



# ŌTARA WATERWAYS & LAKE TRUST



# 2023-24

## ANNUAL REPORT



# A Word from our Chair

*It is an honour to share my reflections as the newly appointed Chair of the Ōtara Waterways and Lake Trust in this remarkable year. Taking on this role has been a privilege, especially as I witness the unwavering commitment of our team, volunteers, and community to the health and vitality of our waterways.*

*This year has been a period of growth and achievement for the Trust. From planting over 28,000 native species to actively managing restoration across 51 hectares of land, our collective efforts have significantly enhanced biodiversity, improved water quality, and bolstered flood resilience. Our community engagement activities have been equally impactful, with over 2,100 individuals participating in events that foster a sense of connection and responsibility for our environment.*

*As I reflect on the successes of 2023-24, I am inspired by the partnerships, dedication, and passion that define our Trust. Together, we are not only restoring ecosystems but also building stronger, more resilient communities. I look forward to continuing this journey alongside all of you, as we strive for cleaner waterways and a healthier future for our people.*

*Warm regards,  
Tipi Arthur  
Chair, Ōtara Waterways and Lake Trust*

## Key outcomes 2023-24

- 22 stream restoration sites actively managed by the Trust
  - 8 Ōtara sites
  - 12 Howick sites
  - 2 Māngere sites - Harania and Te Ararata Streams
- 29,302 plants planted by the Trust
  - 12,430 Billion tree sites
  - 4,014 Ōtara sites as funded by the Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board
  - 11,196 Howick sites as funded by Howick Local Board
  - 1,100 Ōtara sites as funded by other organisations
  - 562 Māngere Stream restoration
- 2,193 people engaged in community engagement activities
  - 1,115 volunteers
  - 1,078 participants
- 125 community engagement events and activations
- 3,471.5 volunteer hours



# Stream Restoration

The Trust's stream restoration initiatives within the Ōtara Waterways catchment in 2023-24 focused on ecological restoration across 20 sites, aiming to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, and strengthen flood resilience. Key activities included ongoing weed control, planting, and site maintenance.

2023-24 planting outcomes	# Plants
Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board funded sites	4,014
Howick Local Board funded sites	11,196
1 Billion Tree sites	12,430
Ōtara sites - other funders	1,100
	<b>28,740</b>

## Habitat Restoration and Management

Approximately 51 hectares of land is now actively managed for restoration, including ongoing weed control and infill planting at sites that benefited from the 1 Billion Trees programme. This represents a long-term commitment to improving local biodiversity and ecological health, ensuring that the native plants established as a result of the 1 Billion Trees investment continue to thrive

## Planting and Biodiversity enhancement

The Trust successfully planted 28,740 native species across the restoration sites. This planting strengthens the previous years' work, promoting greater biodiversity by filling gaps in the ecosystem and increasing plant survival rates in challenging areas.

## Comprehensive weed control

Targeted weed control efforts were intensified, with a focus on invasive species such as privet, woolly nightshade, Tradescantia, moth plant, convulvulus, and honeysuckle. This work ensures that newly planted native vegetation is protected from aggressive weed species, helping to improve the resilience of the restored areas.



# 1 Billion Trees

After 3½ years and 105,500 plants in the ground, the Trust's 1 Billion Trees programme was concluded in December 2023.

The project focused on seven of the most critical stream reaches in the catchment identified as at a point of collapse with rapidly diminishing riparian cover and colonisation by a great diversity of invasive weeds.

The Trust is incredibly thankful for the Ministry for Primary Industries and Te Uru Rakau's generous funding, support, and opportunities through the 1 Billion Trees project. With this funding, the Trust was able to expand its restoration efforts and strengthen community engagement activities within the upper Ōtara Waterways catchment.

