

JOBS | MAHI
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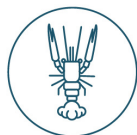
Hurunui Catchment Planting Programme Project Profile



Purpose of this review:

**To highlight the positive social,
environmental, and community benefits
resulting from the Hurunui Catchment
Planting Programme.**





Hurunui Catchment Planting Programme

The Hurunui Catchment Planting Programme, funded through Jobs for Nature (J4N) was initiated by the Hurunui District Landcare Group (HDLG) in August 2020, with the aim of improving water quality and native biodiversity in the area.

Region	Canterbury
Recipient	Hurunui District Landcare Group
Start date	17/08/2020
End date	02/12/2022
Approved funding	\$1,494,720
Co-funding	\$402,000
Intent	Ecosystem restoration, freshwater restoration
Funder	Te Uru Rākau Ministry for Primary Industries

Why is the project important for the region?

During the COVID-19 pandemic the Hurunui Catchment Planting Programme created employment opportunities in the Canterbury region. The project helped build resilience in the local community during a challenging period, particularly for farmers.

The HDLG plays a crucial role in protecting and improving the biodiversity of the Canterbury region. They work on ensuring the preservation of native species, identifying threats to their survival, and prioritising actions to create better outcomes for biodiversity.

What difference is the project making to people?

Employment opportunities and community participation

The project created employment opportunities and improved community participation in environmental restoration activities.

The project provided support to several small businesses working in the Hurunui District at a time of uncertainty due to the impact of COVID-19. Over the life of the project there were at least 22 individuals contracted, sub-contracted, or employed through one of the contracts to support the HDLG project, and many more who indirectly benefited (eg fencing contracted by the landowner).

The HDLG have built strong relationships with the farmers, boosting community involvement in nature-focused initiatives. Over 300 landowners, who manage 310,000 hectares in the district, were already engaged in environmental management practices as a collective.

The project inspired these landowners to identify additional areas they could retire and replant with native species, contributing to the future growth of native biodiversity in the district.

The HDLG also provided education, resources, and networking services, encouraging individuals to value and care for native biodiversity. The knowledge and experience gained from this project will be invaluable in the coming years as they share their learnings with their wider 320 farm member base.¹

How is the project contributing to the wellbeing of Māori?

The HDLG works to build collaborative relationships with Māori communities and rūnanga (council) in the Hurunui District. This helps to weave Māori cultural values into farming decisions and discussions, while generating a deeper connection to the land for locals.²

The project included a 2.5 hectare site near the Waiau Uwha River that has been developed based on the idea of a “nohoanga”, a traditional concept that refers to a place of rest and a location for gathering and cultivating kai (food) which delivers cultural benefits.

Protecting these values is important for the wellbeing of local communities and for preserving the unique heritage of the area. Historically, the Ngāi Tahu Whānui, would temporarily live in sites along the Waiau Uwha River in search of kai and other natural resources. This site serves as a tangible link to their history and traditions, and a place where these traditions can be practiced and preserved for future generations.³

Impacts on the environment

Improved biodiversity and catchment support

The planting of 100,900 native seedlings at 105 sites across 48 farms has boosted the local flora and fauna, contributing to improving the region's biodiversity. The sites were a mix of riparian, wetland, new native bush, and enrichment planting areas, where podocarps and other natives were planted with existing natives.

Sowing native plants is a significant way to help local wildlife and ecosystems that are under threat. A review undertaken for the HDLG found that most of the planting sites are in areas with less than 10% of their original native plants remaining. Planting native species in these highly threatened areas is very important. These areas are in bad shape, with only small patches of the original habitats left, and these are often not in good condition. It is more impactful than planting in areas that still have a lot of their native plants because it helps restore the natural environment where it's needed most.⁴

The programme provides catchment support for over 300 North Canterbury farmers. This support helps these farmers implement practices that improve water quality and biodiversity, managing livestock to prevent them from damaging riverbanks, and planting native vegetation.⁵

The catchment is home to a range of forest vegetation communities and sub-communities, with some differences observed between the North and South Hurunui catchments.⁶ Biodiversity is important for the resilience of ecosystems in this area, providing habitat for native species and maintaining the ecological functions of the river system.

Sustainable land and water management

The planting has reduced the amount of sediment entering waterways, leading to improved water quality for the Hurunui River, which is considered of high conservation value and is noted for its trout and salmonid fishery value.⁷

The planted trees will also sequester carbon, contributing to the mitigation of climate change.

Economic benefits

The improved water quality directly supports the region's agricultural and horticultural activities. These sectors are key to the economic growth of North Canterbury, and their productivity is closely tied to the health of the local environment.

The projects efforts to improve water quality can lead to better crop yields and healthier livestock, thereby boosting the profitability of these sectors. By improving the health of the environment, the project also supports the long-term sustainability of the region's economy.



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