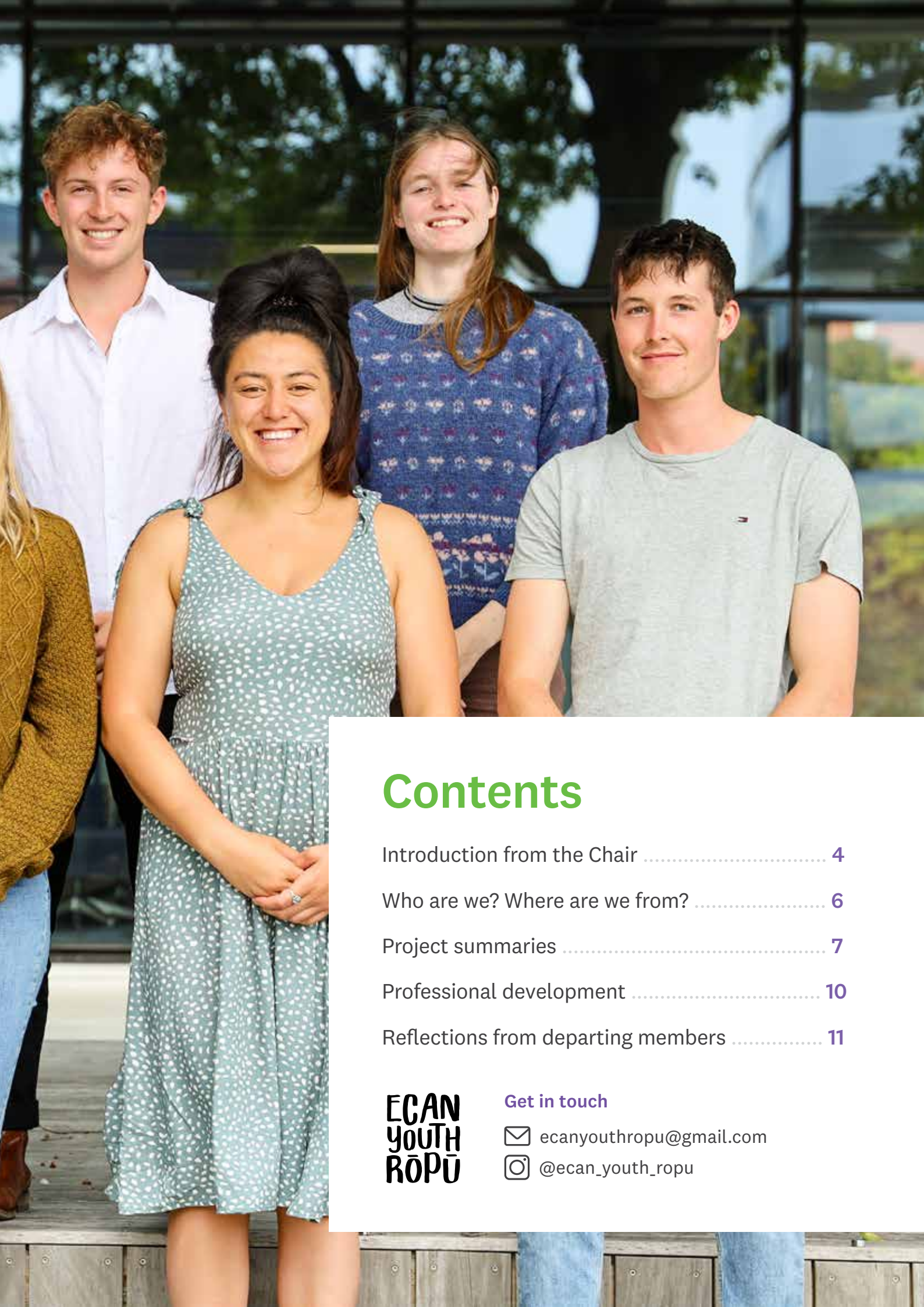


Environment Canterbury Youth Rōpū

2021 Annual Update







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Get in touch

✉ ecanyouthropu@gmail.com

📷 [@ecan_youth_ropu](https://www.instagram.com/ecan_youth_ropu)

Introduction from the Chair

Tēnā koutou,

This year the Youth Rōpū has truly settled into its role, both within Environment Canterbury and externally.

