



BLAKE

Inspiring environmental leadership

March 2024

BLAKE 2024 Impact Report

Celebrating 20 years of inspiring
environmental leadership and honouring
the legacy of Sir Peter Blake



This year marks the 20th anniversary of BLAKE, established as the Sir Peter Blake Trust in 2004 to continue Sir Peter Blake's legacy in environmental leadership and to inspire New Zealanders to commit to a sustainable future for Aotearoa.

This report is an opportunity to celebrate the significant impact BLAKE has made through its programmes, designed to motivate people to care for the environment by engaging in adventures and activities that encourage environmental awareness and leadership. It also allows us to honour the memory and mission of Sir Peter, which is more critical now than ever before.

We are delighted to include a foreword from Pippa, Lady Blake, BLAKE Patron, and Rt Hon Helen Clark, who was instrumental in helping establish the Trust during her term as Prime Minister of New Zealand. BLAKE has enjoyed an enduring partnership with the New Zealand Government, and foundation partner, Westpac, since its inception. This support has enabled BLAKE to grow our ability to encourage generations of Kiwis who, together with the BLAKE team, have gone on to become kaitiaki of our natural world.

Foreword



In November 2001, I had the privilege of briefly joining Sir Peter Blake and his Seamaster crew during their research expedition on the Amazon River. Witnessing Peter's determination and adventurous spirit at first hand, and listening to his impassioned advocacy for the importance of the Amazon's waters and forests, left an indelible impression on me. We could not have foreseen that just a short while later, Peter's tragic death would shake our nation and cut short his visionary work.

At the time of his passing, it was well known that Peter's legendary sailing career had inspired many New Zealanders to embark on their own maritime adventures. Peter's efforts to awaken concern about environmental degradation had also taken hold in the hearts and minds of those of us who had the privilege of spending time with him. I appreciated the potential to draw from Peter's courage and curiosity for educational programmes which would inspire future generations of New Zealand children to care for the environment. With that in mind, my government supported the establishment of the Sir Peter Blake Trust to commemorate Peter's life and ensure that his vision endured.

Twenty years on, our vision and Peter's aspirations have been realised through dedicated programmes in which BLAKE can take real pride. In a world grappling with climate change, habitat destruction, pollution, and biodiversity loss, it is critical we nurture the environmental leaders our world urgently needs. This report articulates how BLAKE has and will continue to empower New Zealanders to acquire the knowledge and skills required to address the environmental challenges of our time.

Rt Hon Helen Clark
Former Prime Minister of
New Zealand 1999-2008



When I first met Peter in 1979 I was captivated by his tales of global adventures and his passion for the ocean and the environment.

As he sailed around the world, his stories of incredible marine life became less frequent, replaced by a growing concern for the decline of biodiversity in our oceans—a stark contrast to the vibrant seas he once traversed. Peter's love for the environment turned into a commitment to understand how human activities like pollution and climate change were affecting our planet.

Now, two decades since the establishment of BLAKE, I'm proud to say that we are bringing Peter's dreams to life. One of his greatest passions was instilling a love for the natural world in young children. If he were here today, he'd be incredibly excited about BLAKE's NZ-VR programme, which brings virtual reality headsets to schools across the country, allowing our children to experience the wonders of our marine environment.

It's been remarkable to see BLAKE empower teachers with the tools to educate students about environmental causes, support aspiring researchers exploring environmental pulse points, and encourage more of our children to connect with and care for the environment. The impact of BLAKE over the last two decades is a testament to the enduring legacy of Peter's vision and the collective efforts of all those dedicated to preserving and cherishing our precious planet.

Pippa, Lady Blake
Patron and founding Trustee
of BLAKE

Introduction

Human activity has deeply scarred our planet's climate and ecosystem. This was abundantly clear to Sir Peter Blake throughout his career, and since his passing, the climate crisis has only intensified.

Since BLAKE's inception two decades ago, a remarkable transformation has unfolded – from a time when climate change discourse was confined to activists, to today, where these conversations transcend boundaries of age, geography, culture and occupation. Increased accessibility to knowledge, facilitated by the internet, scientific discoveries, indigenous knowledge and global awareness campaigns have deepened our understanding of the imperilled state of our intricate ecosystems.

This awareness has led to significant policy interventions, including climate change legislation aiming to cap temperature rises at 1.5°C, bans on single-use plastics, the electrification of transport and an ambition for a predator-free New Zealand by 2050.

Yet, amidst these efforts, our planet still faces escalating challenges. Global heating including rising ocean temperatures, acidification, pervasive pollution, and biodiversity loss due to habitat destruction, continue to threaten our natural world.

This sobering reality calls for immediate, concerted action. Because we lack the earthly budget to do anything else but make a difference.

The legacy of Sir Peter must ignite an inextinguishable fire in every New Zealander to be *kaitiaki o te taiao*.

Individual actions are needed if emissions are to be cut in half by 2030. International action will be needed if we are to protect 30% of our oceans through a network of fully protected marine reserves by 2030. Local and global guardianship will be needed if we are to conserve some semblance of the environment as we know it. New ways of thinking are needed. In Aotearoa, we have a great opportunity through Te Tiriti o Waitangi to embrace the deep and broad knowledge of *te taiao* held in *te ao Māori* and the guidance offered to live in a harmonious relationship with the natural world. It offers a foundation for us to embrace the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples all around the world, as we are starting to do with *mātauranga Māori* here in Aotearoa, to more fully honour the planet as a living entity.