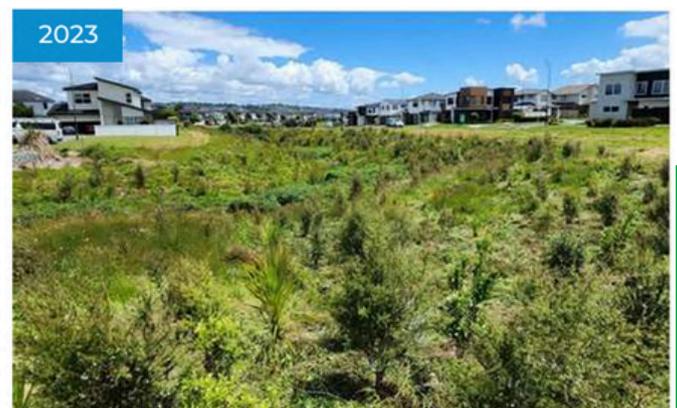
Moreover, the 1 Billion Trees project empowered the Trust to demonstrate its ability to execute a large-scale restoration project on time, on budget, and with exceptional proficiency. The Trust was able to achieve significant biodiversity and water quality improvements, as well as meaningful community engagement outcomes.



Te Irirangi Reserve

## Local Board Funded Projects

The continued support from the Ōtara-Papatoetoe and Howick Local Boards in 2023-24 has allowed long-term stream restoration efforts to be continued at all of the stream restoration sites across the catchment with the conclusion of the 1 Billion Trees funding. This reflects a significant scaling up of Local Board investment in restoration efforts across the Ōtara-Papatoetoe and Howick Local Board areas.



Historic 1 Billion Tree sites, such as the site at Jerpoint Drive in Flat Bush, are now being supported with Local Board funding, allowing the measurable progress being made by the Trust to be continued.

# Out of Catchment Restoration Projects

With the Trust's growing reputation as an organisation highly skilled in stream restoration, opportunities to lead restoration projects outside the catchment are being offered. This work provides important ecological connections to the Trust's restoration sites and additional work for the Trust's Stream Team.



## Māngere Waterways Programme

For the past two years, the Trust has been engaged by Auckland Council's Healthy Waters department to lead the stream restoration activities along the Harania and Te Ararata streams in Māngere to support local community efforts in those areas.

In 2023-24 this work involved ongoing maintenance of previously planted areas and continued infill planting to increase stream shading and bank stabilisation, to reduce water temperature for improved health & colonisation of native fish and macroinvertebrates, and to suppress growth of exotic macrophytes.



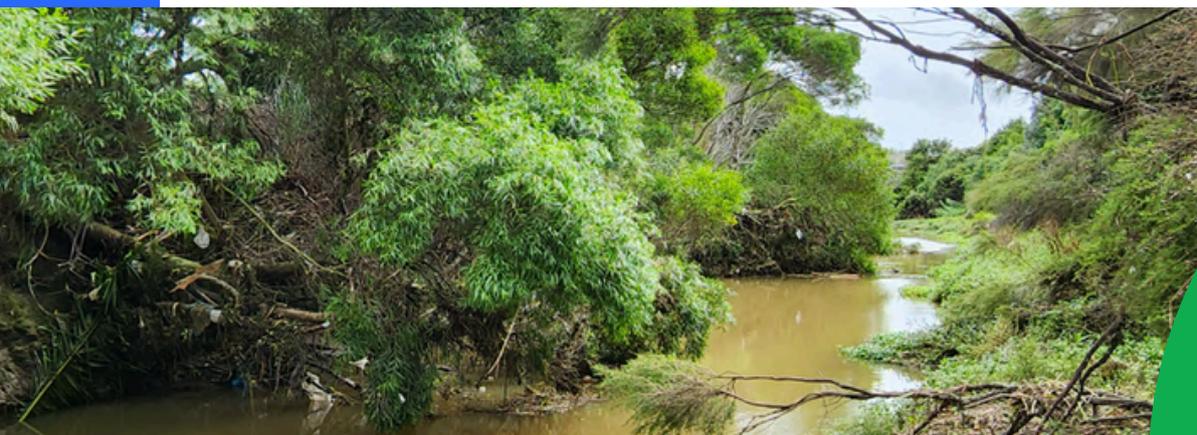
## Healthy Waters Community Flood Resilience

In response to the January 2023 Auckland flood events, in 2024 Healthy Waters funded community led initiatives that aimed to enhance flood resilience whilst also enhancing the health and wellness of Auckland's streams and surrounding natural environment.

