

Connect for Nature 2025 Report





Thank you to all our generous supporters

In 2025, the Sustainable Business Network (SBN) celebrated the planting of more than one million native plants and trees. This milestone was reached thanks to the more than 70 community nature projects we've supported since 2015. It also coincided with the launch of Connect for Nature, the next evolution of our long-running Million Metres Streams programme.

Our Connect for Nature programme makes it easy for businesses to support trusted community groups working on nature projects. By connecting funding, people and purpose, we aim to accelerate nature regeneration nationwide.

Our role is to attract business investment into regeneration, not just through donations, but through deeper, longer-term partnerships.

The programme offers several ways for businesses to get involved. That includes financial donations, casual volunteering support and full partnerships where SBN manages relationships with community groups and provides impact reporting and communications support.

Corporate volunteering is a key part of this model. We're shifting volunteering from 'helping out' to a strategic team-building experience, with a fixed fee that reflects the true cost of delivery and supports the ongoing mahi of community groups involved in nature projects.

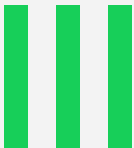
In 2025, Connect for Nature partners supported impacts well beyond tree planting. Across participating projects, 3,829 volunteers contributed nearly 20,000 hours of mahi. The funding supported community groups to plant 26,634 native trees and plants, while also investing in plant propagation, pest control, site maintenance, equipment, training, health and safety, and community engagement.

Throughout this report, you'll see groups highlighting the value of flexible funding that supports the full life cycle of regeneration.

Two of our Connect for Nature partners, Alsco Uniforms and NZ Safety Blackwoods, played a pivotal role this year, providing both funding and hands-on support to community projects. We're grateful to them and the many businesses and donors who supported the programme in 2025.

In 2026, we're looking for other businesses to support this important mahi. To find out more, simply fill in this [short form](#), or email rosie@sustainable.org.nz and we'll be in touch.

Ngā mihi nui,
Rosie Sommerville
Project & Partnership Manager





Connect for Nature

Impact to date*



\$5.16 Million

Fundraised



50

Community groups
involved



632k

Native plants and
trees planted

*This includes Million Metres Streams and Connect for Nature impacts since 2015.



Our partners

AlSCO Uniforms & NZ Safety Blackwoods

Connect for Nature brings businesses and communities together. Our partners play a vital role in making that connection meaningful. AlSCO Uniforms and NZ Safety Blackwoods are leading by example. Through financial contributions, team volunteering and long-term relationships, they are building strong, meaningful partnerships with community groups across multiple regions.

The impact on people is just as powerful. In AlSCO Uniforms' survey feedback, 100% of participants who responded reported that taking part in nature-based volunteering had a positive effect on their wellbeing.

We were especially delighted to see the AlSCO Uniforms' Dunedin branch go one step further by donating a first aid cabinet and eye wash station to Sinclair Wetlands. It's a tangible example of a business responding directly to the needs of its local community group.

Ngā mihi nui to AlSCO Uniforms and NZ Safety Blackwoods for their ongoing support, generosity and commitment to restoring Aotearoa New Zealand's natural environment.





Conservation Volunteers NZ

Papakura Stream Restoration Project

Overview & impact

Trees planted through SBN funding	1260
Total trees planted	42,005
Hectares managed	0.63
Number of volunteers	1195
Volunteer hours	3377
Number of restoration days	51



Conservation Volunteers New Zealand (CVNZ) aims to empower the people of Aotearoa New Zealand to become kaitiaki for nature in their communities. In Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, CVNZ is leading a collaborative, catchment-wide project to restore the health of the Papakura Stream. This significant freshwater system runs 63 kilometres from Brookby in East Auckland to the Manukau Harbour in the west.





Project update



“More than 150,000 native plants have been planted by CVNZ volunteers across 14 sites within the Papakura Stream catchment since 2021. Extensive efforts are being made to remove several hectares of invasive weeds, establish fencing and clean up litter. The restoration sites are on a mixture of public and private land.