At BLAKE, the past twenty years have taught us that by motivating people to care for the environment – through adventure, participation, education and enjoyment – we can collectively become a force for the enduring change our environment so critically needs.

On behalf of the BLAKE Board and our passionate team, we are proud to present this summary of the positive impact BLAKE has had since its inception two decades ago, in this, our BLAKE 20th Anniversary Impact Report.



James Gibson
Chief Executive Officer
BLAKE

Mission and Vision

Our history

Sir Peter Blake was one of the world's most celebrated yachtsmen.

In a 30-year career, he won every significant blue water race on the planet, won and successfully defended the biggest sailing prize of all, the America's Cup, and slashed the record for the fastest non-stop circumnavigation of the world under sail.

Sir Peter's prowess in sailing was matched only by his unwavering commitment to environmental leadership. After his 2000 America's Cup win, Sir Peter increasingly dedicated his time and energy to environmental protection. He embarked on a mission to inspire and energise people to care for the environment. He voyaged to the planet's 'environmental pulse points', witnessing firsthand the impacts of climate change in Antarctica and the ravages of deforestation in the Amazon.

Tragically, Sir Peter was killed on 6 December 2001, in Macapa at the mouth of the Amazon River, while carrying out his work. His death cut short his vision to ignite a movement of millions of people around the world committed to caring more about the environment and taking action to protect it.

What we do

The overwhelming majority of condolence messages from the public strongly urged that Sir Peter's mahi must be carried on, in his name and in his memory. The Sir Peter Blake Trust (BLAKE) was established twenty years ago to continue Sir Peter's environmental leadership legacy.

Our mission is simple yet powerful: To inspire and empower people to lead a sustainable future for Aotearoa.

Our initiatives encompass two pivotal focus areas: **Discovery and Depth**.

Discovery initiatives like BLAKE NZ-VR and Explorers aim to reach every child in every school, fostering environmental curiosity.

Depth initiatives such as Inspire, Expeditions and Ambassadors help shape a new generation of environmental stewards, nurturing their leadership potential.

Purpose and values

At the core of our purpose lies Sir Peter's profound vision:

" We want to restart people caring for the environment... through adventure, through participation, through education, and through enjoyment. "

This echoes through every one of our programmes, encouraging active engagement and fostering a sense of responsibility towards our planet.

Looking ahead, our aspirational 2050 vision, our moemoeā, envisions a world where all generations are inspired and empowered to be kaitiaki o te taio – guardians of the environment – echoing Sir Peter's legacy and spirit.

As the understanding and integration of te ao Māori grows across Aotearoa, we are working to infuse our work with the traditions and wisdom of mātauranga Māori. We recognize that indigenous perspectives will be critical to solving the environmental crisis both here and around the world, and therefore it is essential we integrate the Māori worldview into the programmes we deliver. While we have started this journey and have some important activity in place, growth in te ao Māori will be a major part of our work in the months and years ahead.



Our Impact

Discovery: Every child in every school



Programmes have been running since February 2019

106,934 students

In partnership with New Zealand Geographic, we have produced an underwater virtual reality experience which showcases the rich biodiversity beneath the surface of the Hauraki Gulf and connected ocean spaces, as well as the damage that has occurred. With this content we deliver a school programme that promotes understanding, engagement and a greater sense of kaitiakitanga for our oceans.



The first programme took place in 2020

473 students

Our newest programme provides a three-day experience for year 7-8 students who have participated in NZ-VR. Students gain an exciting and inspirational introduction to the natural world, taking part in activities such as snorkeling, surfing, rock pooling and kiwi spotting. Tikanga and mātauranga Māori are integrated into the programme, and students learn from the knowledge and passion of the BLAKE team.

Depth: A new generation of environmental leaders



Established in 2004 under the name Sir Peter Blake Youth Environment Forum

1,071 students
252 educators
73 sailors

A week-long environmental leadership experience, with programmes for both secondary school students and primary and intermediate school teachers. Participants take part in outdoor adventures and environmental activities with a range of experts. They come away with new knowledge, leadership capabilities and confidence, and are inspired to make a real difference in their own communities.



Launched the initial expedition in 2012

94 students
13 educators

Our ocean voyages are a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for students to be part of a team which visits remote and environmentally significant areas such as the Sub-Antarctic Islands and Fiordland. Students learn from world-class scientists and environmental leaders while undertaking real-life science research and exploration.



The first ambassadors were selected in 2004

78 students

Environmentally passionate 18 to 24-year-olds are selected for our amazing ambassadorships in Antarctica, the Southern Ocean, and throughout New Zealand. BLAKE Ambassadors are offered environmental leadership opportunities to work on projects alongside teams of scientists, conservationists and engineers on research and conservation projects. Partners include NIWA, DOC, Antarctica New Zealand and GNS Science.



129 leaders

These are the premier leadership awards in New Zealand, celebrating and recognising outstanding leadership contributing to a better Aotearoa - socially, environmentally, culturally or economically.

Total participants of all current programmes:

Total students:	Total teachers:	Total schools:	Leaders recognised:
108,650	256	643	129

Environment

At BLAKE, our core purpose is to ignite a passion for environmental stewardship through adventure, participation, education and enjoyment. In a world where environmental challenges are increasingly intricate, we are dedicated to educating New Zealanders about our natural environment, its significance, the threats it faces, and our collective responsibility to safeguard it.

We are on a journey to further understand te ao Māori and practices of kaitiakitanga, our relationship to the natural world and how we can further incorporate these perspectives into our programmes. We believe that genuine connection with the environment comes from not just learning about it but experiencing it firsthand. Our programmes are designed to create a sense of awe and wonder about our environment, immersing participants in hands-on and experiential learning.

