

Perry Outdoor  
Education Trust

# ANNUAL REPORT

20  
25



# 2025 In Review CHAIR REPORT

Although things seem to have settled down, with covid no longer front of mind, times remain tough in our schools. Attendance remains an issue, with 80,000 children missing more than 30% of their class time in term two alone. And according to ERO disruptive behaviour in New Zealand classrooms is amongst the worst in the world. So what are we doing to help?

At POET we are working hard to “turn learning inside out”, engaging our young people in the outdoors, helping build relationships both between students and teachers, and within student groups. Students are building resilience through low-risk challenges, learning about sustainability and realising that the outdoors is a fun place to be.

In 2024 we worked in 14 secondary schools – our POET Schools – and that is increasing to 15 in 2025. With 6081 student days spent outside which includes 574 student leader days and 685 primary student days. Our team and schools have been busy! POET teachers spent 962 days either on camp or undertaking outdoors related professional learning and development.



Highlights for the year include welcoming a new board member, Shanan Miles, who has worked for several years running the Outdoor Education course at Wintec and brings a wealth of industry knowledge and practical experience to our board.

We also stepped further into the community, supporting a holiday programme for children in temporary emergency housing, and running a creative session for rest home residents, making harakeke piwakawaka and raupō figurines. Our work with primary schools has grown too, with outdoor cooking and crafting popular activities.

Our POET equipment remains a vital resource. Huge thanks to Outfitters and Lodge Real Estate for our new SUPs, Spoken Cycles for bike maintenance and helping source new bikes, Perry Metal Protection for keeping our trailers in shape, and Kiwi Camping for our tents, bed rolls, cookers, just about everything camping related. And a shout-out to the funders who helped us get our new braziers — we've put them to great use!



Funding continues to be a challenge, so we're especially grateful to our loyal group of sponsors and supporters. Thank you, NZ Carbon Farming, Brian Perry Charitable Trust, Grassroots Trust, Trust Waikato, WEL Energy Trust, Les Harrison Transport, Fairview, The Lion Foundation, COGS and the Lottery Grants Board, your support means so much.

As if the year wasn't busy enough for our team, we threw in a move from Tristram Street Hamilton to the new Perry House at Peake Rd, Cambridge. And we spent 6 months of the year down one coordinator. A huge thanks to Pete and Karen for keeping the home fires burning (with lots of charcoal pencils and fun cooking activities on the braziers!) and well done to Brian who spent 6 months volunteering abroad.

And a huge thank you to our generous board who give of their time, energy and expertise throughout the year. What a great bunch you are Vicky, Emma, David, Dianne and Shanana.

We look forward to getting out there with our young people throughout 2025!

Marlene Julian  
*Chairperson POET*



# who we are **OUR** **TRUSTEES**

Our governance team is a vital part of POET, and we're grateful to have such a dedicated group. Marlene Julian (Chair), Vicky McLennan, David Bradford, Emma Burke, Dianne Pacey, and Shanan Miles all volunteer their time, bringing valuable skills and experience to the table. Their support and guidance give our staff confidence and help keep us focused on what matters—creating meaningful outdoor learning experiences for young people across the region, and helping us keep turning learning inside out. Dianne and Shanan joined as Trustees in 2024 and have shared more about their background and connection to POET's vision.



**DIANNE PACEY**

I totally believe in the value experiences in the outdoors have on the way young people view themselves, others and the environment. I have experienced first hand how experiences can foster personal and social development transforming an individuals' view of themselves and others while building a greater appreciation of their local area resulting in a much greater degree of

connectedness to their natural environment.

Ensuring all young people of today have the opportunity to grow from challenge and adventure experiences in the outdoors is even more important in our increasingly urbanised and digitally driven world; it is essential to the development of their general health and wellbeing. I value the opportunity, as part of the POET team, in making outdoor education experiences more accessible to young people in our community.



**SHANAN  
MILES**

Shanan brings over 20 years of experience in the outdoors—as an educator, instructor and outdoor adventurer. His passion for the outdoors runs deep, and in his current role at the polytechnic in Hamilton, he's focused on passing that passion on, helping train the next generation of outdoor professionals. As an assessor for the New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association (NZOIA), Shanan brings a wealth of hands-on experience, and a broad skill set to the POET board.

Stepping into a board role with POET was a meaningful way for Shanan to bring his skills and values together. Like the rest of the board, he plays a key role in guiding the strategic direction of the Trust and making sure our programmes remain sustainable and impactful.

For Shanan, being involved with POET reflects his deep commitment to equity in education. He's passionate about making sure all students, regardless of background, get the chance to explore their local environments and histories. POET's approach of co-designing activities with schools means that outdoor learning is not just an add-on, but a powerful part of the curriculum.

Through his governance role on the board, alongside others, Shanan helps make sure these transformative opportunities remain accessible to all students. It's about more than time spent outdoors—it's about helping young people grow into confident, connected, and capable individuals.

