

TĀNGARO TUIA TE ORA
ENDANGERED SPECIES FOUNDATION

Impact Report

2025-2026

Cover image: Hector's Dolphins - Garry Webber

Ngā Mihi Nui ki a Koutou Katoa

Restoring te taiao at scale requires mass collaboration and mobilisation, innovating in a space that urgently needs it, by and through community.

This year we broke new ground by hosting the first ever Endangered Species National Hui.

At the hui, iwi, hapū, scientists, practitioners and advocates showed us what is possible when mātauranga Māori, lived experience, campaigning and science work side by side.

Over two days we connected, learnt, listened and planned for what comes next.

To our supporters who enable our work; to trustees and advisors who share their expertise, networks and passion; to our project partners; to iwi, hapū and community groups who lead restoration work across the motu; to scientists and those who have held knowledge and space for many generations; and to every individual who signs petitions, shares our stories - we thank you all.

This is what kotahitanga looks like in action, and it is how we will create lasting change for te taiao.



Tawera Nikau, Co-Chair
Tāngaro Tuia te Ora
Endangered Species Foundation

Your support has enabled us to:

- Grow Awhi Awa | Embrace a Stream into a nationwide freshwater programme reaching communities across at least eight regions
- Launch the Kanakana Kete in cooperation with the Hokonui Rūnanga
- Amplify calls for greater protections for Māui and Hector's dolphins
- Reach 10,000+ petition signatures calling for an end to bottom trawling in Māui and Hector's habitats in collaboration with Moana Rāhui o Aotea (Ngāti Te Wehi)
- Protect the future of the tara iti by opposing sand mining
- Advocate to stop destructive fishing practices and legislation that will further degrade our environment.

Together, we are a stronger voice for te taiao, empowering communities to lead and be the change.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi,
engari he toa takitini.
We are all in this together.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou. We look forward to working together to grow our collective impact and create lasting, positive change.



Emma Giesen, Co-Chair
Tāngaro Tuia te Ora
Endangered Species Foundation

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Our Mission

We convene, collaborate, create, communicate and resource positive change for Aotearoa's endangered species and their habitats.

The issue

Currently, New Zealand is facing a biodiversity crisis:

- Over 7500 species are at risk of extinction
- Of these, 800 are listed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) as being at a high risk of extinction.
- Only 25% of these high-risk species are currently able to be actively managed by the DOC.

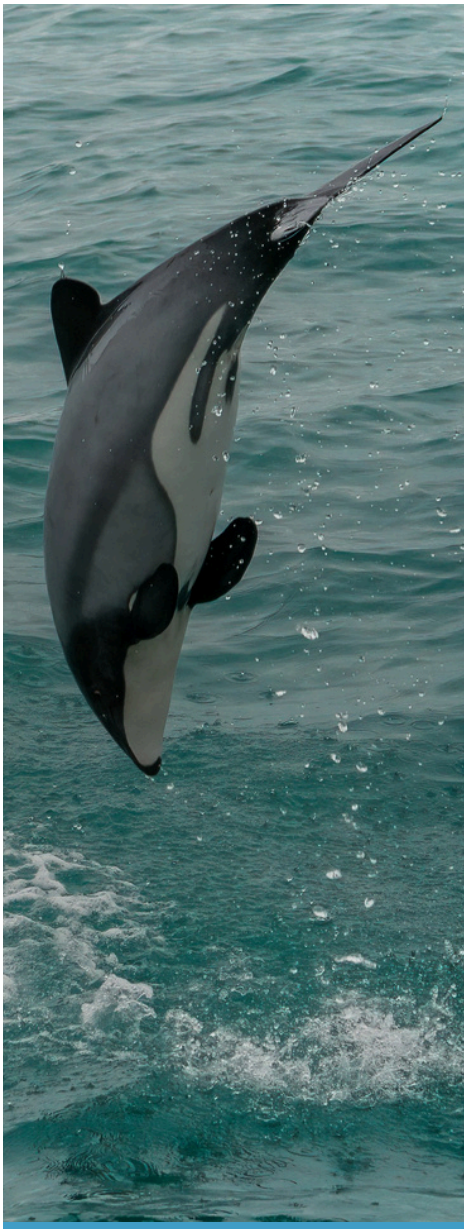
Aotearoa is famous for its uniqueness and we have a long history of working to protect our natural heritage. But even though considerable effort is being made, it is not enough.

