



Annual Report

JULY 2024 TO JUNE 2025

Connecting people with te taiao | www.mountaintoseawellington.org



We continued to send ripples out into our communities this year, creating many opportunities for people to connect to this beautiful and wild place we call home.

We're so proud of our small, but mighty, team and our volunteers who bring so much heart to their work. Rain and shine, they are there working alongside schools, community groups and partners to help care for te taiao. Education and community programmes have reached over 2000 students across the region, and we've grown our capability to support better accessibility for everyone at marine events. All of this is possible thanks to the hours of support from our amazing volunteers - 3490 of them to be exact!

Our seaweed restoration project, Love Rimurimu, has been on the international stage as part of the Kelp Forest Alliance, with our community-based research helping to inform efforts around the world at the International Seaweed Symposium in Canada. After five years of

learning, we also produced the Love Rimurimu Toolkit, providing practical guidance and open-source resources to support restoration. The team then went on to triple plant-out efforts, with 1,278 young seaweeds going into the waters of Te Whanganui a Tara over the past year. And, in March 2025, we hosted Aotearoa's first-ever Seaweed Fest, a unique and inspiring week of seaweed celebrations.

Our Freshwater team builds upon several years of growth bringing people together to strengthen connections between communities and their waterways. This stream of work has seen us host over 40 freshwater-focused community events, drawing over 3,500 people, and actively supporting 49 catchment groups with monitoring and restoration efforts, including planting thousands of native seedlings.

Read on to find out more about our past year. Thank you for being on this journey with us - from the mountains to the sea.



One of 12,595 seedlings planted this year. Otaraua Planting Day.
Credit: Mark Coote



Gathering for Seaweed Fest 2025 Community Snorkel, Taputeranga.
Credit: Sambath Ouch

Our work is supported through our partnership with the national Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust. We are the sole regional providers of its unique programmes in Te Upoko o te Ika a Māui.



By the numbers

Since 2008, more than 60,664 people have been involved in our programmes and projects.

3490

hours were donated by parents and MTSW volunteers to support community programmes

97

school classes took part in our education programmes

49

freshwater catchment community groups supported

989

students experienced their local marine environments

94

community events were held, **attended by 9010 people**

132

environmental action events (monitoring and restoration) held, drawing **1124 attendees**

3086

hours donated to support events and action

1227

students explored streams, rivers and lakes in their rohe

506

students involved in follow-up environmental actions

1278

seaweeds out-planted

12595

native seedlings planted

630

people took part in **four** community snorkel days



One of our popular Awa After Dark events at Ruamāhanga Farm. Credit: Andrew Stewart



Students from Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngā Mokopuna preparing seaweeds for plant-out. Credit: Lisa Wolf



Water sampling at Wakamoekau spring. Credit: Rebecca Jamieson

Our Highlights

Seaweed celebrations and research

We tripled our plant-outs this year, and rubbed shoulders with all the seaweed greats at the International Seaweed Symposium in Canada, sharing our work developing a novel breath-hold methodology for plant-outs and monitoring.

But the festival to celebrate all things seaweed was our absolute highlight. Over 5000 people took part in 38 events across nine days at Seaweed Fest 2025. We celebrated with kai, tattoos, snorkels, sea shanties, exhibitions, film screenings, seaweed ice creams, saunas and more! The waters and shores of Wellington were definitely alive with rimurimu celebrations.



Breath-hold monitoring programmes are the cornerstone of our field work.
Credit: Lorna Doogan



Seaweed ID at Seaweed Fest Whanau Day. Worser Bay Boat Club.
Credit: Sambath Ouch



Freshwater Fish Monitoring at Pounui Lagoon, Wairarapa.

Freshwater discoveries

In the Wairarapa, our key partnership with the Wairarapa Catchment Collective supports groups with freshwater monitoring, wānanga, restoration, and education. We've also launched inanga (whitebait) spawning projects in the region, building knowledge and supporting iwi-led monitoring. These efforts have now helped to identify nine new potential inanga spawning sites.

In Waikanae, alongside Greater Wellington, Kapiti Coast District Council and Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, inanga eggs were discovered in June and July. Another exciting find was juvenile piharau (lamprey). Previously abundant on the coast, Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai is working on their vision of a flourishing piharau population once again.