**// I'm more confident & I like  
coming to school more now  
we do outdoor ed stuff. //**

**- POET Student**



# WHERE WE WORK

*Across the Waikato*

In 2024, POET partnered with 14 secondary schools and a growing number of primaries and intermediates.

POET has worked with several primary schools over the last 12 months including Knighton Normal School, Horotiu School, Ngāruawāhia Primary School, Horsham Downs School and more recently, Whitiora Primary School.



In 2024

**We worked  
with**

**1,712**

Students across  
the Waikato



# **working with PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Working with primary schools in the outdoors space offers a unique and enriching opportunity to support children's learning and development in a natural, engaging environment. I have been lucky enough to work with several primary schools over the last 12 months including Knighton Normal School, Horotiu School, Ngāruawāhia Primary School, Horsham Downs School and more recently, Whitiara Primary School.

The thing I love about outdoor education is that it allows students to explore subjects such as science, technology, and art in a hands-on way, bringing classroom concepts to life. Whether it's using a handheld microscope to explore the bark on a tree, using fire to cook some food, or building a shelter from the weather, the outdoors becomes a living classroom where curiosity and communication are encouraged.

One of the most valuable aspects of working with primary schools outside is the chance to help students continue developing personal growth skills such as teamwork, problem solving, and resilience. The activities that POET helped support such as camp cooking, shelter construction, or raft building, foster collaboration and problem-solving. Students learn to support each other, take on leadership roles, and overcome challenges together, which builds confidence in ways that are difficult to replicate in a traditional classroom setting.



The younger students bring an enthusiasm and 'buzz' to an outdoor day that you just don't get with the senior students. Their excitement from the little things is a joy to be around. I have often heard kids say things like 'this is the best day ever!' when the activity was simply making pikelets on a gas cooker.

I truly hope that POET continues to grow in the primary sector, because as good as it is for the kids, I think it is also good for my soul too!!

-Pete Guyan  
*POET Co-ordinator*

our Impact

# STUDENTS THAT AGREED

I felt better  
spending time  
outdoors



94%

Camp helped  
me connect  
with others



94%

Camp helped  
improve my  
CONFIDENCE



92%

Camp was  
FUN & I'm  
glad I went



95%

# Where our money went **FINANCE REPORT**

At POET, we choose to have our finances independently audited each year. It's one of the ways we show our commitment to transparency and give our supporters confidence that their contributions are being used wisely. We know that every dollar matters, and we take real care in how we manage and invest the funds entrusted to us.

This year, 71% of our spending went directly into the mahi that happens in and with schools—supporting outdoor learning experiences that benefit rangatahi and tamariki across the region. We kept administration costs to just 10%, and programme oversight and leadership accounted for 19%. These figures reflect our focus on staying lean behind the scenes so we can keep putting as much as possible into the heart of our work: turning learning inside out.



Hands on  
with schools



Keeping us  
running



Leading  
the work



**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>Income</b>		
	393,720	337,808
Donations, sponsorship and funding	35, 738	24,635
Interest received	155, 831	144,781
Services provided		
	<b>585,290</b>	<b>507,223</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Depreciation		
Equipment	10,888	13,499
Overheads	3,504	4,181
School Partnership Contributions	49,950	29,602
Staff	201,612	195,834
Travel	223,858	252,344
	13,457	10,686
	<b>503,269</b>	<b>506,146</b>
<b>Net Surplus for the Year</b>	<b>82,021</b>	<b>1,078</b>

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Accumulated funds	756,345	674,324
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>756,345</b>	<b>674,324</b>
Current Assets	834,594	979,569
Non-Current Assets	33,165	31,583
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>867,759</b>	<b>1,011,152</b>
Current Liabilities	111,414	336,828
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>111,414</b>	<b>336,828</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>756,345</b>	<b>674,324</b>

*A full set of audited financial statements are available on request.*

# OUR WORK

## POET Programmes

At POET, everything we do comes back to one goal: to make school a more positive experience for young people.

We believe that spending time in nature – learning outside the classroom – helps students and teachers build stronger relationships, stay well, and engage more deeply in learning.

From first experiences in the outdoors to student leadership, teacher professional development, and senior outdoor education, our programme-based model helps us deliver meaningful, equitable opportunities for all. Here's how it looks in action.



- Secondary Programme
- Primary Programme
- The Starter Programme
- Teacher Support Programme
- Rangatahi Leaders Programme
- NCEA Outdoor Support
- Connected Communities





