



New Zealand Association for  
Environmental Education

# Annual Review

For the period 1 July 2021  
to 30 June 2022

# Welcome from the Chairs

We are delighted to report that the 2021-22 year was one of continued growth for NZAEE. With ongoing Network of Expertise (NEX) funding, we were able to advance work towards our goal:

That people of Aotearoa are empowered to be in sustainable relationships with the natural environment and each other, to regenerate our world.

We have done this by moving forward in all three of our work areas:

- Building capability
- Networking
- Being a strong sector voice

This report outlines the impact that we have had, and the momentum that we continue to build at a time when we are increasingly noticing and feeling the impacts of changes to our physical environment, communities and biodiversity.

## Flying the flag for environmental and sustainability education

We take our role as a sector organisation seriously and feel that it is a necessary one given that there are many people involved in creating opportunities for our young people to experience the joy of nature connection, through learning about the environment, and thinking creatively to take action for the environment and our changing climate.

Teachers, providers of environmental education programmes and community groups all have a part to play, as do the many government agencies whose reason for being overlaps in some way.

The guiding document for our sector is Mātauranga Whakauka Taiao: Environmental Education for Sustainability, produced in 2017 by the Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment, and the Ministry of Education.

Many of our members, including several who are on NZAEE's National Executive, were involved in the development of the strategy, and the NZAEE Conference in 2018 focussed specifically on circulating and discussing the document in detail.

As we are reporting for the period 2021-22, which aligns with the first five years of the government document, we have structured our reporting to follow the structure of Mahere Rautaki: Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2021.

The report below shows the progress we, as a sector, have made towards the objectives and actions set out in the five-year action plan. We've done this with minimal involvement from the partner agencies, who wrote in 2017:

"Through this Strategy and Action Plan, we are committing to working together and with others to help all New Zealanders learn how they can take action to address the sustainability challenges we face locally and globally."



In reality, an election, changing personnel and a pandemic have interrupted implementing this strategy. As a plan, Mātauranga Whakauka Taiao: Environmental Education for Sustainability never contained detail on resources, so there has been very little ownership or engagement from the Government agencies in how it would be implemented and monitored.

Despite this, we believe that the Strategy is still relevant and paves the way for government agencies to work together to support environmental education for sustainability.





We have seen our members enacting aspects of the government plan in their own programmes, and have also aligned NZAEE's own work programme with elements of the strategy. By reporting in the format of the government plan after the first five years, we hope to demonstrate that as a sector we are aligned with government intention.

Securing Network of Expertise (NEX) funding from the Ministry of Education in 2021 has meant that NZAEE has been able to take on an oversight role.

We've been able to pay people to proactively provide structure, support, resources and learning opportunities in environmental education, sustainability and climate change for teachers and providers who are working in or alongside an increasingly stretched and stressed education workforce.

We are proud of what we have been able to achieve in the past few years. We have done this in an Aotearoa New Zealand that has seen the increasingly visible effects of climate change and biodiversity loss, and internationally, where our Government has made commitments to emissions reduction and the rights of children and indigenous peoples through the United Nations.

There is still a lot more to be done, yet as our NEX funding has not been confirmed beyond the end of 2023, NZAEE is having to plan for various funding scenarios. During the 2023 year we will be calling again on government agencies and politicians to consider how much they prioritise the knowledge of and action for the environment, as all of these things contribute to strong communities, increased wellbeing, and a nurtured, flourishing and more climate robust environment.