How we create change

We support high-priority conservation projects that protect the most vulnerable indigenous species and habitats in Aotearoa from extinction.

We achieve this by:

- Working with local communities and supporting Māori-led initiatives, to enable conservation outcomes
- Collaborating and campaigning with partner organisations
- Resourcing positive change for projects
- Inspiring and motivating action by sharing practical tools and stories of change, empowering people to make a difference.



Māui Dolphins number only

~50

Our Strategy

Reigniting Survival through Revival

Our mission to enable and resource positive change for Aotearoa's endangered species and their habitats is built upon five guiding principles:

- Māori-led restoration that honours indigenous knowledge,
- saving endangered species through direct intervention,
- habitat restoration addressing root causes of decline,
- advocacy for policy change, and
- empowerment that builds community capacity for conservation, with a particular focus on rangatahi engagement.

Our strategy focuses on three key areas. Leadership encompasses governance, Māori and community-led initiatives, and advocacy measured through policy change and impact reports.

Projects include Māui and Hector's dolphins, Awhi Awa stream education and restoration, Tara iti habitat protection and advocacy for the top 50 endangered species. This is tracked through restoration statistics, policy change and engagement levels.

Financial sustainability ensures long-term impact through diversified funding and partnerships to ensure reliable sources of income and the ability to plan ahead.

STRATEGIC POU	PRIORITIES	IMPACT MEASURES
LEADERSHIP	• Co-governance • Māori and community led • Advocacy • Partnerships	• Lead by example • Policy change • Impact reports
PROJECTS	• Awhi Awa | Embrace a Stream • Māui and Hector's Dolphins • Endangered Species National Hui • Top 50 Endangered Species	• Restoration statistics • Engagement levels • Stories of change
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	• Funders • Supporters • Partnerships	• Increase project resourcing • Break-even yearly



Tara iti - Darren Markin

Māui and Hector's Dolphins

Working to save the world's smallest, most endangered marine dolphin

Once numbering ~500, Māui dolphins are the world's rarest marine dolphin, with ~50 individuals over the age of one remaining. Hector's dolphins have also suffered dramatic declines, from an estimated 50,000 in the 1970s to ~15,000 today.

Both species face pressures including lethal entanglement in set and trawl nets, habitat degradation, pollution and climate change. Without decisive action, Māui dolphins could disappear within our lifetime.

ESF works alongside iwi and leading NGO partners to support a coordinated national response to protecting these taonga. Central to this work is supporting Māori-led leadership and voice. Collective advocacy happens in collaboration with Moana Rāhui ō Aotea (Ngāti te Wehi), Māui and Hector's Dolphin Defenders, WWFNZ, ELI, DSCC, KASM, LiveOcean and Māui63.

Key Achievements

- **Collaborated** with NGOs and local communities to build a coordinated ocean
- **Oceans movie** screenings in Hamilton and Mangawhai where ESF sat on Q and A panel.
- **LUSH Cosmetics partnership** with nationwide instore promotion, the Te Rapa store event, the Mission Bay activation, staff engagement and influencer outreach.
- **Opposed** Fisheries Amendment Bill, submitted to protect Orange Roughy, signed DSCC letter opposing South Pacific bottom trawling expansion
- **Called for** greater marine sanctuary protections after marine mammal deaths via joint letter to Minister of Conservation with ELI and WWFNZ.
- **Monitored** offshore marine farm and oil prospecting proposals in Māui habitat.





Hector's Dolphins surfing

10,000+ Voices for Māui & Hectors

A collaboration with international ethical cosmetics company LUSH has hit its target of 10,000 signatures, while informing many more people about the threats driving the decline of Māui and Hector's dolphins and what needs to change to give these taonga a future.

Launched in June 2026, the LUSH x ESF campaign brought together LUSH, Tāngaro Tuia te Ora | Endangered Species Foundation and Moana Rāhui o Aotea | Ngāti Te Wehi to raise awareness of the urgent need to protect Māui and Hector's dolphin habitat.

At the heart of the campaign was a limited-edition Māui Dolphin soap, supported by in-store displays across the motu, digital content, creator partnerships and media. Up to $7,500 from soap sales is being generated to support the campaign.