In 2024

**Students  
spent**

**6000  
DAYS**

in the  
outdoors



# ENGAGED & CONNECTED

*with Nature*

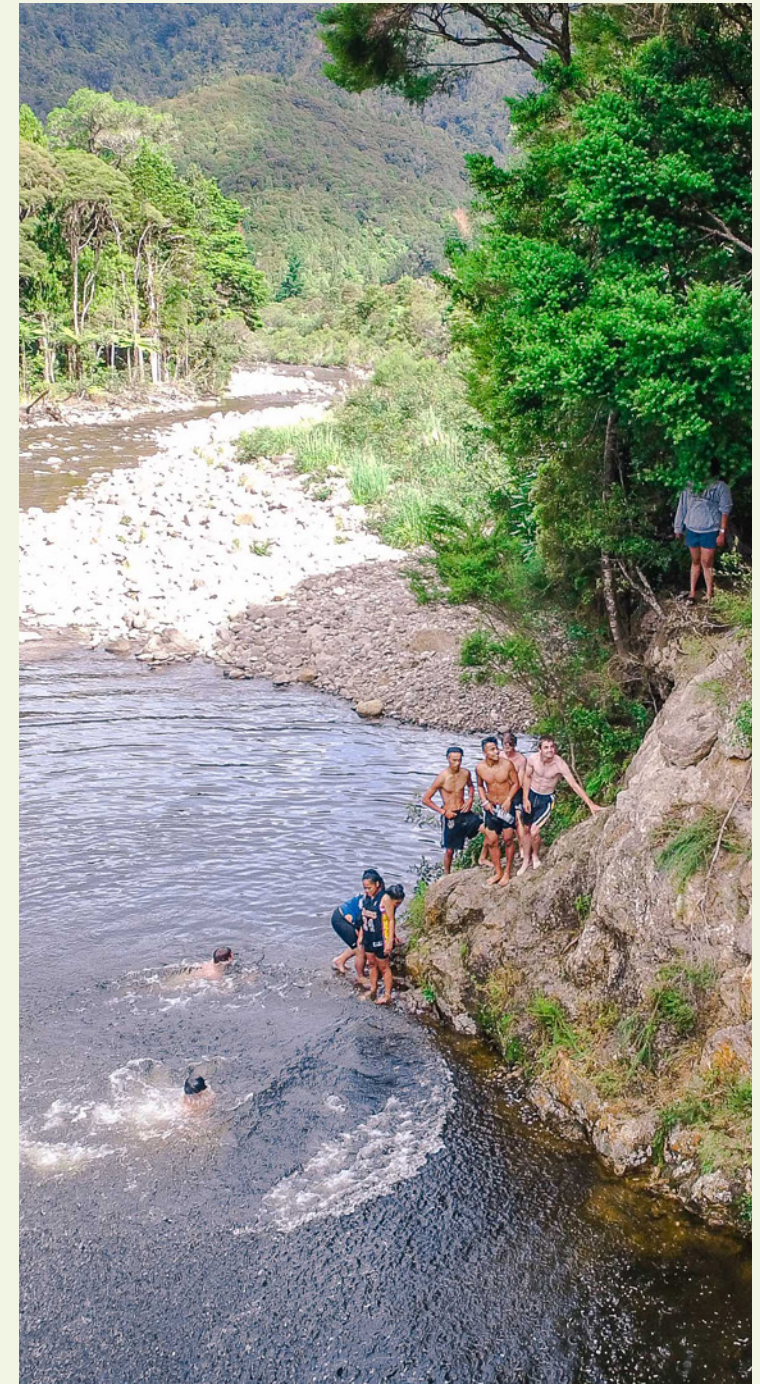
Last year I took my daughter canyoning down the Atuatumoe Stream in the Kaueranga Valley AKA Sleeping God Canyon. It was an amazing experience. I knew the cost and perceived risk would be too much for our POET schools, however the last kilometre of the trip was relatively flat, no ropes required, no big jumps needed, I thought maybe the students would get into wandering up and down the last stretch of this stream.

Paeroa College Year 9's were the only ones using Kaueranga Valley in term one, so we introduced the concept to the school coordinator, did a recce and put it on the program.

I was a little apprehensive on the first rotation wondering if these year 9s would think it was too hard or too boring or would rather be playing on their phones. But I soon discovered that I had nothing to worry about as all six rotations of student groups loved this activity. They went feral, scrambling up the rocks, playing on the natural water slides, swimming in the water holes, and just enjoying being together in this stunning natural playground.

To me it was at the essence of what we are trying to achieve at POET: working with schools to help connect rangatahi to their local natural environments. It was zero-cost, zero-equipment, and maximum fun. It was amazing to see how much these kids engaged and connected with nature. All we had to do was help them access these unique spaces safely and sustainably and then get out of their way.

-Brian Connelly  
*POET Co-ordinator*



# Turning Learning **INSIDE OUT**

Check out our awesome new tees featuring a custom outdoor graphic, designed by Carla from Chalk. We think it captures the spirit of our work with rangatahi and tamariki.

We've had loads of great feedback already, and we're excited to let you know that these shirts will be available for purchase soon. All proceeds will support our programmes, so keep an eye out – we'll be sharing how you can grab one and wear your support with pride!



“Interacting with nature  
made me feel grounded  
and calm.” - POET Student







# OUR SPONSORS

## & Supporters

A huge thank you to our generous sponsors and funders – like-minded organisations who share our commitment to empowering young people and caring for our natural world. We're proud to partner with you and together we are turning learning inside out.



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PERRY OUTDOOR EDUCATION

[poet.org.nz](http://poet.org.nz)

