



Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust National Office

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September 29th 2022

Mountians to Sea Conservation Trust Chairperson Report

Kia ora koutou,

Firstly, I need to acknowledge the great news we received yesterday, the confirmation of \$18 million dollars from the Ministry for the Environment as part of the Essential Freshwater Fund. Kim, the late nights and serious mahi has paid off. Yes, it was a team effort submitting the application and all the background work, but Kim you are a superstar, and we are so proud of you and the team. This is a huge opportunity for the Trust, not only the partnerships that will be formed, the work delivered, but the outcomes for nature, our freshwater life-supporting systems across Aotearoa.

It is a real privilege to be a trustee and be able to highlight in this brief report from the chair of the Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust the extraordinary amount of work carried out over the last 12 months that supports the vision of the Trust. It is also daunting as there has been so many achievements.

I will start with Whitebait connection: Over 9,000 native riparian plants were planted, nearly 3kms of riparian habitat restored and over 12,500 people engaged, including 69 schools. What also stands out was that the team adopted 35 new whitebait spawning habitats and the team inspired 105 action projects.

Experiencing Marine Reserves has also had an incredible year: Over 5,600 students had snorkel experiences, over 4,900 people experienced a marine reserve or rāhui and got to see first hand the benefits of marine protection, and a whopping 9,713 people have been taken snorkelling. The EMR team should be incredibly proud to have reached over 17,600 people.

These achievements are even more impressive given the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to disrupt operations over the last 12 months. The number of events and people the WBC and EMR teams have worked with over the last 12 months is impressive, but what also stands out is the Trust's Health and Safety record engaging with that many people. Samara, I need

to acknowledge the significant amount of work you do behind the scenes, and the skills of our contractors across the country.

Financially while the Trust still has some work to do to achieve long-term sustainability, I need to acknowledge not only the MFE \$18 million funding, but the other big grants the Trust has achieved over the last 12 months which include: The Department of Conservation \$50,000, MFE \$1 million and Fonterra \$100,000 towards the Northland Īnanga Spawning Habitat Restoration Project. The Foundation North \$446,800 for the Northland/ Auckland region, and the \$120,000 from Auckland Council for the regional whitebait habitat restoration project. These are great achievements.

The Mountain to Sea Conservation Trust has always had a big vision and the WBC and EMR programmes continue to inspire not only the next generation of leaders, our tamariki, but everyday New Zealanders. The achievements over the last 12 months are making a real difference out there in terms of freshwater and marine conservation education, and are a testament to both our Poutokomanawa/Co-directors, Kim and Samara and the teams across Aotearoa. Kim and Samara, on behalf of the Board I want to say a big thank you. You are both incredibly talented women that continue to surpass expectations.

I had the privilege of joining this year's annual EMR Poor Knights 'action competition winners' trip, which includes students, parents, teachers, and some of our Trust funders from around the country. Experiencing some of these students' reactions to snorkelling at the Poor Knights was incredible, this is a once in a lifetime experience for all involved, so thank you Samara.

I would love to acknowledge everyone in the teams and the significant amount of work they do, but I would be here all night. Holly, thank you for the great mahi that you do that makes all our jobs that much easier.

Our Board of Trustees has had a busy year. We have a significant opportunity for the Trust to grow, but this will come with some challenges. These will need to be navigated with care and attention to detail. However, I am confident the Board can support our Poutokomanawa/Co-directors to achieve this.

Noho ora mai

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Widdowson', written in a cursive style.

Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust Chairperson