The connected nature of the Youth Rōpū—especially that which has been developed this year—places the Rōpū in a prime position to be a centre for environmentally-based youth advocacy in the future.

It's important to remember how we got here. A group of passionate rangatahi came together to figure out a way to make decision-making at Environment Canterbury better: more forward focussed, democratic, and diverse.

Through various internal-based projects, this part of the group's kaupapa has been met and surpassed. While increasing our presence within the organisation, external connections have also grown exponentially to the benefit of young people across the region.

Through our Long-Term Plan submission project, public transport events, youth meet-ups, and social media campaigns, this group has reached out to and connected with people around Waitaha. It has sought the opinions and voices of a diverse range of young people and brought them to the table.

This has not been an easy feat and one that is constantly evolving. As the first ever youth council of this kind in Canterbury, there are many extra challenges to our outreach. These include our geographic spread, transport limitations, school and university hours, and the group's voluntary nature.

It has been a real journey finding unique and innovative ways to conquer these challenges, which comes back to the beauty of this group; it is organic. Precedents for many of the projects we embark on do not exist and so we are tasked with creating new spaces and roles for young people, moving walls, and shaking up systems. This requires a certain amount of creativity and courage, something the members of this Rōpū have in spades.



A final goodbye

At the start of 2020, I was elected Chair of the Youth Rōpū. We had experimented with a flat leadership style in 2019 and decided that we needed a person accountable to strategy and the more macro-level development of the group. I was 16 when I was elected; I'm now 18 and leaving high school.

On a personal level, this role threw me in the deep end of leadership and I feel I was given the time to find my feet and develop a style of leadership that I can be proud of. I have not reapplied for my position and will leave this role next year. I must thank all past members of the Youth Rōpū for their commitment to our mahi and the dynamic they have developed.

I've been here since midway through 2018 and seen young voices go from strength to strength at Environment Canterbury and in a wider societal context. It has been incredible to witness and be a part of this. There is much we have all learnt over the past few years, from great personal and leadership development, to gaining knowledge of

the ins and outs of policy. I've only got very basic advice to pass on. We all have a voice. Use it for others, use it for yourself, and remember that no one can ever take it away.

This group has been on a journey together, fighting as a unit—working for outcomes as a team. I have no doubt they will find even greater success in years to come.

