

## Submission on Dunedin City Council Annual Plan 2023-2024

*To:* Dunedin City Council

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### Overview of Tomahawk-Smailis BeachCare Trust

Tomahawk Smailis Beachcare Trust (the Trust) is a charitable trust with a focus on the restoration of the habitat and biodiversity of the sand dune ecosystem in the Ocean Grove Reserve. Our goals include the provision of long-term protection to the Ocean Grove community against the threat of erosion. The Trust was formalised in 2008 but has been active for over two decades, having been established in 2000.

Ocean Grove Reserve is a 28ha site of active sand dunes located approximately 6 kms from the Dunedin city centre. The reserve is bordered by Tomahawk and Smailis Beaches. The Trust has a service agreement in place with the Dunedin City Council regarding access to and replanting of the reserve with native trees and shrubs. The Trust has been restoring and acting as one of the kaitiaki of the reserve for well over 10 years. We actively seek to sustain relationships across a diverse group of people by offering a positive opportunity to contribute to a common cause.

The Trust owns and operates a community nursery to ensure that plants being planted enhance and support local biodiversity. As a key part of our operation, the nursery enables us to grow plants from eco-sourced seeds and provides volunteering opportunities throughout the year.

Our community nursery supports the growth of locally endemic and critically endangered plant species and thereby enhances the diversity of species across the Otago region and New Zealand. The Trust employs a nursery manager to oversee nursery operations and the planting programme. Our nursery manager works closely with our Trust's governing body to achieve our goals. We are proud of the contribution that we make to our community.

## **Continued community involvement**

### Disability Services

We continue to host regular groups from IDEA Services and other local disability service providers. Volunteers include people living in residential services and clients of vocational services. We host the Switch group, whose aim is to provide community engagement experiences for young adults aged 18 – 25 years old, twice weekly at our nursery. In 2022 the Switch group contributed a total of 515 volunteer hours. We host a disability service user for 3 hours each fortnight who travels from Balclutha especially to participate in our volunteering program, and residential service users on a casual basis. Where possible, we adapt the timing of our sessions to suit their schedules, as transport and staffing often limit the ability of service users to attend our sessions.

### Community volunteering

Our casual volunteering sessions that run twice weekly have remained well-attended. In 2022, volunteers contributed a total of 1,636 hours. We continue to host at least three community planting days each year. In 2022 our nursery manager was contracted for 12 hours/ week and volunteered an additional 6-8 hours each week in order to maintain the demand for our volunteering program. For 2023 and 2024, we have secured funding to increase our NMs hours to 21 hours/week. These hours are co-funded via our DCC funding and funding from NZ Lotteries Community.

### Education

We have regularly hosted groups of young adults from Otago Polytechnic and Southern Youth Development. By attending our volunteering sessions, Foundation Studies learners have the opportunity to gain social and workplace skills, knowledge, and personal growth through their contribution. We are pleased to have received very positive feedback from learners and their tutors. Each year, we host large groups of university students. We look forward to continuing our strong relationship with all of these organisations/institutions to provide educational and skill-based conservation volunteering sessions.

### Networking – community conservation groups

We maintain strong relationships and sharing of resources, knowledge and ideas with Otokia Marsh and Habitat Trust, the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, Hereweka-Harbour Cone Trust and the New Zealand Sea Lion Trust. We keep in regular contact with DOC coastal rangers. We actively support the work of the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group, EcoOtago, and the newly formed Tomahawk Lagoon Catchment Group.

## **New connections and ventures**

Here we provide the details of our additional achievements since receiving a boost in funding from the DCC.

### Oranga Tamariki

In February this year we hosted a 15 year old to complete 12 hours of mandatory community service. We now maintain email contact with support staff from Oranga Tamariki who are in need of a range of community-based organisations, and keep them updated on our volunteering sessions should they have other clients who wish to join us. We believe that we are in a strong position to make a difference in the lives of young people who have found themselves in a difficult place.

### Nature School Dunedin

We have had the pleasure of hosting young learners (aged 8 to 10 years old) from Nature School Dunedin on multiple occasions during school term. Tasks have included removing old irrigation from our shade house, making tree guards, potting up seedlings, and weeding around young seedlings in the Reserve. Each session incorporates environmental education that is integrated into the development of practical conservation skills.

### Involvement in Dunedin Festivals

We will make our debut in the Wild Dunedin Festival of Nature this year, hosting plant pot weaving workshops and a plant sale at our nursery. We have previously supported and been part of the Puaka Matariki Festival and the International Science Festival with planting days.

