa ki te Taiao

Through Te Aho Tū Roa, the diverse learners of Arohanui Special School took part in a newly developed inclusive Active Whakapapa Programme – hands-on nature experiences woven through with te ao Māori. 36 ākonga (students), 8 kaiako (teachers), 5 partner organisations and mana whenua participated.

Te reo Māori waste education for kura and kōhanga reo

This kaupapa delivered te reo Māori-led waste education grounded in tikanga, mātauranga Māori and sustainability practices. Through wānanga, professional development and in-kura support, tamariki, kaiako and whānau were empowered to strengthen parakore practices and reduce waste within their kura, kōhanga reo and communities. The programme engaged 37 kaiako, 7 kōhanga reo, and approximately 1,000 whānau and community members through wānanga and events.





Student planting a banana plant at Te Maara Kai o Wirihana (food garden) at Manurewa High School.

4. Building knowledge and amplifying voices

This year, we focused on helping connect Aucklanders to information, tools and resources to support them to take climate action and see themselves in the response.

The Auckland Climate Action platform was launched in February as a trusted home for practical information, showcasing local climate leadership and resources to support action.

The Demonstration sites project brought climate action learning opportunities and low-cost ways to take action into everyday places, Auckland Botanic Gardens, libraries and other Auckland Council facilities, utilising family friendly sites, reaching families where they already are, using sites to maximize educational moments.

A new series of leadership videos developed with environmental leaders reinforced our focus on supporting youth voice and leadership, and promotion of sustainability careers.



Auckland Climate Action Platform

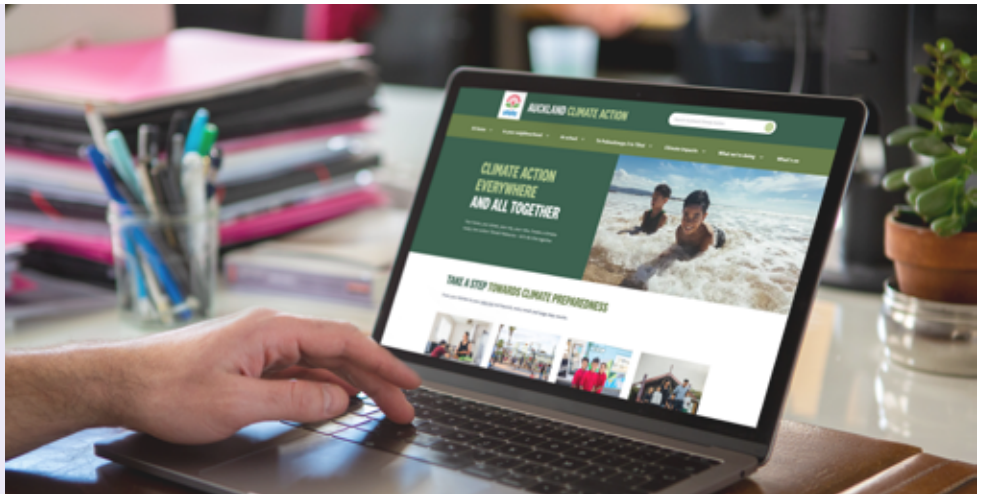
As Tāmaki Makaurau faces the growing impacts of climate change, Aucklanders need trusted information and practical support to act, navigate change, and build resilience. The Auckland Climate Action platform provides that leadership online, helping people understand climate risks, prepare for what's ahead, and find the local initiatives, services and support to take action.

This online resource brings trusted information, practical resources and local stories together in one place, making climate action easier to understand, more relevant to everyday life and connecting Aucklanders with opportunities to participate.

Its storytelling brings local resilience to life: following community food forests and māra kai, sharing Waiheke's Climate Ready Communities journey, and celebrating the leadership of disabled Aucklanders through a Disability-Led Climate Adaptation pilot. The kai resilience stories alone drew 193,000 views. Practical resources such as a map showcasing where local fruit trees and nut trees are in public places also received 23,194 views.

By the numbers

- **2.1** million content views generated across social channels
- **59,000** engagements connecting Aucklanders with practical climate action
- **166,000** page views of climate advice, tools and local initiatives.



