



HL update October 2019

Each year two planting days are held at the lagoon, one in the spring and one in the autumn. This programme, which is called Ki Uta Ki Tai (from the mountains to the sea) has been running for the past eight years. It came out of a decision by four local groups, Hawksbury Lagoon, River Estuary Care, Kati Huirapa Runaka and East Otago Taipaure, all of whom are involved in conservation and habitat restoration. The idea was to collaborate and design a four-day experience as a way to encourage volunteers to support this work. Each year since the programme's inception, a core group of volunteers are mostly recruited from the University. Each day is organised by one of the community groups with local volunteers invited for each day.

Students originally stayed at the old Karitane School site but in more recent years they stay at the Kati Huirapa Ki Puketeraki Marae. This offers an experience of Powhiri (welcome) and Poroporoaki (farewell) in addition to harakeke weaving sessions in the evenings and waka sailing or paddle boarding when the tide is right. Many have never experienced anything like this before.

Over the years we have had international and NZ students, for whom the whole conservation experience has been a revelation. Some students return each year or as often as studies allow. Feedback from students demonstrates interest in their continuing to be involved in similar projects on their return home.

There are many people who make these days a success. At the University, Chanel (whose Masters research included Ki uta ki tai as a case study) recruits students, organises food for the weekend, transports them to East Otago and stays with them on the Marae.

George manages the supply of plants at a shade house for habitat restoration projects, from his base at the old Karitane School site. Here students pot up plants as their initial task and take the time to get to know one another, whilst ensuring future supplies of native plants. The Rivercare group organise a day either clearing around existing plantings or planting more plants along the river. The Hawksbury Lagoon Committee organise similar work, and include a walk around the lagoon to learn about the bird life and the cultural history of Matainaka. Each day the local lead group provides morning tea and lunch for everyone working on the day.

It is a highly successful collaboration with a great deal of conservation work being achieved to benefit the local environment and beyond. In addition, we have all been inspired by our contact with such energetic, smart and motivated young people.

Just a reminder to ensure dogs are kept on a leash when walking the causeways especially as birds are now nesting. Tea towels for xmas presents are also available @ \$15, check the website.

Shirley McKewen
Chair
Hawksbury Lagoon Soc.