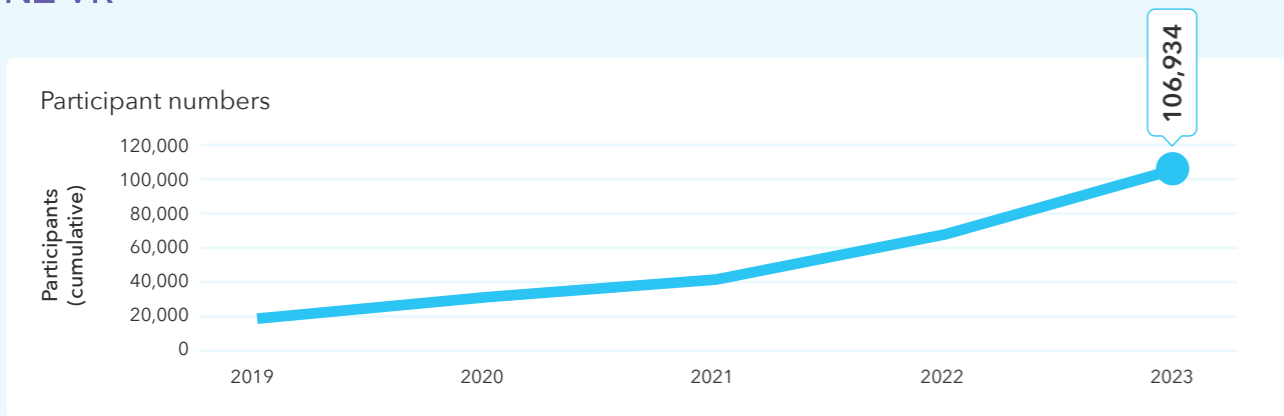
Our approach is rooted in adventure and fun, recognising that people are more likely to cultivate a sense of responsibility for nature when they find joy in engaging with it. In addition to providing people with the knowledge and tools to become engaged stewards of our environment, we also provide opportunities for researchers to access hard-to-reach landscapes, advancing our understanding of climate change, geology, marine science and conservation.

“Our approach is rooted in adventure and fun, recognising that people are more likely to cultivate a sense of responsibility for nature when they find joy engaging with it.”





Bringing ocean depths to classroom desks to spark inspiration and environmental action



“ This was an incredible way to gain more understanding of the importance of caring for our environment. It was interactive, engaging, and the students said they felt like they were in a submarine and were able to understand the information better because they felt like they were under the water. ”

–Teacher from Redoubt North School

Beneath the shimmering surface of New Zealand’s waters lies a world largely unseen, where vibrant marine ecosystems teem with life. Yet these underwater habitats are grappling with the harsh impacts of pollution and overfishing, often hidden from our view. When we can see our underwater environments with our own eyes, we are reminded of their fragility, instilling in us a sense of responsibility for their preservation.

BLAKE’s NZ-VR programme unlocks this hidden underwater world, using immersive 360° footage of marine and terrestrial environments across Aotearoa captured by New Zealand Geographic. Supported by Westpac, a team of travelling educators visit intermediate schools around Northland, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, equipping students with virtual-reality (VR) headsets for an awe-inspiring journey.

90% of teachers agreed that NZ-VR inspired their students to care for the environment

98% of teachers agreed that VR is a good way to support teaching environmental education

As students don VR headsets, they become completely enveloped in the 360° experience, often moving around in their seats, eager to take in every organism swimming around them.

Beyond showcasing healthy undersea habitats, the programme sheds light on struggling, unprotected areas, facilitating discussions on what causes this damage and what we can do to protect our marine environment. “Students were able to see with their own eyes the toll that pollution and overfishing is having on our marine environment,” shares a teacher from Onehunga High School. “They explored the concept of kaitiakitanga, and discussed all the things they could do to protect our oceans so that we can all enjoy them now and in the future.”

Since launching in February 2019, BLAKE NZ-VR has guided 106,934 students from 643 schools on a virtual adventure across our oceans.

For students unfamiliar with the ocean or hesitant about swimming, VR provides a non-confrontational introduction to marine environments. It also enables BLAKE to bring the programme to schools across the country, transcending their often distant proximity to the ocean, empowering all students with a strong understanding of our ocean life and how we can protect it.

Through surveying teachers who took part in the programme, we know that students come away with a greater knowledge of what is happening to their natural environment, the causes, and an understanding of what actions they and their community can take to better protect and keep our native flora and fauna safe from harm.



BLAKE Expeditions

Connecting scientists with environmental pulse points to understand the impact of climate change

55% Of BLAKE Expedition participants, 55% considered the experience to be life-changing in terms of their relationship with the natural world

107 students, educators, environmental leaders took part in the expeditions



“ Seeing the beauty of our Sub-Antarctic islands gave me the passion to want to go back and spend more time in these places fighting for recovering the spectacular ecosystems which are losing the battle against invasive species. If I hadn’t gone on BLAKE Expeditions, I would not have been able to see with my own eyes the issues New Zealand conservation is still facing. ”

–BLAKE Expeditions participant

“ While I was already really interested in climate change and environmental justice, this trip crystalised this interest and shone light on the fact that I could contribute (and give back) to this issue in a meaningful way through my life and career. ”

–BLAKE Expeditions participant

Exploration often leads to revelation. In the case of BLAKE Expeditions, the journey to uncover our planet’s environmental pulse points has not only given groups of individuals a rare opportunity to venture to hard-to-reach landscapes, but has also contributed to scientific understanding and conservation efforts.