Ngā mihi nui

Sally Birdsall and Robyn Zink  
Co-Chairs

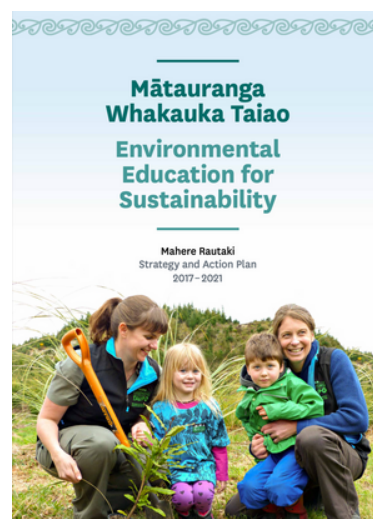
April 2023

# Explaining this year's reporting approach

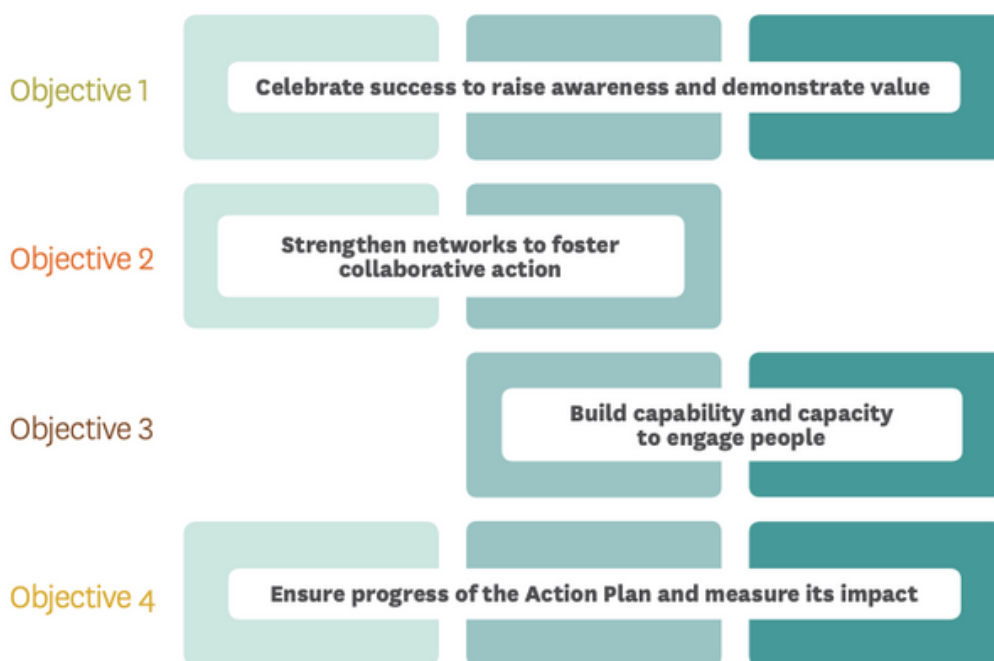
This year we have chosen to structure our report using the format of the government document: *Mātauranga Whakauka Taiao | Environmental Education for Sustainability Mahere Rautaki: Strategy and Action Plan 2017–2021*.

We have done this as there has been no report produced by the government agencies on progress during this period. As NZAEE represents the sector, we felt that our organisation was best placed to report on actions and progress during that period.

Each section aligns with an Objective in the strategy, to which there were several named Actions.



## Four-year focus for this first Action Plan (2017–2021)



## OBJECTIVE 1

# Celebrate success to raise awareness and demonstrate value

### OBJECTIVES

### ACTIONS

#### Objective 1

**Celebrate success to raise awareness and demonstrate value**

Celebrate exemplary practices and partnerships

Leverage existing programmes

Mātauranga Whakauka Taiao | Environmental Education for Sustainability Mahere Rautaki: Strategy and Action Plan 2017–2021.  
Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Education, July 2017

A key part of NZAEE's proposal for NEX funding was to develop a system that will enable our community of educators to feel connected, informed and inspired anywhere in Aotearoa New Zealand. When we secured NEX funding in 2021, work began on this project.

We launched a new website in April 2022, with the intention that it would be a one-stop-shop for environmental education resources, events, stories, inspiration and connections for teachers and providers.