The reach has been significant. The campaign has generated 28 media inclusions with a potential reach of more than 4.2 million people, alongside hundreds of social media placements, with a combined potential reach of over 1.7 million. Twenty-one creators also shared the campaign and its messages with their own communities.

Most importantly, more than 10,000 people have now signed the petition calling for bottom trawling to stop in Māui and Hector's dolphin habitat.

The campaign shows what is possible when organisations bring their different strengths and networks together. Moana Rāhui o Aotea | Ngāti Te Wehi brought connection to the moana and leadership from the communities closest to these waters. ESF brought species knowledge, advocacy and campaigning expertise. LUSH brought its international reach, national store network, creative capability and customer community.

Together, the partnership has helped take the plight of Māui dolphins to audiences well beyond the usual environmental sector, raising awareness for this endangered species into a much wider public conversation.

With Māui dolphins on the precipice of extinction, 10,000 signatures are a significant milestone. We look forward to carrying this petition forward to key decision makers in the year ahead.

🔗 **Please sign and share petition to stop bottom trawling in Māui and Hector's habitats:**


WHAKATĀ...
MOANA RĀHUI
MĀUI
DOLPHINS
ON THE
BRINK OF
EXTINCTION

Endangered Species National Hui

Taonga tuku iho | The Hui about the Doey

The first Endangered Species National Hui was a huge success, bringing together over 200 people passionate about taiao restoration from across Aotearoa.

Iwi, communities, scientists, practitioners, and advocates shared their challenges, successes and hard-won lessons, building connections between projects and people who are often working in different places.

The hui provided an opportunity to explore how mātauranga Māori, lived experience and Western science can work alongside each other, and how successful approaches can be shared and scaled to create greater collective impact.

Day One focused on success stories and projects making a difference on the ground.

Day Two focused on collaboration and action, creating space to build relationships and identify opportunities to work together.

Key Achievements

- **230 attendees** from more than 80 organisations across 30+ rural places, towns and cities.
- **22 rangatahi attended** for free and took part in a dedicated panel. Another 40 free tickets went to volunteers and and 6 community groups received discounts.
- **A 9.7 out of 10** average in attendee survey
- **Engagement Hub** with six groups, including Stormwater360, Enrolment Aunties, Mātuku Wetlands and live lizards.
- **Extensive media coverage** included Good Local, Radio Waatea, a Newsroom guest editorial, Te Hiku Media and Whakaata Māori.
- **100+** social media posts profiling speakers, topics and kaupapa

Next steps and priorities:

- **Workshops:** run online and in partnership with communities.
- **National Hui** with whakawhanaungatanga, species updates, campaigning, advocacy, funding and shared challenges, in participatory, action-focused formats.









Hector's [illegible] surfing



Photo: Michaela Insley





The feel of this conference… was warm, full of aroha, well-organised and grounded in a collective understanding and drive to protect our taonga.

That it was 'ground up' said to me that this is a movement despite moves from central government to shift focus from the environment.
I say keep going.

I loved that this hui didn't feel like a hui - it was about whanaungatanga and bringing the coolest people who are extremely passionate about protecting te taiao into one space.

I learnt so much about fearless kaitiaki who have moved maunga to ensure our taonga are protected.

This kaupapa gave me the history I was missing, the knowledge I lacked, and the words I was searching for.

On a personal level, the experience was very validating. There were many speakers who, like me, didn't have any formal qualifications or academic background in environmental science, but were passionate enough about nature to learn the ropes and lead change in their community.

Hearing from such a wide variety of people really helped confirm my belief that to make a difference you don't need to be the world's most qualified person - you just need to care. And perhaps more importantly, have the bravery to apply that care into action.

What Comes Next?

Keeping the Momentum Going

There is strong demand for continued networking, practical learning and opportunities to share expertise and problem-solve across restoration, species knowledge, advocacy, funding and strategy.

Workshops in partnership with communities

Workshops and wānanga can be organised to build capability, share knowledge and create practical opportunities for people to learn from each other and work through shared challenges.

Topics could include practical sessions focused on species, campaigning, advocacy, funding, shared challenges and restoration solutions.

It is recommended that another National Hui is delivered to build on the strong demand for connection, knowledge-sharing and collaboration demonstrated at the first hui.