Founded in the wake of Sir Peter Blake’s 2000 America’s Cup win, the original Blakexpeditions was born from a pursuit to protect the environment and raise awareness by voyaging to the epicentres of environmental change. Aboard Seamaster, Sir Peter and his crew embarked on journeys to Antarctica, investigating climate change’s impacts, and later to the Amazon to study the effects of deforestation.

In 2012, in honour of the 10-year anniversary of Sir Peter’s death, the first Young Blake Expedition was planned and executed. Fast forward 12 years, a diverse group of 94 young New Zealanders and 13 educators have embarked on BLAKE Expeditions. Their mission: a scientific voyage of discovery, combining natural science and research with adventure on the open sea.

These expeditions venture into hard-to-reach locations, often pristine and ecologically crucial. In 2023, the expedition set sail for Campbell Island in the Southern Ocean aboard HMNZS Canterbury. There, they gathered peat cores to unlock ancient climate records, investigated plankton diversity in the Southern Ocean, and conducted marine intertidal surveys, forecasting the potential impact of Antarctic ecosystems under different warming scenarios.

Collections of macroalgae from these expeditions have served as invaluable resources for ongoing research programmes. Specimens meticulously collected during the 2016 and 2018 expeditions have contributed to our understanding of the seaweeds of the New Zealand Sub-Antarctic and the macroalgal flora of Rangitāhua (Kermadec Islands).

These collections have not only aided in documenting high diversity, but have also led to groundbreaking discoveries. Collaborations with international scientists have resulted in the discovery of new genera of coralline algae from the Sub-Antarctic, showcasing the expedition’s global impact on biodiversity research.



Young People

We believe young New Zealanders hold the key to a sustainable future. As the popular Māori whakatauki says: Ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi, the old net makes way for the new net, suggesting it is time for young generations to take responsibility based on the learnings from their elders.

Our mission is to empower our youth by creating an environment that encourages them to set ambitious challenges and embark on journeys of personal growth and discovery that go beyond the ordinary. At the core of our philosophy is the idea that when young people connect with the natural world, they cultivate a profound sense of responsibility toward the environment, gain a deeper understanding of their own identity and values, and boost their confidence in all aspects of life.

To achieve this, we ensure that students from all backgrounds can experience the joys of connecting with the natural environment. We also show them that a future dedicated to environmental stewardship is not only possible but also fulfilling. We want them to understand that they can build their lives around caring for the environment and contribute significantly to a sustainable and thriving planet.

“We want them to understand that they can build their lives around caring for the environment and contribute significantly to a sustainable and thriving planet.”



New Zealand Falcon/Kārearea

Falco novaeseelandiae

Description

Brownish-black with stripes on chest and belly. The New Zealand falcon is slightly over half the size of the swamp harrier, which it usually attacks on sight. The male is about two-thirds the weight of the female.

Did you know...

Falcons differ from the much larger harrier in that they catch other birds on the wing, and seldom eat carrion.

Sanctuary Mountain

Teacher feedback	
100%	agreed that Explorers inspired their students to care for the environment
100%	agreed that Explorers connected students to the natural environment
100%	agreed that Explorers provided an opportunity for students that they may otherwise not have access to
86%	agreed that Explorers improved the students' mental wellbeing
86%	agreed that Explorers made the students more confident to undertake outdoor activities
86%	agreed that Explorers strengthened friendships and relationships between students

Dear Blake,
Thank you for giving me this fun experience and the opportunity to go snorkelling and other amazing activities. I really enjoyed this camp, it's like a once in a life time opportunity. I'm very proud of myself for overcoming my fear of the water/ocean and being more confident in myself, I would also like to give a special special thanks to Grace and Thomas for always supporting and making me feel comfortable and safe.

Tūrangawaewae is a powerful Māori concept translating to 'a place to stand' - a space where individuals feel empowered and deeply connected. This principle forms the bedrock of BLAKE Explorers, a transformative three-day experience tailored for intermediate students, aimed at building resilient and empathetic leaders through adventure.

Since its inception in 2020, BLAKE Explorers has organised 26 camps, providing 473 students from 18 schools with an avenue to commune with nature, gain confidence and kindle a passion for shaping Aotearoa's future. Specifically curated for students, many of whom are unfamiliar with the ocean, the programme introduces activities like snorkeling, surfing, rock pooling and kiwi spotting.

Lydia Shoebridge, Sylvia Park School teacher, remarked: "As well as the educational benefits, we have noticed a change in our students at school; they have stronger friendships, their confidence has sky-rocketed and they have become leaders in their own right. Something we didn't expect to see was a shift in attendance. We had a few students who were rarely at school prior to the trip, and since coming back they have been at school every day."

Stepping out of their comfort zone has been transformative. It encourages students to be more observant and respectful in the environment, fostering a deeper understanding of themselves and a stronger connection to their cultural heritage and beliefs.

" Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that BLAKE Explorers connected students to the environment, enhanced mental wellbeing, posed physical challenges, boosted confidence for outdoor activities and strengthened friendships. "



Recalling a poignant moment, Thomas Morris, BLAKE's Senior Programme Manager, shared: "During one of our snorkels, we were already 150m off the beach when one of the students turned to me and said, 'I can't swim!' I told her to turn around and look back at the shore. I then asked her, 'How do you think you got here?' She said it's because of her fins and her wetsuit. I then told her that those are just tools and that those tools needed someone to use them... 'That someone is you! You did this! You swam all this way by yourself without anyone else's help. You can swim!'"