We spoke to a number of teachers and providers in the development of the website. It was crucial for everyone we spoke to, that the information be fresh and current. To ensure this, we have contracted an experienced teacher, and environmental education provider as a Content Curator, initially in the role of sourcing and referencing the material, and latterly in developing spotlight articles that celebrate success to raise awareness and demonstrate value.

#### NZAAE WEBSITE:

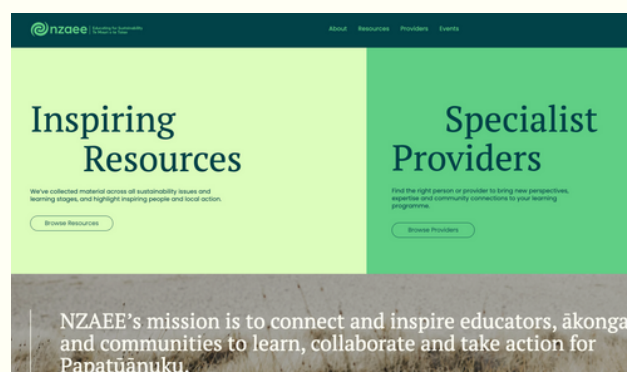
Numbers as at 31 June 2022

96 Individual resources

21 Professional learning collections

9 Spotlights, or themed case studies

286 provider listings



## Exemplary Practices and Partnerships

The **[Spotlight section of our website](#)** provides a place where we feature longer stories of a project in a school or community, and also provides a place for seasonally relevant or subject specific collections of resources.



An example of a seasonal collection is the **[Rākau | Trees in our Learning Spaces](#)** Spotlight, which highlights events, resources and providers who can support schools and centres to celebrate, grow and plant trees. It provides a context to highlight best practice among our member providers, including national organisations such as Enviroschools, KCC and DOC, through to local restoration programmes such as Te Kākano in Wānaka.

### CASE STUDY:

#### NZAEE Conference 2022: Hā Hauora Tangata

During the 2021–22 year, a large amount of time was spent planning the conference, *Hā Hauora Tangata*, held in October 2022. Considerable thought was put into selecting speakers to share exemplary practice and partnerships through case studies and panel discussions.

Teachers and providers appreciated the chance to share their stories on a national stage.

I really appreciated the diversity of speakers and experience shared. Thanks. It can be a lonely journey as an educator, particularly when the school does not have an environment focus or strategy.

*(Conference participant, October 2022)*

As the reporting period for this report ends in July 2022, our next review, for the 2022–23 year, will contain a lot more detail and feedback about the conference.

## Leverage Existing Programmes

The [\*\*Spotlight section of our website\*\*](#) also provides an opportunity to profile and promote successful programmes. We have been using the platform to work with provider members to share their work more widely, such as Spotlights featuring schools who are part of the Enviroschools programme and seasonal stories from Garden to Table.

### **CASE STUDY:** **LINKWATER STUDENTS LEADING CHANGE**

Linkwater School is a small rural Green Gold Enviroschool in the Marlborough region, where students and teachers are passionate about their environment and much of their curriculum is based on students learning about and taking action for sustainability, supported by their wider community.

With long-term support from Enviroschools, they also work with the Marlborough District Council as part of the Kids' Edible Gardens programme and have taken part in citizen science through Sustainable Coastlines' Litter Intelligence project.



We find that the [\*\*Events section of our website\*\*](#) is a great way of promoting webinars and other professional learning opportunities offered by partners such as Science Learning Hub and Para Kore. This helps support the work of our key partners and has widened their reach to teachers and educators across a range of subject areas and locations.

[\*\*Our Facebook page\*\*](#) has also been an effective platform to further leverage the events and material that we have on our website, with high engagement rates and continued interest in the content that we share.