Supporting programmes accessible to all

Our education and community programmes are as busy as ever. To better equip our volunteers we rolled out a popular volunteer training programme, delivering training sessions focused on strengthening in-water snorkel skills. Our four community snorkel events drew 630 participants at Taputeranga Marine Reserve, including a hugely successful session with local disability in sport organisation dsport, where members with disabilities were supported to experience the marine reserve. This new partnership will continue into the 25/26 season, helping to build our capability to deliver more accessible education and community programmes.

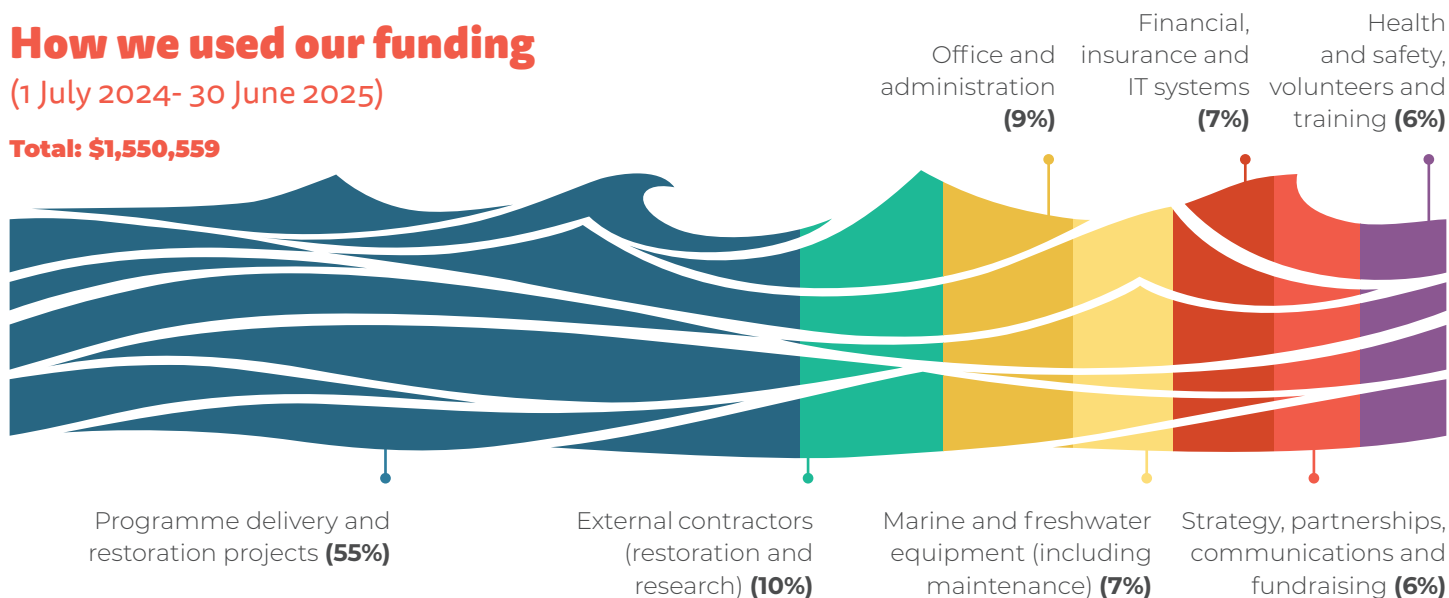


Dsport snorkel session at Community Snorkel, Taputeranga Marine Reserve. Credit: Red Beanie Photography

How we used our funding

(1 July 2024- 30 June 2025)

Total: \$1,550,559



Thank you!

Mountains to Sea Wellington would like to acknowledge all the amazing people who have helped us grow over the 2024-25 year. Special thanks to the many volunteers, funders, trustees, and staff who share our vision of a community connected with te taiao.



Our full performance report for 2024-25 can be found on the Charities Commission website at www.register.charities.govt.nz/Charity/CC54455. To stay in touch, sign up to our newsletter at www.mountaintoseawellington.org or follow us on Facebook or Instagram.