“There is tremendous scope for this project to grow and continue over many years. The 2025 planting season brought together an incredible mix of volunteers. Primary schools, dedicated corporate teams and our amazing local community members all helped make the season a truly special and successful one.

“A highlight from the season was when NZ Olympic Team athletes joined Brookby School to plant 1,375 native trees. We were thrilled to welcome two new landowners to the project after they heard about our work from neighbouring properties. This helped expand our restoration efforts and build on the success of previous plantings.”



Conservation Volunteers NZ - The Papakura Stream Restoration Project

THANK YOU TO THE FUNDERS

“The support we’ve received from SBN and its network of partners enabled us to make great progress in 2025. We expanded to include two new planting sites, got more native plants in the ground and tackled more weeds. This funding has helped us keep building momentum towards a healthier stream and catchment that future generations can enjoy.”

“SBN is a pleasure to work with and genuinely passionate about making an impact. We’re grateful for its continued support and look forward to seeing how much more we can achieve together in the years ahead.”



Waiheke Resources Trust

Love Our Wetlands Project



Overview & impact

Trees planted through SBN funding	3696
Total trees planted	8559
Hectares managed	48
Number of volunteers	883
Volunteer hours	1789
Number of restoration days	126



Love Our Wetlands Waiheke collaborates with the local community and volunteer groups. Together, they are working on the ecological restoration and protection of eight significant wetland habitats on Waiheke Island – Te Matuku, Te Whau, Matiatia Headland, Rangihoua, Okahuiti, Te Huruhi Bay, Owhanake and Awaawaroa.

THANK YOU TO THE FUNDERS

“Our 2025 wetlands work has been another exciting step forward, supporting the regeneration of Tikapa Moana (Hauraki Gulf). We are incredibly grateful to our donors. Your support has allowed us to continue planting and restoring key wetland areas across Waiheke, inviting locals, rangatahi and volunteers to connect with the whenua and nature.

“At our older sites, canopy species are now being introduced, helping us progress towards our long-term restoration goals. Thanks to your generosity, we’ve also been able to support targeted projects in critical wetland habitats, ensuring these ecosystems continue to provide homes for native fish and other wildlife.”





WAI Wānaka

Urban Catchments Project

Overview & impact

Trees planted through SBN funding	392
Total trees planted	947
Hectares managed	20
Number of volunteers	268
Volunteer hours	457
Number of restoration days	8



WAI Wānaka connects neighbours, tamariki (children), visitors, businesses and farmers to wai (water). It does this through education and by creating opportunities for people to take action, like joining an urban action group or becoming a citizen scientist to monitor water quality. This project empowers the community to care for the headwaters of the mighty Mata-au (Clutha River), bringing local groups together to improve biodiversity and water quality in places meaningful to them.





Project update

“Our Urban Catchment Project seeks to improve the health of our local urban streams and ecosystems. Groups are informed about local water issues and what steps they can take to improve the health of local waterways. The groups take ownership of issues they can affect and WAI Wānaka, along with other community groups, provide knowledge, connections and support. Over the past year, we have facilitated four Urban Catchment Groups and established one new group.

“We run regular beach clean-ups and Adopt a Drain workshops. These events are accessible and are often the first point of connection for many locals. A great example is Bremner Bay where a group came together around shared environmental concerns. With our support, they’ve been able to collaborate and develop a practical action plan for local environmental stewardship.

“This year we ran our first survey of urban catchment group members. We plan to repeat this annually.

Examples of the results included:

- 89% of respondents said they felt connected to their local community.
- 100% of respondents understood where their water came from and where it went, including stormwater.”



WAI Wānaka - Urban Catchments Project



Project update

Lakeside Road Restoration

“Our ongoing collaboration with the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) played a key role in securing its support for this project. Demonstrating its commitment to environmental restoration, QLDC removed invasive plant species and prepared the one-hectare area to allow native flora to flourish. Over autumn, the group removed more invasive growth and planted 400 native plants with the help of Te Kākano, a local non-profit nursery.”