The Ōtara Waterways and Lake Trust was selected to be the technical lead for those initiatives in the four southern local board areas of Ōtara-Papatoetoe, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Manurewa and Papakura, collaborating with and supporting smaller local organisations to draw on connections and local knowledge.

In the period January to June 2024, the Trust worked alongside Healthy Waters to support local community groups to develop and fine tune their flood resilience projects for delivery post 30 June. This included planning for its own project in the Ōtara Creek Reserve to remove wattles and over hanging branches from a section of the Ōtara Creek from July – September 2024.

Otara Creek



# Community Engagement

The Ōtara Waterways and Lake Trust's community engagement programme is a cornerstone of our mission to restore and protect the local awa and waterways. By actively involving local residents, community groups, schools and businesses, we foster a sense of responsibility and connection for the environment. This work is critical to the long-term success of our restoration efforts, ensuring that the restoration of our waterways is not only achieved but maintained for future generations. Through partnerships, education, and hands-on involvement, we are creating lasting change that will support the ecological health of our waterways and the wellbeing of our communities.

Our community engagement work comes under three funded work programmes: Ōtara & Flat Bush community engagement, Kaitakawaenga work programme and Pest Free South Auckland.

**Total Volunteers** people doing mahi **1,115**

**Total participants** people attending events **1,078**

**Total number of people engaged** **2,193**

**Total number events/activations** **125**

**Total volunteer hours** **3,471.5**

**Total amount rubbish collected by volunteers** **282.5 bags**  
plus 40m<sup>3</sup> landfill, 2 mattresses, 1 couch



## Otara Community engagement

On 18 September, the Trust hosted 102 students, teachers and parents from Bairds Mainfreight Primary School to take part in a clean-up of the Ōtara Creek Reserve as part of Keep New Zealand Beautiful Week. The students are active kaitiaki of the Reserve, regularly visiting the Reserve for clean ups or other activities as organised by the Ōtara Community Coordinator.



## Flat Bush Community engagement

On Saturday 13th April, the Trust delivered a night illumination event in celebration of Buddha Day. The purpose of the event was to provide a different activation centred around art and culture to engage with the Flat Bush community.

The event consisted of three stations of illuminated “trees” with outlines of native fish, birds and invertebrates. At each station there was a different educational focus with Pest Free Howick, Whitebait Connection and the Ōtara Waterways and Lake Trust.

## Skills-based learning

In 2023-24, with funding from Lotteries, the Trust trialled a skills-based learning programme to support volunteers wanting to attend regular volunteer sessions to learn meaningful skills related to stream restoration. Two intakes were completed – the first with undergraduates and the second with high school-aged rangatahi (15 years and older) with a total of 39 participants engaging in 29 sessions.



## Kaitakawaenga

The Trust is committed supporting positive and respectful relationships with iwi, hapū, marae and hapori Māori to deliver stream restoration and community engagement projects that meet the aspirations of Māori and the wider community.

In 2023-24, the Trust's Kaitakawaenga continued this work with the successful delivery of many tikanga Māori events, including Matariki celebrations and tree-planting initiatives., and continued to strengthen relationships with hapori Māori and key local organisations, fostering trust and collaboration.

## Ōtara Pest Animal Network

Through the Pest Free South Auckland initiative, the Trust continued to build community interest and engagement in backyard trapping and pest animal control with targeted promotional campaigns, education workshops and free traps available.



# Supporting wider environmental efforts

In 2023-24 the Trust continued to be the umbrella organisation for Pest Free Howick and Pest Free South Auckland.

## PEST FREE SOUTH AUCKLAND

The aim of Pest Free South Auckland is to support efforts towards pest plant and pest animal eradication within the four local board areas of Manurewa, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Ōtara-Papatoetoe, and Papakura.

This includes direct efforts such as pest plant control, pest animal trapping and bait station management, as well as education and training.

The Ōtara Waterways and Lake Trust is the umbrella organisation for the Pest Free South Auckland Coordinator and the annual moth plant pod competition which is delivered across the four local boards.

