

Tō Tātou Pōneke Our Wellington

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News | 5 December 2024

Celebrating volunteer efforts in Wellington city

Over 63,000 hours of hard mahi caring for nature across Pōneke have been put in by volunteers, who are doing their part to make the city a creative capital where people and nature thrive.



Volunteer Geoff Couling, who has volunteered for many years. Image credit: Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Trust.

With over 4363 hectares of open spaces and reserves in Wellington, the capital is fortunate to have so many community leaders and groups caring for nature in the city.

The Parks and Reserves team has estimated that across 2023/24 volunteers contributed at least 63,085 hours to caring for our open spaces. While the Council knows the community does so much more than what we have reported or are able to account for, here are some of the estimated hours that have been put into our green spaces by volunteers:

- Wellington Botanic Garden ki Paekākā and Ōtari-Wilton's Bush - 5,951 hours
- Berhampore Native Plant Nursery - 355 hours
- Karori Cemetery - 800 hours
- Trapping in reserves - 1,110 hours
- Community restoration of reserves- 54,869 hours



Volunteer weedbusters. Image credit: Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Trust.

In the past 12 months, Pōneke has had a significant expansion to the possum control network and established new traplines in partnership with community groups across the city reserves, including more trapping around Zealandia Te Mara a Tāne.

This year alone, community trappers caught 13,742 pest animals, and thanks to these efforts, native bird numbers in the city continue to rise.



Volunteers Jane and Andrew gather plants from the Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Trust Nursery. Image credit: Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Trust.

The restoration planting programme continues to grow with an additional 110,105 plants, almost half of those have been planted by the community. That includes almost 2,000 podocarp and canopy species that have been added across the reserve network that will turn into giants of the forest in generations to come.

Wellington City Council teams continue to work with community groups, with the Park Rangers supporting 125 volunteer groups who undertake activities such as planting native rākau, removing ecosystem weeds, trapping pest animals, rubbish clean-ups, and trail building and

maintenance across parks and reserves.

Park Ranger Mark Kent says that Wellington is extremely lucky to have so many willing volunteers.

"The work volunteers carry out across the city is incredibly important for Wellington, take Mākara peak as an example. In 25 years, the Mākara Peak Supporters have transformed a once barren hill side into an award-winning mountain bike park in a regenerating forest that now is home to many of our native manu including Kiwi."

Mākara Peak mountain bike park won the Recreation Aotearoa Outstanding Park award for 2024.



Nursery Volunteer Ros, potting up *Astelia chathamica* (Chatham Islands kakaha) in the Ōtari Nursery. Image credit: Wellington Gardens.

There are also six volunteer groups who undertake work at the Wellington Botanic Garden ki Paekākā, Ōtari-Wilton's Bush and our Cemeteries.

Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Manager Tim Park says that volunteers

have helped shape Ōtari to be what it is known and loved for today.

“Volunteers at Ōtari do a huge range of work, from trapping in the forest, to revegetation planting, weeding in the gardens and forest, propagating plants in the native plant nursery, picking up rubbish, guiding groups through the gardens, and hosting in our Visitor Centre on the weekends.

“The Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Trust plays a key role in supporting and coordinating volunteer efforts, as well as undertaking fundraising, organising events like talks and guided walks, enabling school visits and funding research at Ōtari.”



Volunteers from the community who removed 930kg of rubbish from the Wilton Park slip site.

Urban Ecology Manager Daniela Biaggio encourages everyone to get involved with their local volunteer groups.

“Our volunteers are the beating heart behind nature thriving in Pōneke. They are listening to nature, responding to what nature needs every day, and dreaming of a better

tomorrow. They are building a culture of caring for nature in our community and in turn being nourished by that mahi.

"Community conservation is not just supporting nature to thrive but also helping people thrive by improving the wellbeing of those who take part. What can be more fulfilling than leaving a legacy for future generations?"

If you are keen to give volunteering a try you can join your local community group or check out our partners in [Conservation Volunteers Wellington](#) who help organise mahi across many of our parks and reserves.

Wellington City Council thanks all volunteers for their passion, dedication and efforts into making our city better every day.

Read more



4 December 2024

Volunteers strengthen Wellington skyline's defence

against possums

Community volunteers and Wellington City Council have worked together to establish an eight-kilometre trapline on the skyline.



13 November 2024

Making Mākara Peak Mountain Bike Park safer for riders

Park Ranger Mark Kent is out to make Mākara Peak Mountain Bike Park safer for all riders.



21 November 2024

Predator Free Wellington to expand efforts citywide

Predator Free Wellington has successfully eliminated pest species from the Miramar Peninsula. Now they're tackling the rest of Wellington.

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