Click to view

Demonstration sites

Every day public places are some of the best spaces to reach Aucklanders who might never seek out climate information.
The Demonstration Sites programme brings climate action displays and experiences into high-traffic venues, including libraries, the Zoo and the Auckland Botanic Gardens, meeting families where they already are, showcasing how council is playing its part to reduce emissions and build resilience, and pointing people towards practical, low-cost ways they can do the same.

By the numbers

- **157,727** Aucklanders reached across Zoo and Auckland Botanic Gardens climate trail installations.
- **9,550** children engaged through Auckland Zoo activity booklets with their families.
- **12,566** people per month, on average, reached with climate messaging at the Auckland Botanic Gardens.
- **3** signs installed in Auckland Council community facilities, with 4 more in design, reaching an estimated 6,500 people.



Leadership videos, from classroom to career

Environmental leadership can shape a student's path well beyond school. A new series of leadership videos captures how past Enviroschools students turned their passion into action, and in some cases towards careers in sustainability and climate action.

Watch now



Upskilling educators for sustainability learning

The Teacher Cluster model provides an opportunity for educators to connect, share ideas and learn from each other, alongside other providers and other experts. Shaped by teacher feedback, 24 workshops were delivered across the region, reaching 598 attendees and helping teachers build their confidence to support students on their sustainability journey.



5. Future focus: local leadership is where it's at

Throughout the year, we operated on the knowledge that people are influenced to take climate and environmental action primarily through their social, cultural, and community networks. The leaders of those networks – young people, rangatahi, mana whenua, community advocates and community organisations play a vital role in normalising change and catalysing local action. By providing funding, capability building, tools and connection, we strengthened their ability to build resilience and reduce emissions.

Partnering with mana whenua and enabling these community-centred leaders proved our most effective strategy for impactful action. That is where our future direction firmly sits - focusing our resources even more intensively on empowering these crucial leaders and lead organisations, at the most effective points of change.

Mā te huruhuru ka rere te manu.
Adorn the bird with feathers so it can soar.



Projects in development

Growing Food Forests
Communities across Tāmaki are engaging with the community food forest movement – in parks, schools and marae seeing the multiple co-benefits- providing cooling shade, growing kai, and caring for the whenua. Three pilot sites, soil-carbon testing and relationships with four iwi mana whenua have sparked plans to establish up to five more forests next financial year.

Mana Ora Youth Resilience
We intend to build on providing practical opportunities to support youth-led resilience with a new evaluation report and youth voice helping inform how we scale the programme across the region.

Rangatahi Pathways
Supporting rangatahi Māori leadership is a priority so we have supported a first of its kind new Rangatahi Pathways programme, involving 16 rangatahi Māori in paid 8-12 week intern placements – across the Council family in Auckland Botanic Gardens, Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, Healthy Waters, Libraries, Auckland Emergency Management, Technology, the Tūpuna Maunga Authority and within our teams - delivered in partnership with Mātātahi Taiao.

Experience Centre Accessibility
Our team are learning new skills so that we remove barriers to accessibility and our Experience Centres can better support students and schools - building on the over 18,000 students and 4,000 adults who visited this year, with a goal to grow bookings from specialist schools.

Supporting the Uptake of Active Transport
Responding to record numbers of people cycling around the region and increased investment in cycleways and shared pathways, we will continue to collaborate with Auckland Transport colleagues, Local Boards and community partners to develop community cycling activations to reduce barriers and increase the uptake of cycling as a viable option, delivering significant co-benefits including reduced congestion, health outcomes, emission reduction and cost savings.

Enabling Community Adaptation Planning
Partnering with the Resilient Tamaki Makaurau programme, we are increasing support for community planning. Building on the successful Local Board Climate Action Plan model to include adaptation planning, work is currently underway on Waiheke, and a pilot with two additional Local Boards planned. This work will allow us to test an approach to support local decision making and establish short-term priorities, based on local needs and opportunities.





Community members gathered at Triangle Park for a dawn karakia whakawātea, led by Pita Turei of Te Kawerau ā Maki, to bless the whenua ahead of the food forest planting.

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