



The kaupapa of all Networking for the Environment hui is to share knowledge and ideas. The hui on 5 December 2018, was about celebrating our constellation of volunteers - Te kāhui tūao - and in recognition of the UN International Volunteer Day.

Tour of Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Community Projects:

The day started with approximately 30 people taking a walking tour of projects on the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River in Woolston. The first stop was at the Laura Kent Reserve, where Rachel Barker (DOC) talked about the rich history of the river through Woolston. Annabelle Hasselman of Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network (OHRN) and Dugald Wilson talked about the native plantings, and communities on-going efforts to clean-up river banks.

Next stop was at Radley Park, where Michael Reynolds, founder and project manager for the Roimata Food Commons talked about the development of the orchard of 60 heritage fruit trees, 500 native plants and soon to be started community garden.

“Providing food is one part, but encouraging social interaction is another,” Michael Reynolds

Hui:

Forty-five people came to the new Woolston Community Library to participate in a conversation about volunteering and common challenges facing the sector. Survey results were used to start a conversation on why people volunteer their time. Top three responses are:

- “I am making a difference when I volunteer” 73.68%
- “To be involved we need to care” 68.42%
- “Important that Purpose/ Vision is Clear” 63.16%

Speakers: All talks and slides available at <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/your-region/your-environment/our-natural-environment/networking-for-the-environment/>

1. Chloe Fraser- Partnerships Manager, Student Volunteer Army (SVA) shared her personal reasons for volunteering, as well as the SVA story.

“We all want to make a difference and add some value to the world. What we need to do is provide the opportunities to do so without any of the potential barriers (e.g. free event & free transportation)” Chloe Fraser

Key points:

- a. Eight years after the earthquakes, SVA become a large part of the university culture and daily life with 3,000 registered members (1/5 the student population).
- b. The executive team has 30 volunteer members that work up to 20 hrs/ week.
- c. Events are every weekend of the university year. Size varies from 5 to 1,000 people.
- d. SVA also run high school programme and continuing our involvement within the online and offline community.
- e. SVA want to mobilise and empower students to help their communities in any means necessary.



2. Glenda Martin- Outreach and Marketing Manager, Volunteering Canterbury spoke about emerging trends in the volunteering sector and challenged the group to tell their story and define their impact in a global context.

“When you plant 25,000 natives, you create a recreational spot for future generations to enjoy ... and you contribute to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) number 15 ‘Life on Land’, UNSDG 13 ‘Climate Action’ and, I would suggest, UNSDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing.” Glenda Martin

Key points:

- a. 250-300 people each month register with Volunteering Canterbury (VolCan).
- b. 25-27% of the registrations identify as having English as a second language. For those people making connections through volunteering is a ‘given’ and that’s very often their ‘why’.
- c. Older people are staying in paid employment longer or retiring to caregiver roles with their children’s children – a reflection of today’s lifestyles, costs of living etc.
- d. People want to be asked to volunteer. A recent Volunteering NZ Survey, one of the highest-ranking reasons for not volunteering, people said, was ‘no one has asked me’.
- e. People don’t want to join your organisation’s volunteer team for life.
- f. People want to make an impact. They don’t gift their time because it is ‘spare’ – they gift it to make a difference.
- g. VolCan identify how their projects contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Common challenges:

Our survey results pointed to 4 main areas of challenge for our network groups when it comes to working in a volunteer-based sector. They are: recruitment, retention/ commitment, alignment/ collaboration, and burn-out. Each table was asked to explore these topics, share stories and come up with suggestions for future workshops. Summary of ideas is listed here. See Appendix 1 for all feed-back.

- Social Media- Time efficiency and when to use it.
- People management-How to find out more about your volunteers and manage diversity.
- Nitty gritty of restoration- project planning and management
- Succession Planning
- Capacity building- How to share jobs
- How to align and collaborate across groups
- Administrative collating data on volunteers

Our journey so far:

Alison Bower (ECan) took us through the themes and outcome from all seven Networking for the environment hui since our start on 29 November 2016. Many hands went up when asked who had participated in more than one of the hui and numerous people had been to all seven.

Where to in 2019

The network will be changing gears next year. We will have fewer big hui, probably just two, and more skill building workshops that delve into more detail on specific topics. Workshops will be free but spaces will be limited and booking required. The list of topics is a work in progress. Here’s what we have so far:



Theme	Topic	Date	Who
Volunteer Management	In Safe Hands H&S	15 Feb	Hamish Fairbairn – Conservation Volunteers HFairbairn@cvnz.org.nz book your spot now with Hamish
Building Capacity and Capability	Internship placements for University of Canterbury Students	Feb – June	Ali Bower- ECan and Hector Ensor- UC. Expressions of Interest will be ask for via email in January
Funding	How to fundraise	Late Feb- March	Kate Russell – CCC and Sue Marshall- Independent grant writer, SPCA
Volunteer management	Working with schools	April	Sian Carvell- Education Consultant

He Wakawhetai (gratitude):

Christchurch City Councillor Sara Templeton gave a speech and slide show about all the fantastic projects that have happened thanks to the efforts of the volunteer groups.

Each person received a flax koru as a symbol of our gratitude and in recognition of the light that burns bright in our community volunteer sector. Rex Gibson closed the hui for us with a blessing.

Contact Info:

- ECO Calendar <http://www.ecocanterbury.org.nz>
- Christchurch App for local/ community news -Tracy Edwards wordbird@xtra.co.nz
- Student Volunteer Army- Chloe can be contacted directly at (partnership@sva.org.nz) for general information please contact Isabella at (info@sva.org.nz).
- Volunteering Canterbury [http:// www.volcan.org.nz](http://www.volcan.org.nz) - Glenda can be contacted at outreach@volcan.org.nz



Appendix 1: Challenges and topics of skill building workshops

Recruitment	Retention/ Commitment	Alignment/ Collaboration
Register but many not turn up	How to convert interest to commit	How to coordinate across a few groups rather than each group do it
How to engage with private sector for volunteering	Getting people to commit	Staying in touch and being connected
How to be flexible so can manage resources for volunteer events	How to manage and find volunteers and give them what they need	How to foster a sharing culture and environment
How to incentivise	How to find resources / people in areas i.e. universities	How other people/ groups project manage- learn from those doing it
Offer range of options days/ activities	Ways of rewarding volunteers and ideas to acknowledge individuals when you are with a large grp	People Management/ Leadership
How to recruit and retain for different types of volunteer opportunities	How to communicate the vision- connect with your audience. What motivates your volunteers	Time bank and other creative ways to reward people
	Recognise burnout. Selfcare ideas	How to get message across that it's ok to step back

Other Topics:

- Funding-How to find funds to employ someone for all volunteer related work. How to do good funding applications
- Succession Planning- Hear how other groups try to tackle success for: governance, structure, working together. How to:
 - Plan for each role
 - Address patch protection and let new people in.
 - Help people grow personal self-awareness.
- Dealing with people with different needs. Create a role for every person, balance with need to get the job done. Needs to be a fun, safe environment plus achieve tasks.
 - People management
 - Disability advocates (i.e. Steve Bush)
 - Disabled volunteers to share experiences
 - Network with other orgs to share their skills
- Project Management- beginning to end process and elements, framework
- Use of social media FB, Twitter etc. Practical, hands-on. Bring computers, IT experts, get groups like SVA to share
- Nitty- gritty of restoration stuff: eco sourcing, weed control, non-chemical, site visits
- Administration:
 - Collating data on volunteer's contacts, hours
 - Software that suits needs
 - Centralised system
 - Good systems so new administrators can access
 - Sharing and mentoring between groups