The success of the BLAKE Explorers programme is validated in teacher surveys. Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that the initiative profoundly connected students to the natural environment, enhanced mental wellbeing, posed physical challenges, boosted confidence for outdoor activities, and strengthened friendships—a testament to BLAKE's holistic approach to student development.

BLAKE Ambassadors

Empowering tomorrow's environmental stewards through high-quality internships



Sir Peter Blake envisioned a world where passionate individuals could build lives around nurturing our planet.

BLAKE, in keeping with this vision, launched the BLAKE Ambassador Programme, bringing together environmentally passionate 18 to 24-year-olds for transformative experiences across New Zealand and the Southern Ocean, even venturing to the incredible landscapes of Antarctica.

It all began with the selection of 14 ambassadors between 2004 and 2006 to attend the UNEP International Children's Conference on the Environment, aiming to empower passionate young people to continue caring for the environment. From 2007 onwards, the Ambassador Programme evolved, shifting its focus towards providing future environmental leaders with unique opportunities to contribute to important projects while advancing their career prospects. These enriching experiences are made possible through collaborations with the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), GNS Science, Department of Conservation (DOC) and Antarctica New Zealand.

NIWA



As New Zealand's leading provider of climate, atmospheric, ocean and freshwater sciences, NIWA partners with BLAKE to engage seven young New Zealanders each year in scientific research spanning climate, atmospheric studies and freshwater ecosystems. These programmes grant passionate individuals the opportunity to work with experts, broadening their understanding and paving the way for impactful careers.

Petra Reid participated in the BLAKE NIWA Aquaculture Ambassadorship from February to March 2022 when she was 21, immersing herself in a transformative summer ambassadorship at the NIWA Bream Bay facility. Engaged in learning experiences centered on algae and fish husbandry, and collaborating closely with NIWA scientists, Petra found the programme significantly broadened her understanding of the aquaculture industry. Following her ambassadorship, she secured a role as an Algal Aquaculture Technician at Cawthron Aquaculture Park in Nelson, which she credits to the depth of experience she gained at NIWA. "It can be hard to gain a position in the aquaculture industry, experience is required but how can you get it? Often you need just a bit of experience just to get your foot in the door."

"Our partnership with BLAKE means a lot to us. We take immense pride in collaborating with such a passionate and enthusiastic team, committed to conveying our environmental research to a broader audience and empowering the next generation of young scientists to build careers and lives dedicated to protecting our planet."

–Geoff Baird, General Manager – Communications and Marketing at NIWA



GNS Science

GNS Science, Te Pū Ao, is New Zealand's leading provider of earth, geoscience and isotope research and consultancy services. Its purpose is to understand natural earth system processes and resources, and to translate these into economic, environmental and social benefits. Through BLAKE's partnership with GNS, young New Zealanders are given the chance to participate in research, for example collecting and analysing lake sediments in some of the most remote lakes in New Zealand and mapping the magma systems beneath Whakaari/White Island and Tuhua/Mayor Island.

Nicole Cameron, 22, serving as the BLAKE GNS Science Ambassador, ventured into Fiordland in a four-week expedition in 2022. Working closely with a team of scientists from the University of Otago, Nicole explored the region's potential as a carbon sink in New Zealand. Through her hands-on engagement, she gained more experience in environmental engineering and strengthened her understanding of the role fjords have in climate regulation. Inspired by this experience, she has since taken on a role as a Civil Engineer at Tonkin + Taylor, aiming to build a strong engineering foundation that will enable her to continue learning about how engineering projects impact the environment.

"One of the biggest take-aways from this expedition was recognising how engineering systems such as the Manapouri Dam can interact and influence environmental systems like carbon burial in the fjords. This has prompted me to think about how other engineering or human systems are impacting the environment." –Nicole Cameron, BLAKE GNS Science Ambassador

Department of Conservation



DOC, which is committed to making New Zealand the greatest living space on Earth, collaborates with BLAKE to offer young scientists and conservationists the chance to work on crucial conservation projects in the heart of New Zealand. The BLAKE DOC Ambassador programme, established in January 2015, enables these individuals to contribute to projects like the Kākāpō Recovery Programme in Fiordland, the Takahē Feedout Project in Burwood and the Hoiho/Yellow-eyed Penguin Programme in Dunedin and the Catlins.

Anna Clark applied to be a DOC Ambassador with a specific goal to contribute to conservation efforts at the Burwood Takahē Breeding Centre, where critically endangered Takahē chicks are incubated and hand-reared. During her ambassadorship, she played a crucial role in trap management for pests and the feeding of Takahē. Inspired by this experience, Anna is now undertaking a PhD focusing on the development of a genetic pest control system to align with New Zealand's Predator Free 2050 mission. "As a pest control scientist who primarily works in front of a computer, it was an excellent opportunity to get immersed back out in the field and reconnect with the folks doing conservation work on the ground."



Antarctica New Zealand

Antarctica New Zealand, entrusted with New Zealand's activities in Antarctica, collaborates with BLAKE to offer a unique opportunity for one young New Zealander annually. This ambassador gets to work alongside scientists, aiding in environmental research that not only enriches their understanding but also contributes to safeguarding Antarctica's pristine environment.

When he was 25, Jack Beagley ventured into the heart of the Antarctic as the BLAKE Antarctic Ambassador, undertaking a two-month expedition in late 2021. Collaborating with BLAKE Trustee and then GNS Chief Scientist Gary Wilson and colleagues Livio Ruggiero and Alessandra Sciarra, he undertook groundbreaking studies on melting permafrost, revealing pivotal insights into climate change's far-reaching impacts. Since finishing his ambassadorship, Jack is completing his PhD at University of Otago, modelling New Zealand fjord circulation to better understand how carbon is buried in fjords.