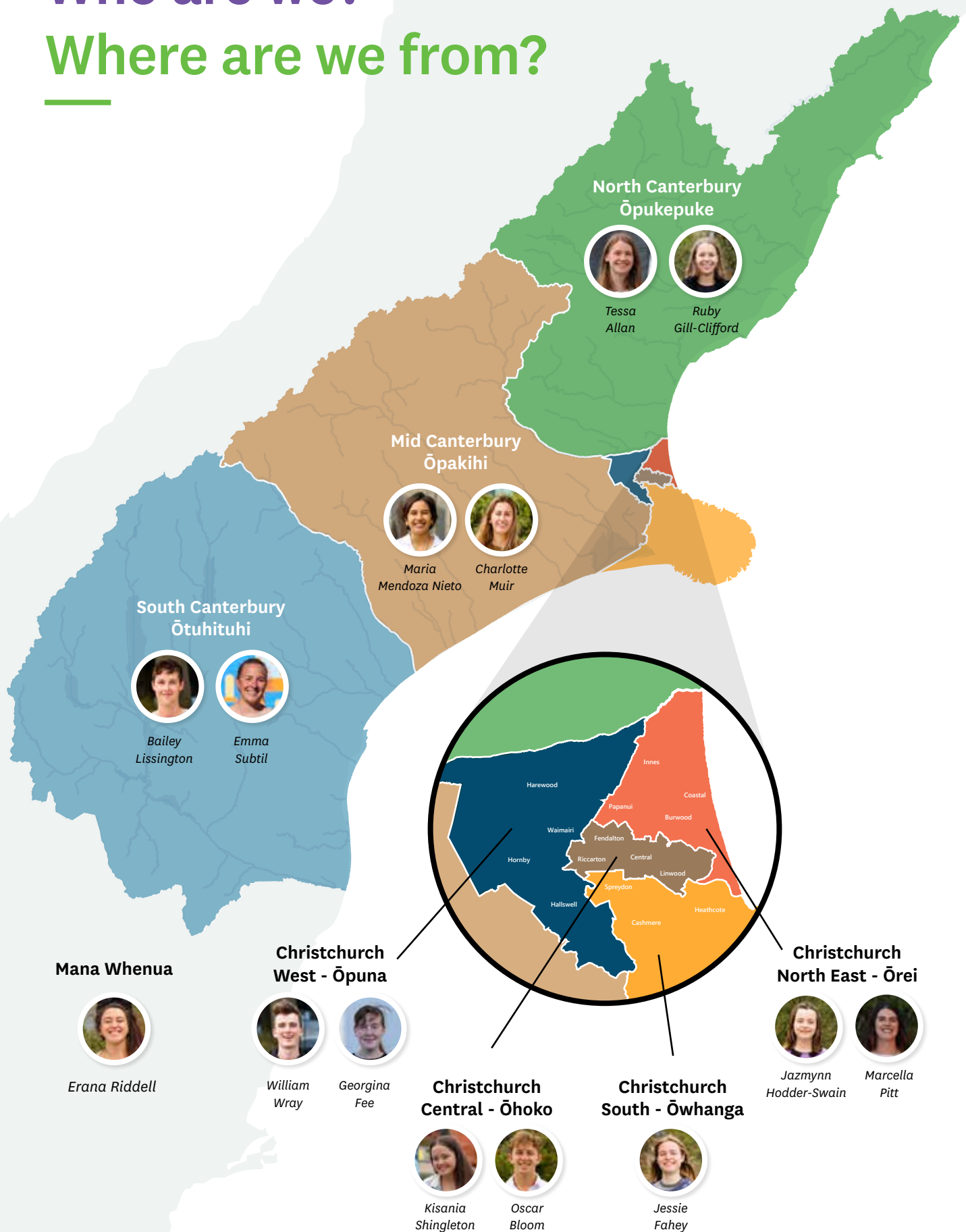
I'd like to say a special thank you to our Deputy Chair, Jazmyynn Hodder-Swain, who has an incredible ability to do the hard yards, and be a true representative of youth voice.

He waka eke noa,

Oscar Bloom
Environment Canterbury Youth Rōpū Chair

Who are we?

Where are we from?





Project summaries

Environment Canterbury Long-Term Plan 2021-2031 consultation

This year, the Youth Rōpū carried out an extensive engagement process with thirteen youth participation groups as part of work on the Environment Canterbury Long-Term Plan (LTP).

The LTP sets out the direction and intentions of the region's budget for the next ten years. In order to create an engagement plan that was accessible and could be used to get a wide range of voices, the Youth Rōpū read through Environment Canterbury's engagement document for the Long-Term Plan (LTP), identified the most pertinent issues to youth and from this, created a document and programme to educate and engage with young people. A survey was then developed to collect the views of young people on these matters. Thirteen events were held over a two week period, resulting in seventy one diverse responses from young people across Waitaha. The data gathered from these events was then analysed by the Rōpū and compiled into a submission that gave insight into young Cantabrian's thoughts on the key issues in the ten-year plan. After this process, the Youth Rōpū presented the submission to Council in May, giving them the opportunity to express the diverse and critical views of young people to the decision makers of the region.

This consultation process, the most expansive that the Youth Rōpū has completed to date, highlighted the need for better resources to be provided to the public for future consultation programmes.

The Rōpū is now working with Environment Canterbury staff to ensure that such resources are provided in the future, beginning with 2022's Annual Plan. The Rōpū also noted that any future Long-Term Plan consultation programmes should focus on encouraging a greater number of young people to make submissions, rather than relying on the Rōpū compiling their thoughts into a single submission.

In conjunction with their own engagement process, the Youth Rōpū was also approached by the Environment Canterbury communications team to collaborate on an advertising campaign to encourage the public to make submissions on the draft LTP.

Youth Rōpū members Oscar, Maria and Will starred in the film and radio advertisements that made up the campaign, co-designing their content with Environment Canterbury staff. Their involvement helped to portray the submission process as approachable and personal, encouraging a wider demographic of people to share their thoughts on the ten-year plan with Council.

