

Enviroschools- Thames-Coromandel District Council

Six Monthly Report on the Delivery of the Enviroschools Programme in Thames Coromandel District for last 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 January to 30 June 2026.

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: 3073

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 support open to all Waikato Enviroschools

- Thanks to [Toimata Foundations' Environmental Outcomes Funding](#), Waikato Enviroschools professional learning was offered to all Waikato secondary schools at Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari. It focused on student enviroleaders, curriculum-linked resources, and local secondary Enviroschools [case studies](#).
- 6 schools competed in the annual Waikato Maara Kai interschool challenge with a cook off with produce grown from their gardens.
- Secondary Enviroleaders attended a [school tour](#) and an overnight summit to support action back in their schools.
- Teacher professional development as offered through [in person](#) and [online](#) events connecting teachers to Enviroschools resources
- Interschool student events were held to support Conservation week in April across the region.

Stories from Thames-Coromandel Enviroschools

Mercury Bay Sensory Garden (photo below left)

After facilitator Jo unpacked Enviroschools resources at a staff meeting, the junior teachers used "Me in My Environment" activities helped students slow down, connect with their place, and shape a school sustainability vision. A clear need emerged: few quiet spaces and more students with diverse sensory needs. Student-led from the start, with the Envirogroup and a whole-school design competition shaping the garden. WRC Grant funding secured plants, materials and plans carefully researched. Strong community backing with volunteers and donations brought the vision to life despite weather delays.

Opoutere School Vision Map

Opoutere School has begun a whole-school vision mapping journey, bringing its Enviroschools kaupapa to life. It started with a teacher professional learning session using the "Me and My Environment" resources. Led by the Envirogroup, students across the school created a collective vision map. Each class chose a focus area — gardens, outdoor learning and shared spaces — and planned projects using the kit. Students owned the process — imagining, designing and planning their own contributions to their place. The vision map is a living document the group keeps refining as new projects come to life. The journey embeds a culture of continuous, thoughtful action where every student has a voice.

Hape Stream study by St Francis School (photo below right)

The stream study linked science (ecosystems, biodiversity, the water cycle) with maths through real data collection. Beforehand, students explored the catchment with their Enviroschools facilitator and met macroinvertebrates as water-quality indicators. At the stream they assessed habitat — bank stability, shade, flow and vegetation — and spotted a large eel. They collected and identified macroinvertebrates, including mayflies as key indicator species. Measurements of water clarity and temperature were later used in class for statistical analysis and graphing. The investigation built freshwater ecosystem knowledge and a deeper connection to their local stream.