Reflecting on his experience, he said it taught him the scale of the challenges we're facing and how we can come together to make a difference. "It was fascinating and reassuring spending time in the field with a group of highly esteemed researchers. Knowing that such capable, venerable people are working hard on questions concerning the wellbeing of our planet and on what the future entails brings me hope, and I think we should all listen to what they have to say."

Leadership

Our world is facing complex environmental issues, from climate change and habitat destruction to pollution and biodiversity loss. These challenges demand informed, dedicated and visionary leaders who can promote change, advocate for sustainability and inspire collective action.

At BLAKE, we believe that while some leaders may be born, leadership can also be nurtured and developed. Our mission is to empower individuals to recognise their leadership potential, instill confidence, and connect them with like-minded individuals who share their passion for environmental stewardship.

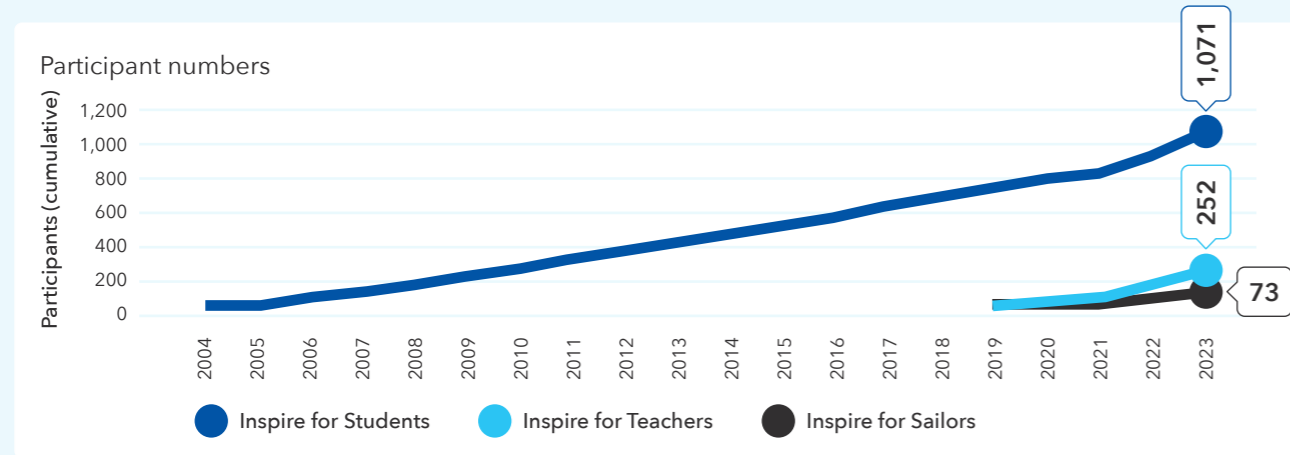
We also recognise and celebrate achievements and excellence in various aspects of New Zealand, including social, cultural and economic realms.

As we further our understanding and honouring of Te Tiriti, we seek to incorporate perspectives of leadership from a Te Ao Māori perspective, drawing on the practices inherent in the practice of rangatiratanga, representing and empowering the diverse collective views of whānau, hapū, iwi and the diverse communities of Aotearoa.

“This has by far been the most relevant and inspiring professional development I have ever attended in my 30 years of teaching! The information, data and resources have been exactly what I have been looking for.”