## OBJECTIVE 2

# Strengthen networks to foster collaborative action

### OBJECTIVES

### ACTIONS

#### Objective 2

#### Strengthen networks to foster collaborative action

Develop our understanding of what makes existing kaitiaki and EEFS networks successful

Use new and evolving ways to connect

Strengthen and widen networks amongst those involved as kaitiaki and with EEFS

Mātauranga Whakauka Taiao | Environmental Education for Sustainability Mahere Rautaki: Strategy and Action Plan 2017–2021.  
Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Education, July 2017

The Objective above aligns well with the objective that NZAEE has developed for its own Networking Workstream:

#### **Our Community of Educators will:**

#### **Feel connected, informed and inspired anywhere in Aotearoa**

- A network of local groups that connects teachers, providers and communities for collaborative learning and support
- Learning in local groups about Te Tiriti, local history and land use, and links to local curriculum and other curriculum areas
- Connections made and fostered with Māori providers, with iwi, hapū and marae groups, and local environmental groups in the community

## Local Groups

NZAEE has always operated a branch structure to encourage local connection and collaboration, but this has been done on a voluntary level, and has relied to a large extent, on local individuals' energy and personal connections. In the past financial year there were only four branches throughout Aotearoa New Zealand which were active enough to qualify for capitation from membership subscriptions to be paid for local events.

We knew that other groups were gathering for support and to learn together, so the intention of the Networking Workstream is to encourage more local gathering and learning, with minimal administrative burden.

When planning the 2022 conference we began exploring areas around the motu where people were keen to meet up face-to-face. The conference was structured so that the first day of the two-day conference could be in-person and local.

Encouraging personal connection was particularly important after a previous year impacted by isolations and lockdowns. Seventeen local groups initially expressed interest in a Local Connection Day, and this reduced to 13 for the conference, but we continue to have contact with all groups as we transition to more supported local hubs.

A more detailed report on the 2022 conference will be provided in the next Annual Review, covering the 2022-2023 year.

#### **LOCAL GROUPS:**

Numbers as at 31 June 2022

Active branches:	4	Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, Christchurch
Local groups discussing local day for conference:	17	Te Tai Tokerau   Northland, Tāmaki Makaurau   Auckland, Kirikiriroa   Hamilton, Te Moana-a-Toi   Bay of Plenty, Taupō, Te Matau a Māui   Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, Wairarapa, Te Whanganui-a-Tara   Wellington, Whakatū   Nelson and Tasman, Wairau   Marlborough, Ōtautahi   Christchurch, Ōtepoti   Dunedin, West Coast, Wānaka, Queenstown, Murihiku   Southland

## Providers Section on Website

When developing the website, we wanted to have a place where teachers and providers could go to find others working in their area – be it geographically, interest area or school levels.

We were fortunate to connect with a PhD candidate who at the time was compiling a directory of all environmental and nature educators by region. She was able to share this with us with her contacts' approval, which means that we were able to launch the website with 286 listings of providers throughout the motu, with the name, contact details and links to their website and Facebook page. NZAEE members are able to add additional information, photos and logos, and this advantage has helped to encourage provider members to join our organisation.

At the end of the reporting period, there were 286 provider listings, and 40 were detailed listings provided by members.

## Online Webinars

An upside of the pandemic was that more people were familiar with learning online. This medium is well suited to delivering professional learning to environmental educators throughout the country.

We have refined the process based on feedback and have found that an hour-long session, held at a time after school, which generally begins with an expert sharing knowledge followed by a teacher or young person sharing their experience is a good format. The webinars are recorded and made available on our website, and if there is an element of interaction needed or preferred, they can be extended in length to 1.5 hours.

