



Cawthron Marine Institute

Changing mindsets: Inspiring the *next generation* of ocean guardians

PROJECT TYPE Community outreach and education.

POTENTIAL IMPACT Creating awareness of the importance of ocean health and inspiring a future generation of scientists, innovators and kaitiaki.

SCALE AND DURATION \$250k to establish and deliver pilot outreach programme.

The ocean is our lifeblood – sustaining ecosystems, economies, and communities. It holds the keys to some of humanity's greatest challenges. From combating climate change and biodiversity loss to ensuring global food security, the ocean is a source of immense ecological value and untapped potential for innovation, sustainable growth, and prosperity.

Yet, its future is at risk. Climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss threaten this vital resource, demanding urgent action. This is why the Cawthron Marine Institute exists. For over a century, we have been at the forefront of leading science, bringing together a world-class team of over 280 scientists from across the globe. Based in Nelson, New Zealand, our researchers drive scientific breakthroughs, in conjunction with indigenous knowledge (mātauranga), that not only safeguard our waterways and oceans but also create tangible benefits for communities worldwide.

As the urgency to protect the ocean's health intensifies, we believe in developing the next generation of scientists and innovators who will shape its future.

Aotearoa New Zealand, surrounded by one of the world's largest and most diverse ocean estates, has a pivotal role to play. As New Zealand's largest independent marine science organisation, we are committed to inspiring young minds to embrace careers in science and innovation and applying a te ao Māori lens to find solutions that benefit the environment and people. That's why we are launching a dynamic **Community Outreach and Education Programme** – to ignite a passion for ocean science and empower future ocean guardians.

For more information contact



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Our vision for the programme

We aim to educate and inspire the next wave of leaders as marine scientists, conservationists, and innovators and kaitiaki – young people who will pioneer solutions for a changing world. Alongside this, we seek to engage broader communities, raising awareness of the critical role our oceans play and how we can all contribute to their protection.

We plan to build on already successful engagements with school children (eg. [Year 13 mussel workshop](#)) and our wider community in Te Taihū (the top of the South Island) before rolling it out across Aotearoa New Zealand. Te Taihū is ideally positioned for this, given its central location, the marine significance of the region, and its role as home to the country's only blue economy cluster, integrating iwi, industry, and research.

Our outreach will focus on school-aged students, particularly Year 9-11 learners who are exploring future career paths. Activities will primarily be undertaken by Cawthron's scientists visiting schools, presenting science talks and welcoming students to our facilities. Te ao Māori focused activities will be offered in conjunction with Cawthron's Te Kāhui Āio team and build on programmes (eg. [Ahumoana Whakahihihiko / Inspiring Aquaculture](#)) that have previously been delivered to schools and colleges.

Programme elements

- **Interactive workshops and learning materials**
Hands-on activities fostering a deep connection to the ocean and an understanding of its challenges.
- **Bringing marine science to life**
School-based, ocean-focused science fairs, competitions, and public talks showcasing cutting-edge marine research.
- **Mentorships**
Opportunities to learn from leading marine scientists, inspiring career pathways in STEM.
- **Scholarships**
Attractive opportunities for high school / undergraduate students to work with scientists on inspiring topics over the summer holidays.

- **Marine science exploration days**

Open labs, researcher meet-and-greets, and hands-on marine science and conservation activities.

- **Wānanga**

Providing cultural context of the connection of land, sea and people and associated pūrākau of local hapū and iwi of the marine environment.

Tūpuna driven, mokopuna focussed –

Your support can make these initiatives possible. By investing in both the content and the capability to deliver them, you will leave a lasting legacy in developing future ocean guardians with an appreciation for te ao Māori, marine science and innovation supporting the responsibility of kaitiakitanga and being good ancestors.

Your generosity will enable us to recruit dedicated educators and kaitiaki, develop world-class learning materials, and ensure accessibility for all.

Founded in 1921 by Thomas Cawthron through what was then New Zealand's most significant philanthropic gesture, Cawthron Institute has grown into a global leader in marine research. As an independent charitable trust, we are driven by purpose – not profit – and guided by science and knowledge that's free from external agendas. Our work is only possible through the generosity of individuals and organisations who share our vision. Philanthropic support is the lifeblood of our mission, enabling us to attract the brightest minds, advance groundbreaking research, and address the urgent challenges facing oceans and climate.

Join us in shaping the future.

Let's empower the next generation to explore, discover, and protect our magnificent marine environment for generations to come.