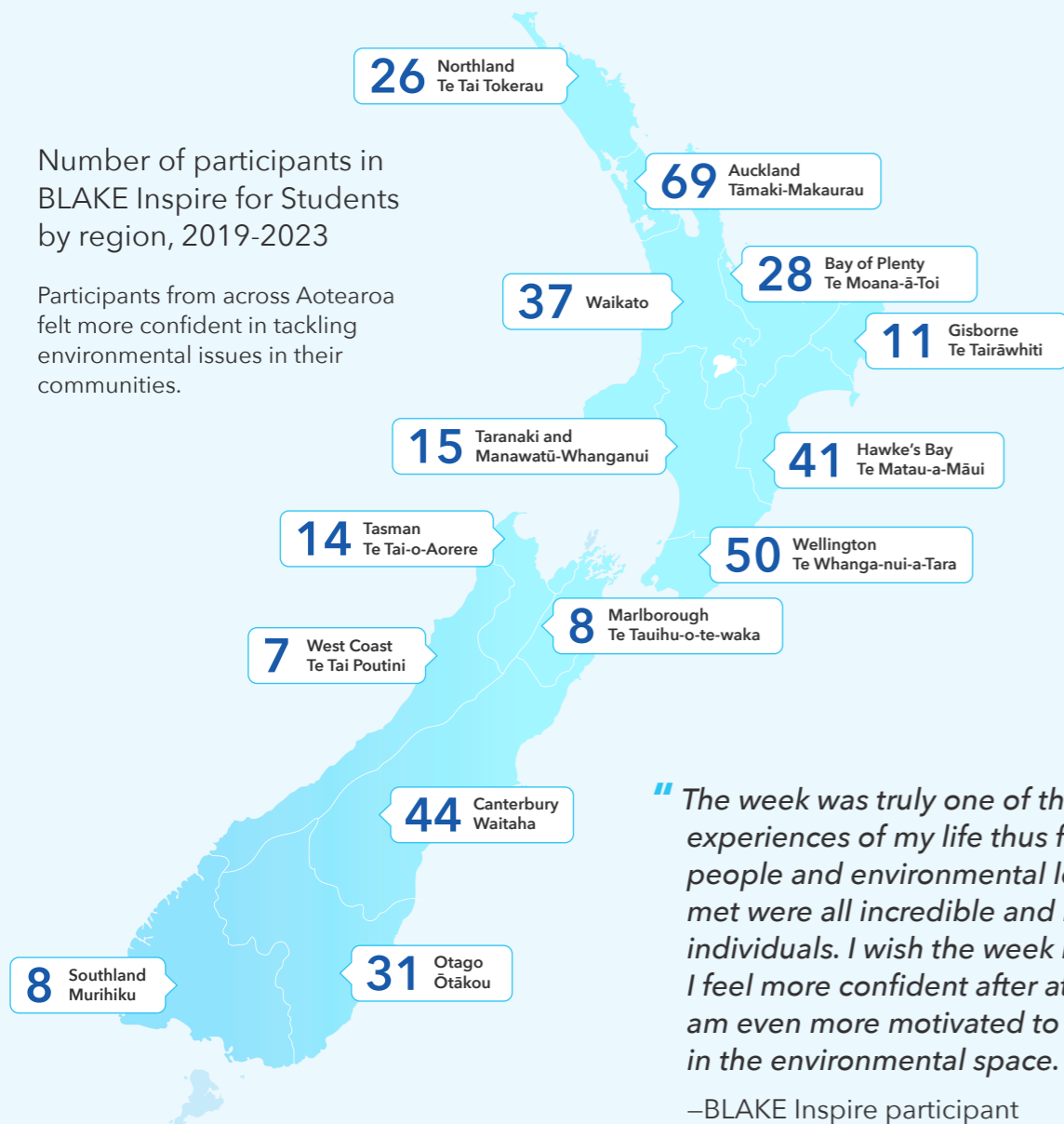
–Inspire for Teachers participant





Number of participants in BLAKE Inspire for Students by region, 2019-2023

Participants from across Aotearoa felt more confident in tackling environmental issues in their communities.



"The week was truly one of the best experiences of my life thus far. The young people and environmental leaders I have met were all incredible and inspiring individuals. I wish the week never ended. I feel more confident after attending and am even more motivated to create change in the environmental space."

—BLAKE Inspire participant

Sir Peter Blake was a staunch advocate of igniting leadership through adventure, participation, education, and sheer enjoyment. This belief underscores the essence of BLAKE Inspire, a week-long adventure for students, teachers and sailors, developing environmental stewards who actively engage with real-world challenges.



Previously known as the Sir Peter Blake Youth Environment Forum 2004-2010 and the Sir Peter Blake Youth EnviroLeaders Forum from 2011-2017, the programmes were established to give students a chance to change their communities for the better while still in school. Participants emerge from BLAKE Inspire equipped with sharpened leadership skills and a deep understanding of how they can create impactful change for environmental causes in their communities. As one student remarked, "BLAKE Inspire not only broadened my environmental awareness but also nurtured my personal growth."

Throughout the week, students immerse themselves in environmental and marine science activities, connecting with local businesses and organisations dedicated to environmental stewardship. At the programme's conclusion, students craft actionable plans to implement their newfound knowledge. These plans deliver results. Charlotte Hardy used her learnings to bring a sustainability lens to period products. She is now supporting health teachers in the Whanganui region and working with her local MP to challenge the Government to include reusable products for the period product initiatives they run.

Since 2019 BLAKE has also delivered a version of BLAKE Inspire specifically for teachers, aimed at helping them become more confident and capable environmental educators. Teachers return to their schools energised and equipped to translate the experience to their students, encouraging environmental action within their schools. BLAKE Inspire for Teachers is now delivered to almost 100 teachers annually, helping them to collectively impact 2,000 students each year when they return to their classrooms.

Teacher Sarah Johns returned to her school prepared to help her students after taking part in Inspire for Teachers. Within the school, she introduced seed bombs to increase biodiversity of the school gardens and created beeswax pouches for all new students to encourage litter-free lunches. Sarah was also empowered to lead activities such as plankton trapping in the local marina to assess productivity of the ocean and made a difference to her community through cleanups and a litter audit.

In collaboration with Yachting NZ, BLAKE Inspire also engages sailors nationwide, offering them the opportunity to sail on Sir Peter's iconic yacht, Steinlager 2. The programme exposes sailors to various experiences, from exploring pest-free island Tiritiri Matangi to engaging in marine science activities, all while instilling a deep understanding of environmental leadership.

"BLAKE Inspire has given me a clear understanding of my capabilities and inspiration for places where leadership is needed in my community. Through the programme we've been brought to the forefront of environmental technology, which has sparked a lot of interest and excitement for further advances and pathways we might follow," said one young sailor on their experience.

Through nurturing 1,071 students, teachers and sailors over 19 years, BLAKE Inspire continues to foster a collective commitment to environmental action, echoing Sir Peter's enduring legacy in inspiring a generation of change-makers.

BLAKE

Awards

Honouring visionary leadership
for a sustainable future

Every year, the BLAKE Awards stand as a beacon of recognition, celebrating individuals whose exemplary leadership shape a more sustainable future for Aotearoa.

Since the first award ceremony in 2005, 129 individuals have been recognised for their profound impact and transformative leadership exhibited across social, cultural, environmental and economic domains within New Zealand society.