### WEBINARS HELD:

During the 2021-2022 Year

21 July 2021	Shaping our Tomorrow. Rachel Bolstad and Marty Taylor (120 participants)
4 November 2021	Partnerships to support your primary programme. Sally Carson and Paul Murray (60)
23 November 2021	EfS Standards for secondary schools. Andrea Soanes and Lyn Rogers (40)
30 March 2022	Pūtātara. Sarah Hopkinson and Fergusson Intermediate (160)
26 April 2022	New Aotearoa New Zealand Histories Curriculum, Graeme Ball (30 – AGM speaker)

### CASE STUDY: OUR PŪTĀTARA WEBINAR

Pūtātara is an online resource produced by the Ministry of Education at the end of 2019, but it was not promoted extensively, resulting in very low awareness amongst teachers.

We knew that people who were using the resource found it very useful, so we organised a webinar on Pūtātara to spread the word. We invited the writer to talk about the approach that was taken and the key concepts that were covered, and then handed over to teachers from Fergusson Intermediate who are using the resource to structure the school-wide year 7 and 8 learning programme.

"Pūtātara enabled all students to connect and follow an area of interest that they were passionate about, and made it really doable for teachers to integrate areas of the curriculum. We love that there is a strong focus on te ao Māori, and that there is a 'take action' component."

Robyn Stent, Fergusson Intermediate teacher





## Seaweed

Seaweed – Kaupapa Moana – in Aotearoa New Zealand has been a focus of NZAEE’s mahi for many years. It has provided a useful focus for branches to gather communities and educators together to learn in and about, and take action for the marine environment.

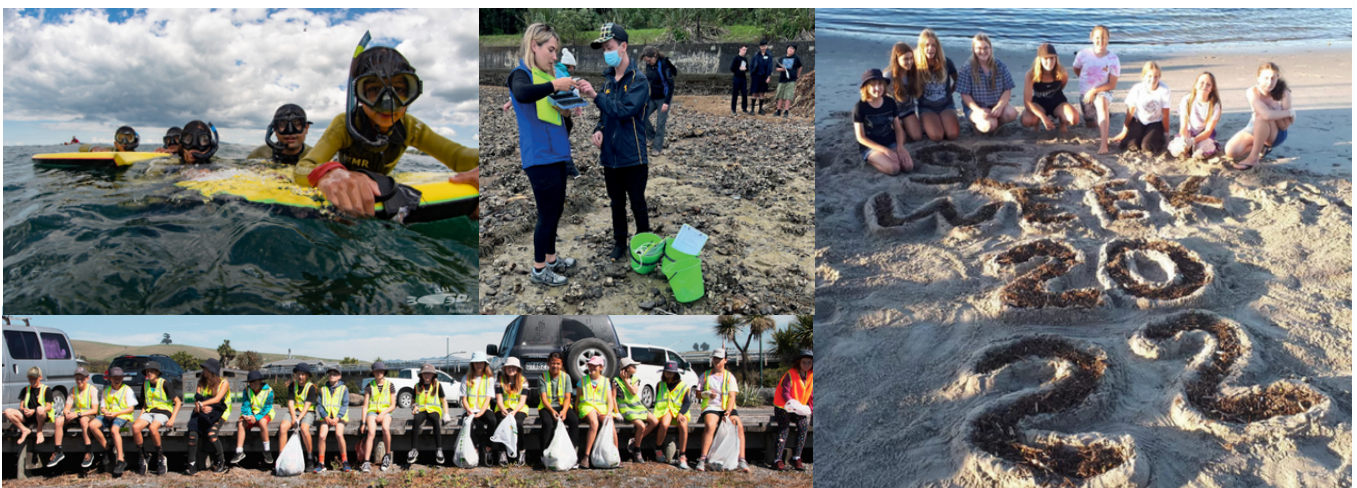
Buy-in to Seaweed has increased steadily over the years, with organisations like Sustainable Coastlines, Mountains to Sea Trust, NZ Marine Studies Centre, aquaria, zoos and libraries offering activities across the motu. It’s also a busy time online, with things marine featuring prominently on a range of platforms.