The next hui would provide:

- More whanaungatanga and networking.
- Practical and interactive sessions.
- Continued focus on practical knowledge-sharing across:
  - Species
  - Campaigning and advocacy
  - Funding and resourcing
  - Collaboration and communications
  - Shared challenges and solutions.
- Tangible ways for attendees to stay connected.
- A connected strategy to mobilise action for endangered species and te taiao across the motu.





Hector's Dolphins surfing



Awhi Awa | Embrace a Stream

Restoring Freshwater Habitats

Nationwide Uptake of Awhi Awa project

Awhi Awa | Embrace a Stream has expanded into a vast nationwide programme, with kete, workshops and presentations reaching communities, schools, businesses, education providers and retirement villages across at least eight regions.

From Waikato and Auckland through to Rotorua, Waiheke, Nelson, Kāwhia, Otago, Wānaka, Southland and Whanganui, partnerships are helping people understand their local waterways and take practical action. Workshops have been delivered in person at schools and events, and a pilot of the first online workshop for staff has been run.

The programme continues to evolve through new kete and resource developments, including the Kanakana Kete developed with Hokonui Rūnanga.

Key Achievements

- **Delivered workshops** to care home residents, tamariki in schools, early childhood centres and community groups, with online sessions also enabling wider participation.
- **Developed new kanakana (lamprey) kete** in partnership with Hokonui Rūnanga
- **Built relationships** with Go Eco EnviroSchools, BUPA, NZ Landcare Trust, WAI Wānaka, Sustainable Business Network, Naylor Love, Hayes Common, AquaWatch, iwi groups, and local and regional authorities.
- **Met with Conservation Minister** Tama Potaka to share the Awhi Awa approach and its potential to support freshwater restoration across Aotearoa.
- **Growing regional networks** through presentations and engagement with stormwater and freshwater organisations
- **Welcomed new Freshwater Advisor** James Dare from AquaWatch.











Siobhan Nuri, Tuna Expert and presenter at ESF Hui

New Kanakana Kete Launched

For over 360 million years, kanakana or piharau have survived changing oceans, landscapes and climates.

For many iwi, including Ngāi Tahu, kanakana are a treasured taonga and a living indicator of healthy waterways. Traditional practices such as hand-gathering and the use of weirs reflect a longstanding relationship between people and freshwater life.

Today, kanakana are nationally vulnerable. Pollution, habitat loss, barriers such as dams and disease are disrupting the waterways and migration pathways they depend on. Their decline is a signal of wider pressures facing freshwater ecosystems.
A kete for action

In partnership with Hokonui Rūnanga, ESF developed the Kanakana Kete as part of Awhi Awa | Embrace a Stream. It celebrates this remarkable species while giving communities practical tools to help restore the waterways kanakana need to survive.





Kanakana Kete - Restoring an ancient taonga

Each kete includes kanakana education resources, learning modules, how to care for waterways, a presentation for schools, businesses and community groups, and practical resources for installing signage near waterways and urban streams.

The signage is made from scrap steel, and comes in the shape of a kanakana, Māui dolphin, kōaro or tuna.



🔗 **Order your kete:**



Image: Tara-iti - chick and parent - Nikki Harley. DoC

Tara iti | NZ Fairy Tern

Tara Iti | NZ Fairy Tern

Protecting Our Rarest Bird

With fewer than 50 tara iti remaining, the New Zealand fairy tern is one of the world's most endangered birds. These tiny taonga, whose chicks are around the size of bumble bees, depend on a narrow stretch of coastline between Pākiri and Waipū for nesting and feeding.

This habitat is under ongoing pressure from sand mining, predators, development and other human activity. ESF supports iwi and community-led action to protect this critical coastline, working alongside communities in this rohe.

.

At the same time, tara iti recovery is showing encouraging signs. The 2025/26 breeding season brought the population to 45 birds aged one year or older, with DOC now assessing potential new breeding sites at Ruakākā, Northern Waipū and Ōmaha.

Key Achievements

- Published and shared **Sand Alternatives Report 2025** with Ministers Shane Jones, Tama Potaka and Chris Bishop.
- **Written and verbal submission** to Select Committee to oppose the Fast-track Approvals Legislation Amendment Bill.
- **Opposed McCallum Bros Ltd's sand extraction proposal** at Te Ākau Bream Bay, submitting to the fast-track panel.
- **Petition with over 14,000 signatures,** formally presented to Hūhana Lyndon at Parliament by ESF Co-Chair Emma Giesen so this can now progress through the formal petitions process.
- **Tara iti recovery** storytelling to keep supporters connected to tara iti recovery.