The pinnacle of acknowledgment is the revered BLAKE Medal, an accolade reserved for individuals whose steadfast leadership has significantly influenced and nurtured a sustainable future, not just for New Zealand but often for the wider global community. This honour celebrates a sustained commitment to driving impactful changes across multiple spheres, defining a new benchmark for exemplary leadership. Recent recipients of the BLAKE Medal include Dame Anne Salmond, Sir Ron Carter, Sir Rob Fenwick, Sir David Skegg, Dame Tariana Turia, Sir Mason Durie and Dame Naida Glavish.

In addition to the BLAKE Medal, the BLAKE Award category celebrates up to four individuals whose exceptional leadership contributions have advanced a sustainable future for New Zealand. Each recipient embodies the ethos of visionary leadership, leaving a mark on various facets of New Zealand society.

Environmental stewardship receives a special spotlight through the BLAKE Award - Kaitiaki o te Taiao. Supported by NIWA, this recognition spotlights leaders who have made significant strides in environmental sustainability, spanning fields like science, education, communication, and broader environmental advocacy. This award celebrates those whose pioneering efforts have measurably advanced New Zealand's environmental conservation agenda.

The future of sustainability rests not only in experienced hands but also in the innovative minds of tomorrow. Recognising this, the BLAKE Award - Rangatahi, sponsored by Westpac, acknowledges the exceptional leadership of young individuals aged 13-24. Emphasising the vital role of young people in shaping a sustainable future, this award often highlights a specific project where young leaders showcase their inspiring initiatives across social, cultural, environmental, or economic landscapes.

The BLAKE Awards symbolise the legacy of Sir Peter Blake, serving as a testament to visionary leadership and its role in nurturing a sustainable future for New Zealand and beyond. These awards honour outstanding leaders and also serve as a catalyst, inspiring future generations to continue the invaluable work of creating a more sustainable and vibrant society.

Conclusion

Over the past two decades, BLAKE has embarked on a remarkable journey to inspire and empower all generations to be kaitiaki o te taiao. During this time, we have left a mark on the lives of over 100,000 students, equipped hundreds of teachers with the tools to champion environmental causes, nurtured the aspirations of budding young leaders, facilitated meaningful connections between researchers and passionate environmental advocates, and celebrated today's trailblazers to inspire the leaders of tomorrow.

Our mission is rooted in the legacy of Sir Peter Blake, an iconic leader known for his forward-thinking spirit, unwavering determination, and fearless approach to tackling new challenges. His philosophy continues to guide us as we confront the pressing need to mobilise collective action, limit global temperature rises and ensure the wellbeing of our planet for future generations.

Environmental stewardship is a shared responsibility, and it is incumbent upon all sectors of society - be it in our schools, communities, workplaces, or within the public sector - to inspire meaningful action in response to the environmental crisis.

As we have evolved over the past twenty years, Māori perspectives regarding tikanga and kaitiakitanga of te taiao have increasingly come to the fore and become integral to our programmes, continuing to deepen our relationships with our precious environments.

With the support of our valued partners, sponsors and supporters, we remain committed to expanding the reach of our programmes, engaging with more schools, and connecting as many of our rangitahi with the wonders of our natural world as possible. Despite the headwinds that lie ahead, we move forward, spurred on by the enduring legacy of Kiwi legend at our backs, as we pursue our mission to inspire and prepare people to lead a sustainable future for Aotearoa.

129

leaders
recognised
since 2005



Honours and thank you

Thank you to our corporate partners, sponsors, community trusts and individuals that have supported BLAKE over the past 20 years.

“ Our partnership with BLAKE began about four years ago when we were searching for an organisation that shares our commitment to benefiting both the environment and the community. The work BLAKE does in inspiring leadership and young people deeply aligns with our own values. Our involvement started with sponsoring awards, and led to us brewing BLAKE BEER which raised \$30,000 for BLAKE’s programmes.

A particularly rewarding aspect of our sponsorship has been hosting groups of students who are in the Mahurangi area for the BLAKE Explorers programme. For many students, it’s their first time in the area, let alone snorkelling or surfing in the ocean. Seeing the kids so stoked to be on these trips and exploring our beautiful region while learning about protecting our taiao makes us really proud of the support we can offer.”

–Kirsty McKay
Co-owner of Sawmill Brewery

“ Since our initial involvement in establishing the Sir Peter Blake Trust over twenty years ago, Chapman Tripp has built a deeply collaborative and valuable relationship with BLAKE. This partnership has evolved over time, from pro bono legal support to include direct financial support towards particular existing and developing programmes, and active engagement of our team members in various BLAKE initiatives.

BLAKE is an impressive organisation, rich in experience, knowledge and a passionate commitment to carrying forward Sir Peter Blake’s legacy of inspiring New Zealanders to care for our planet. Through our shared values of supporting youth and leadership, we have gained valuable insights from BLAKE on effectively engaging with young people in our own workforce and continuing to nurture our future leaders. Our team is deeply passionate about environmental stewardship, and we are honoured to align ourselves with a purpose-driven organisation actively dedicated to fostering the next generation of environmental leaders.”

–Pip England
Chief Executive Partner – Chapman Tripp



Foundation Partner

“ We love working with BLAKE because they share our vision of creating a cleaner and healthier Aotearoa, and empowering the next generation of environmental leaders. The partnership embodies the Westpac spirit of “Together Greater”, generating enthusiasm among our people and enabling us to help schools and communities prosper and grow.”

–Sarah Hearn, Westpac NZ GM of Product, Sustainability and Marketing

Major Partners:



Programme Partners:



Supporters:





BLAKE
Inspiring environmental leadership