It's Time, Canterbury campaign

The Youth Rōpū was approached by the Environment Canterbury communications team to work with them on an upcoming climate change campaign. The campaign, based on information from a NIWA report on climate change predictions for our future, aims to help people understand what climate change will mean for our region. The Youth Rōpū's Mana Whenua member, Erana, spoke at the launch event, alongside Hon. Dr Megan Woods and Environment Canterbury's Chief Scientist, Fiona Shanhun. Erana's speech focused on what climate change means to young people and why it is an important topic moving into the future. The launch was attended by media, Councillors, mayors and industry groups, who all have a vested interest in climate change and its effects on our region.

Citizens Call For Climate Youth Panel

The Youth Rōpū was approached by Aotearoa Climate Emergency, who offered them a place on a youth panel which would present at the 'Citizens' Call for Climate' event, hosted at Rehua Marae in April. The event outlined the benefits which could be realised by forming an Aotearoa Citizens Assembly, featuring talks from Dr Rod Carr regarding public engagement; Lise Deshautel from the French Climate Assembly regarding how a citizens assembly functions; and Rod Oram, who discussed what a climate assembly would look like in Aotearoa.

Youth Rōpū member Bailey spoke on the youth panel, which answered questions and provided perspectives regarding youth consultation.

Canterbury Regional Climate Change Assessment with Tonkin + Taylor

Tonkin + Taylor approached the Youth Rōpū to involve them in the Canterbury Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment, ensuring that the perspectives of young people were heard. Youth Rōpū members Jazmyynn, Will and Tessa participated and were asked a range of questions to draw on youth knowledge on climate change and how the effects of it are already impacting young people. The information provided by the Youth Rōpū was used in the Climate Change Risk Assessment final report. Tessa built a relationship with the facilitators and had an internship over the 2021-2022 summer with Tonkin + Taylor.

Water Zone Committee progress

After much success in 2020 with Oscar Bloom and Erana Riddell officially joining the Christchurch West Melton and Banks Peninsula Zone Committees respectively, the momentum with the Water Zone Committee project has continued. Oscar and Erana have become integral members of their zone committees, wielding influence over the long term strategy and action plans of both the committees. In November, Youth Rōpū member Bailey Lissington was appointed to the Orari Temuka Opihi Pareora Water Zone Committee after engaging with them for the previous six months. These are massive achievements with more and more young people taking up places at decision making tables.

Christchurch City Council coastal hazards workshop

Youth Rōpū members Jazmyynn and Erana attended a workshop at Christchurch City Council alongside other young people who had a vested interest in coastal areas, either by way of studies, where they live or their whakapapa. They listened to the current district's exposure to coastal hazards and Christchurch City Council's proposed programme for the future. They then gave input around the value of creating a more youth specific consultation document that really highlighted the areas they wanted feedback on.

Monthly meetings with Council

In 2021, the Youth Rōpū continued their tradition of meeting monthly with a designated group of Councillors. The meetings continued to be a great space to have conversations about wider environmental issues, community level topics, and Environment Canterbury policy.

These meetings have provided platforms for discussion around the Three Waters Reform Programme, electric vehicles, public transport, Te Mana o te Wai, and much more.



Youth meet-ups

Youth meet-ups occur throughout the year and are designed to be informal discussions which are open to all Cantabrian youth.

This year, the meet-ups were run by a combination of Rōpū members and Environment Canterbury youth engagement and operational staff, depending on the session theme. The meet-ups were once again held in Christchurch and Timaru. In these relaxed sessions, young people from across Waitaha came together to discuss hot topics, share kai and connect with other engaged individuals. These meet-ups proved to be an important channel for both the Rōpū and Environment Canterbury to gather youth perspectives on particular issues. As is explored further below, the 2021 youth meet-ups were also an effective tool for input on the public transport fare review and regional land transport plan.

In 2021, the Rōpū opted to focus on running a smaller number of higher quality youth meet-ups. Depending on the theme and which networks were activated to promote them, attendee numbers still varied during the year, but saw a general increase in attendance. Working alongside youth engagement staff, the Rōpū will continue to refine their approach to these hui in 2022.