Beacon Point Restoration

“Another strong collaboration with QLDC enabled the co-funding and installation of rabbit-proof fencing in 2024 to fully protect this eight-hectare lakeside area. Today, it is cared for by the Beacon Point group which is enhancing it through trapping, planting, and soon, stormwater monitoring. This is creating a model for community-led conservation, as well as collaboration between various community groups.”



WAI Wānaka - Urban Catchments Project



Project update

Kirimoko Catchment

“The five-hectare Kirimiko area is an important green space for the community. Alongside regular plant maintenance, the group is working hard to secure funding for three cattle stops and dog flaps to complete the rabbit-proof fencing. Thanks to SBN, one cattle stop is part-funded. The group is exploring smart, cost-effective options for installation.”

Dublin Bay Restoration

“This dedicated group is working closely with the Department of Conservation to find ways to restore a historical five-hectare wetland to its former glory. They have already taken major steps by installing rabbit-proof fencing and have planted more than 340 native plants.”

Bremner Bay Catchment

“This new group was guided through the process of creating a vision and project overview and setting long-term goals for its one-hectare area. Planning for the year ahead includes developing a comprehensive water quality monitoring programme. The group also attended a WAI Wānaka event to begin community engagement in the area.”



WAI Wānaka – Urban Catchments Project

THANK YOU TO THE FUNDERS

“We are incredibly grateful to SBN and its generous donors for making this mahi possible. Your support has empowered our community groups to restore native habitats, protect biodiversity and create lasting impact for freshwater. Working with the SBN team is fantastic. They allow us to operate without excessive oversight or reporting, freeing up time to do the mahi. Thank you for helping us make a real difference for our environment, now and for future generations.

“Most non-profit organisations face ongoing challenges in securing funding for core operational costs, like salaries, rent and utilities. These costs are essential, yet they’re often overlooked in favour of funding that’s tagged to specific outputs. We’re grateful that the scope for Connect for Nature funding was broadened this year. This shift recognises the importance of investing in the people and infrastructure that enable real impact.”



WAI Wānaka - Urban Catchments Project



Matuku Link

Community wetland restoration in the Waitākere River Valley

Overview & impact

Trees planted through SBN funding	5000
Total trees planted	5000
Hectares managed	37
Number of volunteers	150
Volunteer hours	8000
Number of restoration days	60



Matuku Link is a community wetland conservation organisation. It protects and restores 37 hectares of bush and wetland. It also educates people of all ages about the benefits of these ecosystems and aims to inspire them to get involved in protecting and enhancing our native natural environment.





Project update

“Money is a challenge in the current political and economic climate. We celebrated our ninth anniversary with nine open days. We welcomed many new people who didn’t know about us or wetlands. We also loved hearing comments from returning visitors about how well the trees were growing, the increased number of birds they heard and how good the place looked.

“A highlight was our Wetland Festival celebrating World Wetland Day on 1 February 2025 that attracted more than 600 visitors.

“It included walks, talks, games, food, coffee and 15 other conservation organisations on site.”

PRIORITY SPECIES

- Matuku-hūrepo (Australasian bittern)
- Pekepeka tou roa (long tailed bat)
- Puweto (spotless crane)
- Pateke (brown teal)
- Wētā
- Tuna kuwharuwharu (longfinned eels)
- Koura
- Kokopu



Matuku Link - Community wetland restoration



Before and after

2016



2025



2018

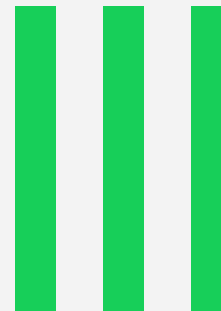


2025



THANK YOU TO THE FUNDERS

“Our team of 2.5 full-time employees generates 4 full-time equivalents in volunteer hours – you can hardly get more bang for your buck than this! We are incredibly grateful to SBN and its funders for supporting our work.”





Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei

Revegetation of Pourewa Reserve

Overview & impact

Trees planted through SBN funding	2969
Total trees planted	7165
Hectares managed	140
Number of volunteers	1166
Volunteer hours	4665
Number of restoration days	100



Te Pourewa Nursery is a native plant nursery and restoration hub operated by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei in central Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. It plays a key role in environmental regeneration, growing more than 200,000 native plants every year for use in restoration projects across the whenua. As the mana whenua, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei leads this work with a focus on kaitiakitanga (guardianship), sustainability and strengthening connections to the land and community.