## FLOOD RESILIENCE

Following the January and February 2023 flood events in Auckland, the Trust identified specific stream sites in Ōtara which had suffered erosion damage and bank scour as a result of the high velocity flood waters. These areas were identified as needing immediate attention to control ongoing erosion and as such a funding proposal was presented to the Hynds Foundation for the Trust to undertake a programme of targeted works to remove debris and to stabilise stream banks.

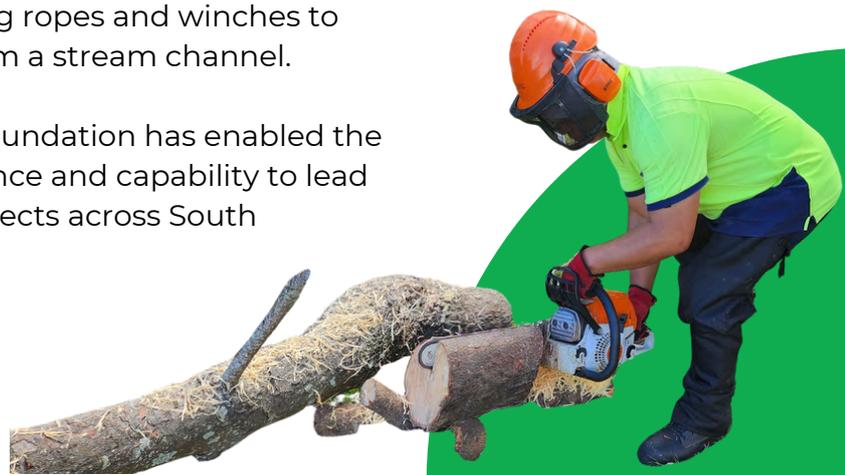
This project has involved comprehensive training for the Stream Team involving chainsaw safety and maintenance, operation of different types of chainsaws in different situations, and using ropes and winches to remove large woody debris from a stream channel.

The support from the Hynds Foundation has enabled the Trust to have the skills, experience and capability to lead and deliver flood resilience projects across South Auckland.

## PEST FREE HOWICK

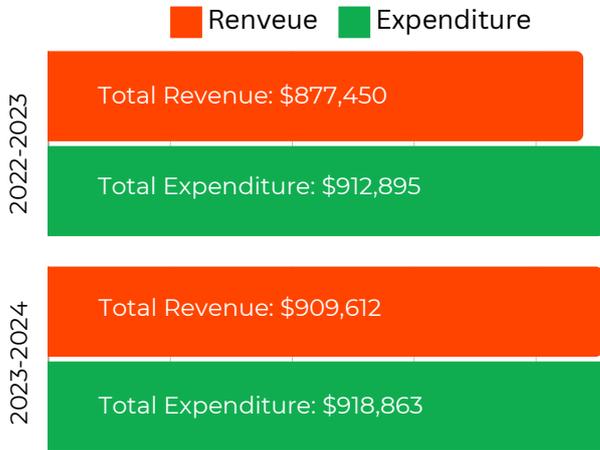
In 2023-24, the Trust continued its support of the Pest Free Howick Ward project by continuing to be the host employer for the Pest Free Howick team.

This is a great relationship for both the Trust and Pest Free Howick, with a shared kaupapa of restoring and protecting te taiao in the Howick Local Board area through the removal of pest plants and animals and engagement of the local community.



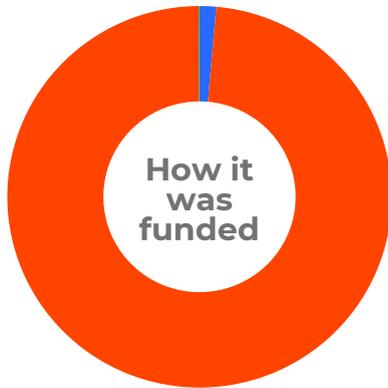
# Financial Overview

## Income Statement



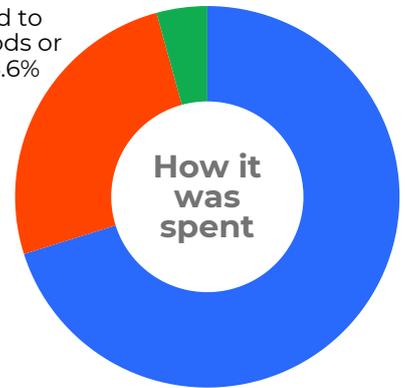
The information in this report has been summarised from the Financial Statements of the Ōtara Waterways and Lake Trust for the year ending June 30, 2024. These were prepared by Chester Grey Chartered Accountants and audited by Shingleton Auditors. The audited Financial Statements are available on request or on the New Zealand Charities Commission website. For further information, please email [katie@otarawaterways.org.nz](mailto:katie@otarawaterways.org.nz).

