

1. What is your organisations passion project?

The vision of Avon-Otakaro Forest is to create a wetland and forest park throughout the Avon-Otakaro River Corridor. Currently we work at 10 project sites replanting and facilitating natural regeneration. We hope our actions create an environment where indigenous plants and animals can flourish.

2. Who you are (e.g. students, landowners, etc.)?

The groups committee are all volunteers ranging from 20 to over 50. We are always aiming to achieve greater diversity of our committee and also volunteer groups. We need to build stronger links with Ngai Tahu and also other ethnic groups in the city. We certainly need more younger supporters who can help us work through what climate resilient restoration really is as there is almost no discussion on this point at all.

3. Who is your target audience?

Anyone who is interested in engaging with restoring the landscape and improving the environment. We are deliberately seeking to engage with the widest sector of society as possible as we know that restoration ecology needs to be much more embedded into everyday life.

4. How do you communicate and tell your story?

We use fairly traditional means of communication such as facebook and other social media. We have developed signage for our sites so people understand what we are doing when they visit our sites. We also have a website. We are seeking a wider outreach in other media formats such as short video of our work. There is a need for much more research to occur into barriers to community engagement in restoration projects as we need many more people involved from a wider array of backgrounds.

5. Is your approach working?

Yes and no, our group has been very successful in securing sites and starting the ball rolling in terms of restoration success, but much more needs to happen in a very short space of time. Restoring smaller sites is good as a demonstration of what can be done, but we need CCC to really start getting the ball rolling with spending some of the 25 million that's been allocated for restoration ecology. Basically we need to scale up ecological restoration massively and in a very short space of time. The group's expertise can be used to make sure CCC restoration is successful.

6. What is your #1 success?

Getting the ball rolling and becoming the leader in ecological restoration in Red Zone. We have the most sites across the Red Zone with a wide array of different ecological communities. Our success is in our ability to continually grow and draw in new people who are willing to really try new ways of doing things. Example, Rekindle event.

7. What is your #1 challenge?

Speed, we are not addressing the climate and ecological emergency fast enough and there is simply not enough happening on the ground when it comes to implementing restoration projects. We have had 10 years since the first quake and little has really changed. What I often see is the climate emergency is often prioritised over the biodiversity emergency, recreation often trumps ecology.