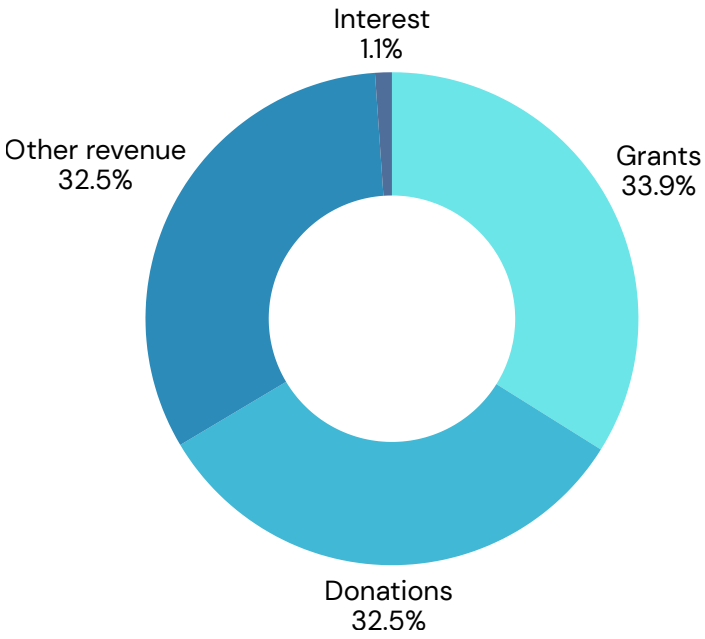




Tara iti – Darren Markin

Financial Sustainability

Income Sources 2025–2026



Expenditure by Focus Area

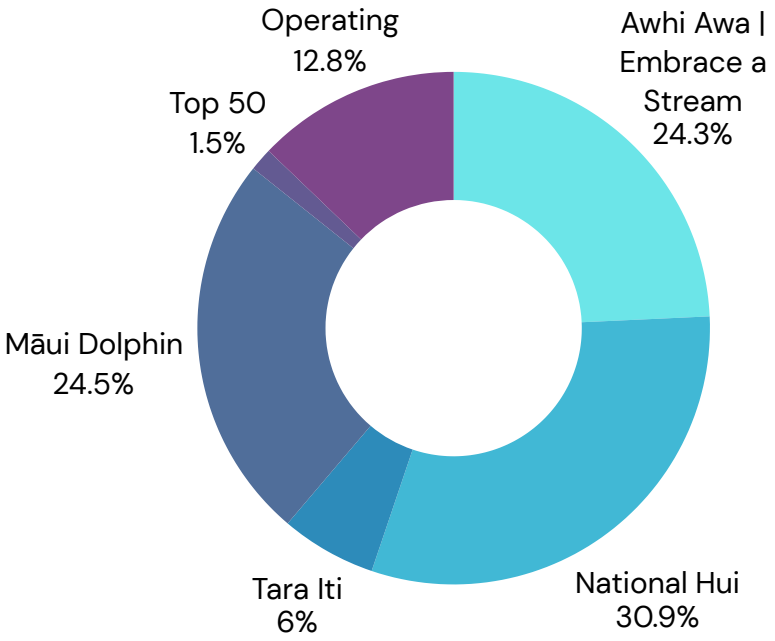




Photo: Longfin eel – Jason Burton

Uniting Talents

Empowering Change

Tāngaro Tuia te Ora – the Endangered Species Foundation – is led through a co-governance model, with the aim of upholding Te Tīriti o Waitangi and empowering tāngata whenua and tāngata Tīriti in the efforts to restore the habitats and biodiversity of Aotearoa. Our small team works alongside volunteer trustees and advisors, whose shared expertise keeps us at the leading edge of action for endangered species.