Project update

“We successfully launched our Ko Te Pūkaki 2040 Restoration Project in May. It has already made strong progress with weed removal and native plantings.”

THANK YOU TO THE FUNDERS

“It has been a rewarding experience working with SBN to support our Ko Te Pūkaki 2040 restoration project. SBN’s commitment to environmental sustainability and community-led initiatives has been instrumental in helping us secure vital funding for our native planting efforts. This partnership has not only strengthened our ability to restore the whenua but has also empowered our vision for a thriving, resilient future. We are deeply grateful for their support and shared dedication to creating long-term positive impact.”



Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei - Revegetation of Pourewa Reserve



Waimakariri District Council in collaboration with the Silverstream Reserve Volunteer Group

Silverstream Reserve Project

Overview & impact

Trees planted through SBN funding	400
Total trees planted	540
Hectares managed	0.4
Number of volunteers	51
Volunteer hours	109
Number of restoration days	3



The 52-hectare Silverstream Reserve is administered by Waimakariri District Council. It features wetlands, drylands, and unique plant species like the rare *gratiola sextendata* and creeping pōhuehue. The reserve, significant to local Māori for mahinga kai (traditional food and resources), is also known for fishing. Volunteers have planted more than 50,000 seedlings. Community groups continue to work on a range of habitat sites.





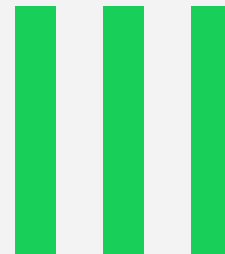
Project update



“Our 2025 planting followed the same general approach as previous years. However, we reached an important milestone by planting undercanopy successional species, such as pokaka, for the first time in the reserve's history. Funding donated by SBN in 2025 was used to purchase seedlings and tree guards and to undertake arborist work on the willow canopy.”

THANK YOU TO THE FUNDERS

“The volunteers' achievements at Silverstream Reserve would not have been possible without SBN's support. Your funding helped us buy seedlings for planting under the willow canopy which extended our planting season. The damp, cool conditions beneath the willows allow us to plant for longer, giving volunteers more time to do what they love most.”





Sinclair Wetlands

Te Nohoaka o Tukiauau

Overview & impact

Trees planted through SBN funding	2500
Total trees planted	2500
Hectares managed	315
Number of volunteers	42
Volunteer hours	850
Number of restoration days	10



Te Nohoaka o Tukiauau/Sinclair Wetlands is a 315-hectare wetland system located south of Dunedin, part of a nationally important and regionally significant wetland complex in the Taieri Plains. The name Te Nohoaka o Tukiauau acknowledges “the dwelling place of Tukiauau”, an early Ngāti Mamoe chief. The area is now owned by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and is valued as a wāhi taonga (culturally significant site), for mahinga kai (traditional food and resources), conservation, recreation and education.

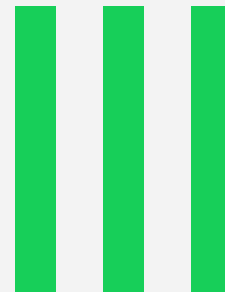




Sinclair Wetlands - Te Nohoaka o Tukiaauau

THANK YOU TO THE FUNDERS

“Business groups and schools really like our hands-on planting days. Funding allows us to do site preparation and weeding. It also helps us to buy plants and plant guards which are important for pest protection. We’ve loved hosting business volunteers through SBN.”





Friends of Baring Head

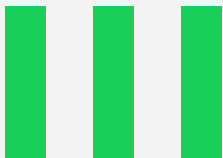
Wainuiomata Project

Overview & impact

Trees planted through SBN funding	6,000
Total trees planted	19,853
Hectares managed	50



The Friends of Baring Head Trust was created as a way for the community to assist Greater Wellington in caring for Baring Head and to be involved in its management and development. The group has the long-term goal of restoring the lower reaches of the Wainuiomata River, bringing life back to Baring Head.