Since 2019, the Sir Peter Blake Marine Education and Recreation Centre (MERC) has been contracted to manage Seaweed events in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, and oversee the national brand. We have been grateful recipients of Foundation North grant funding to enable the Auckland and Northland events to proceed. Over the years of Covid interruptions, MERC adapted the event to offer online events and learning opportunities, and adjusted events and educational opportunities beyond the dedicated week in March, to allow for lockdowns and interruptions.

In 2022, MERC took on the custodianship of the Seaweed brand more formally, and became the fund holder with Foundation North. NZAEE will still continue to be involved in the Seaweed Advisory Group, and as we work more closely with local groups, will continue to seek opportunities for Seaweed to be a focus of local community learning and action.

We also continue to support the Hauraki Gulf Monitoring Project, a hands-on, multi-year citizen science project engaging and supporting schools from throughout the Auckland region, run by NZ Marine Studies Centre Director, Sally Carson.

The photos below show the range of events that are held throughout the country. These events are organised by local people who are passionate about telling the story of our sea, helping young people and communities make connections with each other and see the interrelationships with our environment. Without these amazing people, Seaweed as we know it simply would not happen.





## OBJECTIVE 3

# Build capability and capacity to engage people

### OBJECTIVES

### ACTIONS

#### Objective 3

Build capability and capacity to engage people

Provide context-specific guidelines, tools and professional learning opportunities that support EEFS practices, including mātauranga Māori perspectives

Support EEFS leadership across different sectors

Mātauranga Whakauka Taiao | Environmental Education for Sustainability Mahere Rautaki: Strategy and Action Plan 2017–2021.  
Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Education, July 2017

## Guidelines, Tools and Professional Learning Opportunities

As outlined above, in the 2021–22 year, there were 96 individual resources added to the website. We knew when we were developing the website that there were already a large number of high quality, Aotearoa New Zealand-specific resources available to teachers and environmental education providers, but they were not always easy to find. Having resources catalogued on our website, and able to be filtered according to education level, learning context and region has made these local, relevant and engaging resources more available to more people.

Our Content Curator adds material to the website resource catalogue with a focus on resources that meet most of the following criteria:

- Resources and stories from Aotearoa New Zealand (except our Professional Learning section which includes international research, indigenous worldviews)
- Deep, authentic learning, with student choice and empowered learners
- Place-based/place-responsive learning, recognising how locally specific many environmental issues and projects are
- Led by Māori or working in true partnership with mana whenua
- Respectful and appropriate use of te reo Māori, tikanga and mātauranga Māori
- Positive, hopeful and action-based
- Nature connection and wellbeing focus
- Developmentally appropriate learning for different age groups
- Skills and capabilities are emphasised rather than just a focus on knowledge acquisition (noting that knowledge is still a vital part of learning)

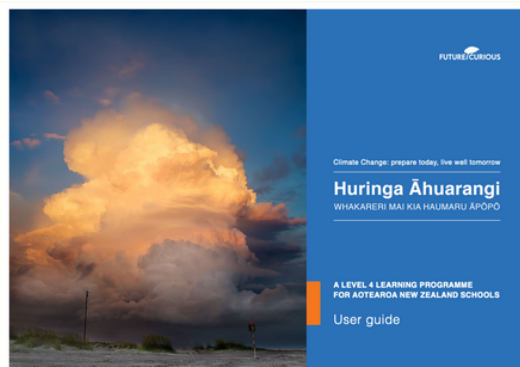
### **CASE STUDY:** **CLIMATE LEARNING PROGRAMME**

The NZAEE website is now the home to *Huringa Āhuarangi: whakarere mai kia haumaru āpōpō: Climate Change: prepare today, live well tomorrow*.

Developed by Aotearoa New Zealand educator Sian Carvell, in collaboration with national and local organisations, the programme was piloted with schools in 2018 and extensively audited and updated in 2021.

The programme is a science-based, integrated learning programme with user and wellbeing guides, and eight modules.

It is one of our most downloaded resources and was shared widely on Facebook when we announced the updated resource was available on our website.