Donations 1.4%



Revenue from providing goods and services \$98.5%

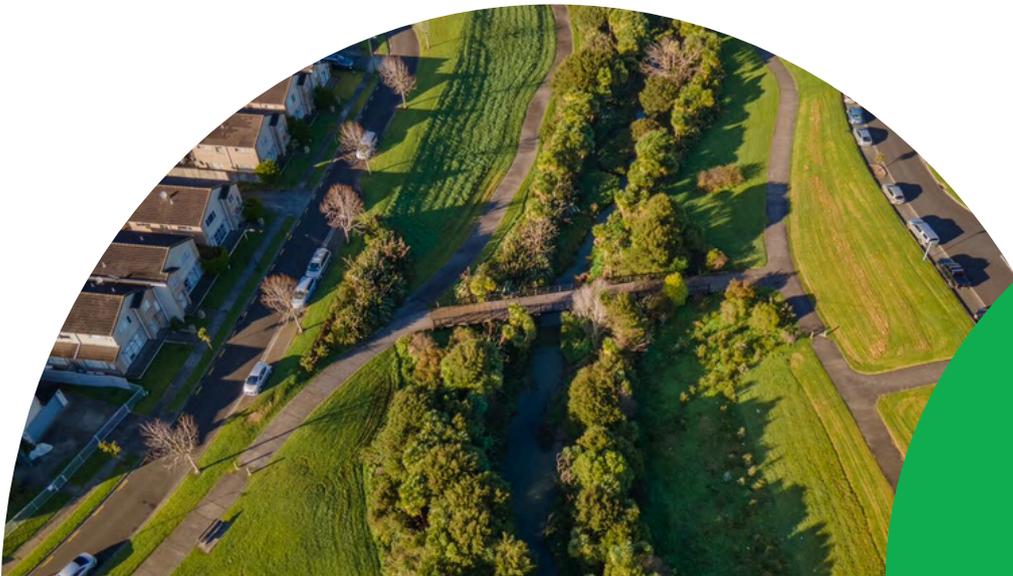
Other expenses 4.2%  
Costs related to providing goods or services \$25.6%



Volunteer and employee related costs \$70.2%

### Revenue from providing goods or services

Grants	759,516
Income - Commercial Services	37,818
Ministry of Primary Industries 1 Billion Trees	98,975
<b>Total Revenue from providing goods or services</b>	<b>896,309</b>



# Acknowledgements

Thank you to our funders and partners who made our work possible this year:



Ministry for Primary Industries  
Manatū Ahu Matua



The Trust would also like to thank various staff and teams of Auckland Council for ongoing assistance with projects, members of the Ōtara Papatoetoe and Howick Local Boards for their ongoing support plus all the volunteers that have assisted at planting days, clean ups and other community events and all the community organisations that support the work that we do.

The Trust would like to make a special mention to Accelerating Aotearoa for its tremendous support of the Trust and in providing a home base for our operations.



## The Otago Waterways and Lake Trust

The Ōtara Waterways and Lake Trust is a community-driven organisation dedicated to restoring and protecting the health of waterways in South Auckland. Through stream restoration projects, education, and collaboration, the Trust empowers locals to take action for cleaner streams, vibrant biodiversity, and resilient communities. Together, we're creating a future where our waterways thrive, and the people connected to them flourish.

1/40 Lovegrove Crescent  
Ōtara, Auckland 2023  
[facebook.com/otarawaterways](https://facebook.com/otarawaterways)  
0221 099 207  
[katie@otarawaterways.org.nz](mailto:katie@otarawaterways.org.nz)