Project update

“The entire scenic reserve has now been retired from grazing and this year we completed planting most of the area.

Greater Wellington's plantings last year had some survival issues, due largely to late-season planting and plants being too small to compete with grass. We walked through the site with the team and discussed how to improve their operations for better survival and growth next year.

We are seeing some loss of older ngaio that have not developed adequate root systems to cope with the wind.

“That isn't a major problem at this stage of the process as it simply opens up space for infill plantings or adjacent trees to spread.

We also started planting among the older plants with new species, including matai, titoki, ribbonwood, miro and tawa.

We continued to plant rare species, working with the rare plant botanist to ensure they went into optimal sites. We weeded the previous year's plantings, but it's clear some species need more frequent weeding.”



Friends of Baring Head - Wainuiomata Project



Restore Hibiscus & Bays

Redwoods Restoration Project



Overview & impact

Trees planted through SBN funding	2543
Total trees planted	2543
Hectares managed	0.42
Number of volunteers	20
Volunteer hours	312
Number of restoration days	2



Restore Hibiscus & Bays is a community-led initiative. It aims to bring together, support and grow the network of people and organisations working on restoration initiatives in the area. In 2025, funding from SBN supported native plantings at the Redwoods site in Arkles Bay, Whangaparāoa, an ecologically significant wetland and gumland margin area. The project aims to restore and stabilise a degraded wetland system while strengthening the resilience and connectivity of surrounding native ecosystems.

Project update

“The Redwoods Project is a very small part of what we do. We planted over 24,000 native plants within the Hibiscus & Bays Local Board area this year. This site is self-sustaining and the community is very grateful for the support from SBN to restore the stream. We are in talks with Auckland Council to extend replanting and pest plant control further up into the catchment. We are also engaging with landowners further down in the catchment with the vision of restoring the entire stream.”



Restore Hibiscus & Bays - Redwoods Restoration Project



Before and after



THANK YOU TO THE FUNDERS

“We are incredibly grateful for SBN’s support. Funding in the charitable conservation space is often tied to specific locations or outcomes, and this donation gives us the flexibility to focus on the places within our local board area where we know it will create the greatest long-term impact.”



Summit Road Society

Linda Woods Reserve

Overview & impact

Trees planted through SBN funding	1874
Total trees planted	4617
Hectares managed	535
Number of volunteers	54
Volunteer hours	254
Number of restoration days	5



The Summit Road Society, formed in 1948, aims to further the vision of Harry Ell, a Christchurch MP (1899 – 1919) and social reformer. It is working to enhance, preserve and protect the nature, beauty and open character of the Port Hills of Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū Banks Peninsula for people to enjoy. Funding in 2025 supported native planting in the Horotane Valley in Linda Woods Reserve.





Project update



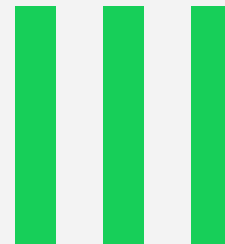
Summit Road Society - Linda Woods Reserve

“A major milestone this year was the expansion of plantings into areas of the Horotane Valley that had not previously been restored. This represents the reclamation of new habitat (previously a cattle farm) and the beginning of long-term ecological recovery.

“Our approach is deliberately phased, with each stage designed to build on the last. Eventually, separate areas of restoration will be connected to a continuous network of healthy habitat. This year’s funding was spent on plant guards and wool mats that are vital for increasing plant survival rates.”

THANK YOU TO THE FUNDERS

“We are deeply grateful for the support provided through funding from SBN. Beyond the ecological gains, the funding also reduces uncertainty and allows teams to focus on the practical work they enjoy, rather than worrying about whether materials will be available. It has given a real boost to our volunteer teams whose energy and commitment are the backbone of our work.”





Sustainable
Business
Network

Manaaki whenua, manaaki tāngata, haere whakamua.

If we care for the land,
if we care for people,
we can move forward into the future.