## Support for Leadership

As we have mentioned earlier, the support that NZAEE is putting into the development of local groups will foster local leadership as well as building connections between educators, and local conservation and education groups. Through our NEX funding, NZAEE is able to provide locally relevant professional learning for these groups.

We have found that all rōpū are different, and often people involved in education or conservation wear various 'hats' in their communities. We need to make sure that the local group that is set up to provide a support network and learning opportunities is fit for purpose, that it 'sits' with the right organisation, and that people in coordinator roles are committed to the collective growth and learning in their wider region.

## OBJECTIVE 4

# Ensure progress of the Action Plan and measure its impact

### OBJECTIVES

### ACTIONS

#### Objective 4

**Ensure progress of the Action Plan and measure its impact**

Provide strong governance to ensure progress of the Strategy and Action Plan

Develop measures that will highlight the impact of activities and demonstrate the success of the Strategy against the vision

Mātauranga Whakauka Taiao | Environmental Education for Sustainability Mahere Rautaki: Strategy and Action Plan 2017–2021.  
Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Education, July 2017

## Strong Governance

This is one of the more difficult areas to report on as the governance of the *Mātauranga Whakauka Taiao | Environmental Education for Sustainability: Strategy and Action Plan* has been impacted by changes in Government and personnel, and the pandemic.

In 2019, when the Action Plan was in its third year, a project was undertaken to understand the current operating environment and develop a programme of initiatives that would encourage and enable teachers, environmental educators and community groups to connect, communicate, collaborate and deepen their knowledge and confidence in teaching EEfS.

At this time there was a steering committee with representatives from each of the three partner agencies, but the momentum and administrative support was provided by the project manager. A lack of accountability on any staff in the partner agencies was seen as an issue by the sector when the 2018 NZAEE Conference spent a considerable amount of time reviewing and understanding the document, and we feel that this lack of resourcing has continued to be a major barrier to significant progress.

When NZAEE received NEX funding from MOE in 2021, it was indirectly enabling the *Mātauranga Whakauka Taiao | Environmental Education for Sustainability: Strategy and Action Plan* to progress. Since then, with changes in personnel in the partner agencies, there has not been a cross-agency steering group that NZAEE has been able to connect with, though we continue to have separate relationships with each of the three partner agencies on an as-needed basis.

## Develop Measures and Highlight Impact

Developing measures of impact is an aspiration for NZAEE. At this stage we have only been able to report on the impact that we are able to control (in effect reporting on the Ministry of Education's behalf as a result of the NEX funding that they have made available to environmental education professional learning and development). Ideally future reporting would pull together the impact from initiatives across many government agencies, but additional funding for NZAEE or resourcing at one of the government agencies would be required to achieve this.

We also know that the three signatories to the strategy: Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment and Ministry of Education are not the only government agencies that contribute to or have an impact on EEfS Objectives. We encourage these Objectives to be woven into other inter-agency work programmes, such as the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, and the climate change response strategies.





## NZAEE National Executive 2021-2022

The progress and achievements achieved in the reporting period would not have been able to be achieved without the time and expertise of our appointed Executive members and the experts that we have been able to contract.

### National Executive (elected and appointed) as at 31 July 2022:

Sally Birdsall	Senior Co-Chair
Robyn Zink	Junior Co-Chair
Elsbeth McMillan	Treasurer
Chris Eames	
Gill Stewart	
Annie McDonald	
Nettie Stow	
Sian Moffitt	
Michaela Coleman	

### Contractors to NZAEE:

Chris Montgomerie	Executive Officer
Becky McCormack	Content Curator
Debbie Courtney	Administrator

#### ORGANISATION DETAILS:

##### New Zealand Association for Environmental Education

Address: 31 Galbraith Street  
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Charitable Trust CC37847  
Incorporated Society 245189



New Zealand Association for  
Environmental Education

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