



Working for Nature/Mahi mō te Taiao grants open in April

The 2025/26 Working for Nature/Mahi mō te Taiao grant scheme opens for online applications on Tuesday 1 April.

In its sixth year of funding, \$138,000 is available for projects ranging from pest control to restoring wetlands on Marlborough's public, private or Māori-owned land.

Funding is awarded in three categories:

- Habitat Marlborough – for restoring native habitats, improving biodiversity and enhancing freshwater quality.
- Protecting Marlborough – for controlling animal and plant pests
- Environmental Advocacy – for initiatives that promote environmental awareness.

The scheme enables groups and individuals to protect and enhance the environment. The maximum funding cap for a Habitat Marlborough

project is \$10,000; for Protecting Marlborough, it's \$15,000, and for Environmental Advocacy, it's \$2,000.

Community groups or trusts involved in multi-year projects are encouraged to apply for multi-year funding through the grant, up to the specified category maximum each year. To be eligible, the trust or group must show a proven history of successfully delivering environmentally beneficial biodiversity projects.

Further information can be found on Council's website via the link below. Applications close at 11:59pm on Wednesday, 30 April, and all applicants will be notified of the outcome by July 2025.

Paper applications are not accepted. Online applications should be made at: www.marlborough.govt.nz/our-community/grants-and-awards/working-for-naturemahimo-te-taiao

Health of Marlborough estuaries revealed

A report to Council's Environment and Planning Committee about the health of the region's 13 estuaries has revealed several important findings.

Senior Coastal Scientist Katie Littlewood said the estuaries were assessed for various environmental indicators and understanding their condition was essential for proper management.

"Estuaries act as vital buffers between land and sea, delivering essential ecosystem services like maintaining biodiversity, providing habitat and nursery grounds for wildlife, and aiding in coastal protection against storms," she said.

"Findings indicate that the inner estuaries of Tōtaranui/Queen Charlotte Sound are in 'fair to good' condition, benefiting from healthy seagrass beds and native forest catchments despite some human modifications. The outer estuaries in this region are rated 'very good', with minimal human impact enhancing their ecological value."



Estuaries, such as this, act as vital buffers between land and sea

However, Ms Littlewood noted that not all findings are positive.

"Kura te Au/Tory Channel is considered to be in 'fair to poor' condition, due to shoreline modifications and other environmental stressors that have significantly diminished the estuaries' ecological health," she said. "This reminds us of the growing human pressures impacting our estuarine ecosystems."

The Council aims to use these insights to monitor trends over time, implement necessary management measures, and ensure the sustainability of Marlborough's precious estuarine ecosystems for future generations.

To find about more about the state of the region's estuaries, go to: www.marlborough.govt.nz/environment/coastal/estuaries

Bus fares to increase from 1 July

Fares on Marlborough's publicly funded buses will rise this July for the first time since the service started 20 years ago.

Council's Assets and Services Committee has approved a 20 per cent increase which will see the price for an adult one-way bus fare in Blenheim rise from \$2 to \$2.40 and a child fare increase from \$1 to \$1.20. The Picton bus one way fare will increase from \$4 to \$4.80 for an adult and from \$2 to \$2.40 for a child. This is subject to the approval of full Council on 3 April.

The new fares take effect 1 July.

Marlborough Roads System Manager Wayne Oldfield said the increase was in response to increased operating expenses, the need to maintain the service and to meet the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) directive to the sector to increase the private share funding component which comes from ticket sales and advertising on the buses.

"The public transport system in Marlborough has seen

an increase in operational costs like many other sectors due to inflation, wage increases, fuel price rises and maintenance expenses," he said.

"To date these have been absorbed by NZTA and Council however that is not sustainable in the long term. To maintain our current service and to meet the NZTA obligations, we need to adjust fares."

"Our private share component is currently sitting at around five per cent and we need to increase that to 6.5 per cent by 2027. Super Gold card holders, who travel for free, make up 70 per cent of passengers."

Mr Oldfield said the new fares still represent great value for money and the public transport service continued to offer an excellent alternative to private vehicles as well as providing a social service for users. It also supports Council's regional climate change mitigation efforts.

The Marlborough bus service began in 2005.

International author visiting Picton Library

Australian author Isobelle Carmody is visiting Picton Library next Monday.

The successful and popular writer of science fiction, fantasy, children's and young adult books will host "A Conversation with Isobelle Carmody" on 31 March at 12.30pm.

The relaxed and informal session is free with all ages welcome.

Carmody's most recent novel,

Comes the Night, is set in near-future Canberra and is a thrilling standalone novel from the queen of young adult fantasy.

It follows a reluctant 16-year-old hero on an epic quest through a mysterious alternative dreamscape, filled with secrets and danger at every turn.

Comes the Night is available from Marlborough District Libraries.



Young adult fantasy writer Isobelle Carmody is at Picton Library this month

Seaweeek success at Momorangi Bay

Many families had a great day exploring and connecting with the sea at a Seaweeek event hosted by Envirohub Marlborough in Momorangi Bay.

Children used bathyscopes to see what lives in and around the rock pools of Momorangi Bay. There was even a small pop-up aquarium and a microscope to examine the microscopic life that lives underwater.

Many people contributed to making the event a success, including Port Marlborough, Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-A-Māui Trust, Nelson/Marlborough NZ Landcare Trust, Waikawa Dive Centre and Simcox Construction.



Oscar, Maddy, and Zara joined Council's Senior Coastal Scientist Katie Littlewood at a Seaweeek event held at Momorangi Bay, organised by Envirohub Marlborough.

Opening Hours

Mon to Fri: 8.30 am - 4.30 pm
Closed Wed 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm
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