Regional Land Transport Plan feedback

At another youth meet-up, Senior Strategy Advisor Clare Pattison facilitated a session on the Regional Land Transport Proposal. Rangatahi got the chance to discuss a vision for a lower emission travel network and comment on how to measure success. The committee agreed on changes based on the work done by the young people and the feedback from the public. Environment Canterbury will be developing new indicators for walking, cycling, accessibility, wellbeing and rail funding to support monitoring of transport outcomes, especially relevant in terms of emissions reduction.

Public Transport Fare Review and on-going consultation

Several of the youth meet-ups this year included consultation sessions with Environment Canterbury staff. In one such meet-up, the Youth Rōpū, alongside the wider youth network, fed into the Public Transport Fare Review in a session hosted by Environment Canterbury Public Transport staff, Ros Service and Stewart Gibbon. Following this successful engagement, Ros and the Youth Rōpū are solidifying a relationship to include youth perspectives in future Public Transport consultation.



Weeding at Silverstream QEII covenant

In collaboration with the University of Canterbury's EnviroSoc, the Youth Rōpū ran a weeding day at the QEII Reserve located on Silverstream Farm in South-East Christchurch. We spent three hours cutting back blackberries, cutting out and cleaning harakeke and general path maintenance to contribute to the overall health of the reserve, all while engaging in some insightful working conversations. The day proved a fun opportunity to learn about native bush management and wrapped up with shared kai.

Recruitment drive

With many members reaching the end of their term, the 2021 recruitment was a big endeavour. From mid-August through till the end of September, the Youth Rōpū advertised for new members across every seat in Canterbury. This involved a concerted social media campaign, reaching out to connections developed through the Long-Term Plan consultation, and using Environment Canterbury staff and networks to find passionate young people. The Youth Rōpū welcomed seven new recruits in October, with the current members staying on until February 2022 to help brief them on all things youth advocacy and Environment Canterbury.

Professional development

Tiriti o Waitangi workshop

The Youth Rōpū attended a virtual Tiriti o Waitangi workshop with Alice Perkins. Alice provided the Rōpū with a comprehensive resource about the partnership that the Crown and Māori entered into under te Tiriti. This was followed up with a tailored, in-depth and open kōrero about the history of te Tiriti, its intention and the historical grievances that have occurred since. We are very grateful for the relationship we have established with Alice and look forward to collaborating with her again in the near future.

Environmental Defence Society Conference

Youth Rōpū deputy chair Jazmynn attended the two-day 2021 Environmental Defence Society Conference. A range of topics were addressed such as freshwater, tourism reform, indigenous biodiversity, conservation reform and the future of the high country.

Hearing the insightful kōrero from the speakers gave Jazmynn valuable knowledge to present back to the Rōpū, as well as a lot to consider from a youth perspective.

Reflections from leaving members

At the end of 2021, many of the Rōpū's members came to the conclusion of their term and time with the group.

We, as the leaving members, wanted to express our gratitude towards Environment Canterbury for their support throughout our tenures on the Rōpū.

Many of us were part of the first intake of Rōpū members in 2019, and in our three years have seen transformational change occur within the youth engagement space at Environment Canterbury.

Key to our success has been the staff we have had the privilege to work with, both within the youth engagement and education team and wider organisation.

While on the Rōpū, Environment Canterbury has been supportive of not only our work, but of us personally, especially through the plethora of opportunities they have offered.

Our time on the group has given us insight into the inner-workings of the public sector and environmental management, while also allowing us to develop our leadership, organisation and communication skills, amongst others.

This personal development has been invaluable and will be incredibly useful as we embark on further studies, new jobs and other opportunities. Most importantly, the Rōpū has given us the opportunity to work with incredible rangatahi from around Waitaha, particularly within this group, who we look forward to seeing succeed in their next endeavours.

Written by Will Wray on behalf of the departing members of the Youth Rōpū.





Environment Canterbury offices

Christchurch
200 Tuam Street
PO Box 345
Christchurch 8140

P 03 365 3828
F 03 365 3194

Timaru
75 Church Street
PO Box 550
Timaru 7940

P 03 687 7800
F 03 687 7808

Kaikōura
96 West End
PO Box 59
Kaikōura 7340

P 03 319 5781
F 03 319 5809

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