### Otago Regional Council

We have participated in on-site meetings with community catchment advisors representing the ORC to discuss our wider role in our local catchment. We participated in the recent ORC biosecurity survey with a detailed response of our activities and areas in which we seek assistance or support.

## Enhanced biodiversity

We are proud to have increased the species diversity of our native plantings. The table below represents our propagation list, indicating new additions to our nursery.

Propagation list pre-2022		Additions since 2022	
Tī kōuka/ cabbage tree	Kapuka/ broadleaf	Putaputawētā/ marbleleaf	Salt marsh ribbonwood
Ngaio	Kānuka	Kōtukutuku/ tree fuchsia	Rauhuia/ <i>Linum monogynum</i>
Tarata/ lemonwood	Mānuka	Whauwhaupaku/ five finger	Native spinach
Kōhūhū/ black matipo	Māpou	Makomako/ wineberry	Remuremu/ bonking grass
Tōtara	Mountain akeake	Horopito/ pepper tree	Pūrei/ <i>Carex secta</i>
Mātai	Tātaraheke/ sand coprosma	<i>Coprosma rotundifolia</i>	Cutty grass/ <i>Carex appressa</i>
Horoeka/ lancewood	Mingimingi/ <i>C. propinqua</i>	Thin-leaved coprosma/ <i>C. areolata</i>	Oioi/ jointed wire rush
Shore koromiko/ <i>Veronica elliptica</i>	Tauhinu/ cottonbush	<i>Coprosma rhamnoides</i>	Pīngao/ golden sand sedge
Koromiko/ <i>Veronica salicifolia</i>	Harakeke/ NZ flax	Shining karamu/ <i>Coprosma lucida</i>	Kahikatea/ white pine
Toetoe	Kōwhai		
Māhoe/ whiteywood			

## **Awards and Funding**

We are very proud to have received the Volunteer South 2022 award for Diversity and Inclusion.

We were awarded \$9000 from the ANZ Staff Foundation towards the costs of protecting our native plantings in Ocean Grove Reserve. The grant allowed for purchase of 2 seasons of tree guards (mesh, stakes and mulch mats) to protect from damage by rabbits and 60 pairs of durable, fertiliser tablets for 4000 trees and high-quality gloves for nursery and reserve-based activities.

We won \$30,000 in competitive funding from NZ Lotteries Community towards the salary of our nursery manager. This funding allows for an increase from 12 hours to 20 hours per week for 2023 and 2024.

We were awarded \$5000 from the Lion Foundation towards our goal of replacing our shade house and constructing an undercover work area for our volunteers. The total cost of the project is \$20 000 and we are working on additional grant applications and selling plants from our nursery to help raise the deficit.

We were among the recipients receiving recycled pavers from the DCC and assistance with site preparations from Isaac Construction. Our new paved area improves accessibility for our volunteers with reduced mobility and has the added benefit of easier maintenance.

We were successful in our bid to participate in the Open Waters eDNA program, receiving four 6-replicate kits to undertake biodiversity sampling in Tomahawk Creek.

We are developing an effective monitoring plan so that we will be eligible to apply for funding from Trees that Count in the 2024 planting season.

Previous awards include a commendation in the Heritage and Environment section of the TrustPower Community awards in 2013, and runner up in the 2009 Keep Dunedin Beautiful Awards. We have also received funding for our activities from a wide range of funding sources over the years.

## **What we need from the Dunedin City Council**



Our annual DCC funding of \$13 000 is our only continuous source of funding. We work hard to secure the remaining funds required to meet the operational costs of our organisation and to undertake projects to improve our facilities for the benefit of our volunteers and for the wider community (improvements will allow an increase of our annual plant production and restoration work in Ocean Grove Reserve). We are proactive in seeking out and applying for competitive funds.

We are, however, concerned about providing job security for our nursery manager, who is fundamental to the ongoing success of our organisation. Searching, applying for and reporting on funding creates a significant workload for our small volunteer base of committee members and our nursery manager.

Our agreement with the DCC is to plant native trees – which we achieve – but in fact we provide a broader service to the City and our community. We care for and enhance our local reserve, which is increasingly enjoyed by people from all over Dunedin. We are proud of our unique approach that celebrates diversity and inclusion, has a demonstrable positive social impact and high-calibre environmental outcomes.

The multi-year basis of the Service Level Agreements that we have with the DCC is incredibly valuable, because it provides a stable starting point for our annual operational costs. The certainty that this stable funding base provides for operational costs contributes to our sustainability and longevity as a community conservation group. We are hugely appreciative of the consistent support we have received from the DCC. We ask that the DCC continue (at a minimum) to provide the current level of funding that we receive.









