

# Enviroschools- Thames-Coromandel District Council

## Six Monthly Report on the Delivery of the Enviroschools Programme in Thames Coromandel District for first six months of the 2025-2026 financial year

This report provides the Thames Coromandel District Council with an update on the delivery of the Enviroschools Programme for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2025.

The Enviroschools Programme supports and empowers children and young people to plan, design and implement sustainability actions that are important to them and their communities. It provides relevant life contexts for learners to be connected with their environment and their communities, and how to be actively involved in social, cultural, economic and environmental change. The programme is guided by Māori perspectives and respect for the diversity of people and cultures is actively celebrated.

Where the programme is embedded, it is resilient in the face of challenges. An Enviroschools journey for schools is not based on linear growth as it can include highs and lows and sometimes appears to regress followed then by reengagement. Evidence has shown that when the programme is developed as 'Whole School Approach' then these periods of hiatus can bring stronger engagement across the school and community over the long term.

### Enviroschools Programme in Thames-Coromandel

**Jo Buchan**

**Facilitator: Rachael Cheeseman**

**Students reached: 3094**

**15 Number of Enviroschools**

**Percentage of schools that are Enviroschools: 68%**

**Year levels reached through Enviroschools: 1-13**



### Value of Enviroschools for Thames-Coromandel District

The annual contribution of \$44,000 provided by the Thames-Coromandel District Council supports the facilitation of the Programme to achieve a number of outcomes for the district, schools and young people to directly align with the community outcomes for the district, including:

- Cultural, Social and Economic Sustainability
- Waste Reduction & Zero Waste
- Biodiversity & Biosecurity Action
- Water health & conservation
- Kai/Food production & distribution
- Energy conservation & action
- Ecological Building action

WRC provides co-funding for facilitation, regional leadership and runs two Enviroschools grant rounds for school projects that align with the Enviroschools guiding principles.

### Regional enhancements for Waikato Enviroschools

With recent curriculum changes, we have tailored our support:

- Enviroschools reflection has been simplified to support school engagement and identify next steps in their journey [Enviroschools | Experiences of the New Enviroschools Holistic Process in Waikato](#)
- Secondary schools receive targeted professional development, curriculum support with environmental experts, resources for Envirogroups and interschool events to build teacher and student leadership.
- [Waikato Enviroschools padlets](#) provide curriculum-linked environmental education resources and inquiry topics.
- In 2026, schools will have access to a nature connection kit, marine biosecurity kit, and catchment model for class or camp-based learning.

### Stories from Thames-Coromandel Enviroschools

#### Conservation Week interschool event

To celebrate Conservation Week, the Waikato Enviroschools team organised an interschool event with DOC at Kauaeranga Valley. The celebration was designed to bring together students and multiple community experts to be inspired by conservation and taking care of nature. The students displayed lots of enthusiasm to learn from other schools and engage in experiential activities (below right). At the end of the day, they reflected on their highlights and the actions they want to take back to school. The event left students inspired to take action for their local environment, and strengthened connections between schools, their local community and nature.

#### Thames High School reduces waste to landfill

On 22 July 2025, Thames High School held its second annual waste audit (below left). A classroom was set up as a waste lab, and rubbish from that day was collected from bins around the school. Students and staff were supported by their facilitator to sort and weigh the waste. They quickly noticed heavy contamination—food on paper, half-full bottles, and compostables mixed with plastic. Despite this, the results were positive: total waste dropped from 95.47 kg in 2024 to 68.15 kg, a reduction of over 25%. Food waste showed the biggest improvement, falling from 48.8 kg to 19.1 kg, thanks to a new lunch provider.

To keep improving, the Enviro students met school leadership and set these priorities:

- Add clearly labelled bins for landfill, food waste, and recycling in shared spaces.
- Install paper-only bins in classrooms.
- Educate everyone on correct waste separation.
- Explore hot composting to turn food waste into soil instead of landfill.