Board of Trustees



Tāwera Nikau
Co-Chair



Emma Giesen
Co-Chair



Karen Hormann
Finance and Paterson Trust Trustee



Rangitahi Wharepapa
Trustee



Mike Thorsen
Trustee



Stephen Goodger
Trustee

Vice Patron



Neil Thorsen
Founder and Patron

Operations



Natalie Jessup
Chief Executive



Christie Goodwin
Operations Coordinator



Matt Wall
Accountant

Advisors

We are guided by an extensive advisory group, which includes community experts, scientists and those with knowledge of mātauranga Māori. These experts share their knowledge and advice, keeping us ahead of the latest research, projects and calls to action for endangered species.



Dr Mike Thorsen
Chief Science Advisor



Graeme Atkins
Mātauranga & Māori-led restoration mahi



Karli Thomas
Oceans



Michaela Insley
Taiao Engagement & Storytelling



Krista van der Linde
Marine Mammals



Adam Simperingham
Solicitor/Honorary Solicitor



Prof. Phil Seddon
Conservation



James Dare
Water Health



Dylan van Winkel
Reptiles & amphibians



Dr James Russell
Pest animals



John Barkla
Plants & habitats



Stu Muir
Awa & wetland restoration



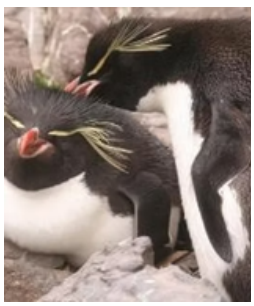
Greg Jenks
Coastal Restoration



James Tweed
Invertebrates



James Joseph
Invertebrates



Colin O'Donnell
Birds

Looking Ahead

2026 - 2027 Priorities

Expanding Impact

- Mobilise for Māui and Hector's dolphin protection and broader marine reserves.
- Awhi Awa nationwide expansion delivering workshops and community engagement.
- Support tara iti conservation and maintain strong opposition to sand mining.
- Lead advocacy and submissions on critical environmental legislation.
- Workshops and National Hui to connect, upskill and scale innovations.

Building Partnerships

- Strengthen collaborations to ensure meaningful iwi engagement and elevation of mana whenua voice.
- Collaboration with community and national groups.
- Deepen relationships with values-aligned organisations to grow financial sustainability and grow environmental impact.

Environmental Leadership

- Champion innovative, evidence-based solutions for marine and freshwater restoration.
- Empower communities to take action for the ecosystems of Aotearoa.
- Enable rangatahi to engage and lead in the taiao space.



Ngā Mihi Nui

Thank you to all our supporters

Our valued supporters and funders are vital to the work we do to enable restoration work across the motu for our most endangered species and their habitats. We are so grateful to you all for the valuable contributions you make to help the revival of our precious awa (rivers), whenua (land) and te taiao (environment) of Aotearoa New Zealand.

A special thank you to Neil Thorsen, our Vice Patron, and the Paterson Trust who continue to enable our mahi with ongoing project support.

LUSH · Bupa · Len Reynolds Trust · WEL Energy Trust · Waikato Regional Council Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato

Trust Waikato Te Puna o Waikato · Hamilton City Council Te kaunihera o Kirikiriroa · Internal Affairs Te Tari Taiwhenua · COGS Community Organisation Grants Scheme

index Engineering Ltd Consulting Mechanical Engineers · The Sargood Bequest · Ngāti Hauā Mahi Trust · Lou and Iris Fisher Charitable Trust

Partnership Opportunities

All our partners and supporters can engage with the projects they support in a meaningful way for their communities - from whānau, to staff and clients, to kura and retirement villages. If you are interested in partnering with us and tailoring a specific project please get in touch:
🔗**www.endangeredspecies.org.nz/contact**





He Mihi Whakakapi

Together There is Strength

By connecting people who care deeply about te taiao we can greatly enhance our collective efforts to make a difference.

Kotahitanga is at the heart of our approach

When communities lead and work alongside experts and people, with a deep knowledge of taiao protection and restoration mahi, we can scale our work and create change more effectively.

This spirit of collaboration runs through everything we do. From our trustees who provide our direction, to our advisors who share their mātauranga, to oursupporters, funders and partners who make new initiatives possible.

He iti te mokoroa, nāna i kati te kahikatea
The mokoroa may be small, but it can cut through the kahikatea.

Even with limited resources, small actions contribute to something much greater. Together we can think boldly and create new, collaborative pathways towards a thriving, resilient future.

Together. Better.
Mauri ora!





TĀNGARO
TUIA TE ORA
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