

Grow Waitaha 2.0

A 10-year case study
of city-wide educational
transformation

2025



Grow
Waitaha

He mihi Acknowledgements

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This case study highlights the journey of the Grow Waitaha programme from 2015 - 2025.

Grow Waitaha was a multi-year project to support schools in post-earthquake Greater Christchurch through city-wide educational transformation. Grow Waitaha aimed to enable schools and kura to reimagine education for young people across the region.

We acknowledge the significant contributions of those who participated in the case study, including Puaka members: Cheryl Doig, Steve Edwards, Kerry Hall, Helen MacGougan, Lynne Harata Te Aika, Liz Hill Taiaroa, Chris Jansen, Janelle Riki-Waaka, Gabrielle Wall, Garry Williams, Emma Royal, and the Grow Waitaha Storytelling team. We also acknowledge past members of the Puaka, the internal Grow Waitaha team and the sector leads who contributed to this case study.

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Grow Waitaha 1.0: 2015-2020



Photo: Ākonga from Pareawa Banks Ave School

Understanding Grow Waitaha 1.0

Grow Waitaha is a city-wide transformative initiative that was established to support post-earthquake education renewal in the greater Christchurch region.



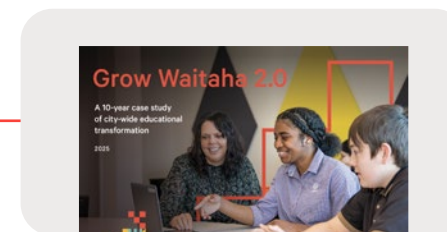
The 2010 and 2011 earthquakes necessitated not just a physical rebuild of school infrastructures in the Waitaha region, but also a reimagining of the educational landscape and what it could achieve.



Grow Waitaha recently completed its 10th year and during that time has worked with every school across the Greater Christchurch area. The scale of the physical rejuvenation was huge. As of July 2024, 97 schools had been rebuilt or had significant reconstruction completed, 12 were under construction, 1 was in tender, and 4 were in various stages of planning and design.



The first case study of Grow Waitaha, [Grow Waitaha Educational transformation through a co-designed collaborative approach in a complex public-sector context](#), outlined the first 5 years of this initiative from its formation through to the significant impact it had across the network. It highlighted the inception, the collaborative framework underpinning its success, and the significant milestones achieved during the first five years.



Case study 2.0 synthesised the second five year iteration of Grow Waitaha—why and how it adapted, how the processes and initiatives changed, and the impact Grow Waitaha has made.

Understanding Grow Waitaha 1.0

A collaborative partnership between the Ministry of Education, mana whenua and four original providers.

Grow Waitaha was established in 2015 following a Request for Proposal (RFP) from Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga Ministry of Education in response to urgent post-earthquake needs. The standard competitive procurement process pitted providers against one another for the best solution, however innovative approaches to the design and delivery of the programme were welcome, and it became clear that the good ideas being pitched were often complementary. Providers and educational groups suggested trialling a collaborative approach to address the complex and multifaceted challenges at hand. Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga Ministry of Education agreed that this was a productive outcome of the procurement process.

As a result, four diverse providers were selected – Tātai Aho Rau Core Education, Evaluation Associates | Te Huinga Kākākura Mātauranga, Leadership Lab, and Massey University's School of Design. These providers, alongside foundational partners Mātauraka Mahaanui and Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga Ministry of Education, co-designed the Grow Waitaha framework – a comprehensive, system-wide approach to rebuilding and innovating education over a 10 year period.

Grow Waitaha was the result of the following inputs...



+



+



A wide range of stakeholders in the Education sector



Experienced leaders from four partners

Grow Waitaha 2.0: 2021-2025



Photo: Mairangatia te Angitu Symposium 2024

Co-design and transition

In 2016, Grow Waitaha providers were offered a 5-year contract. In 2021 this was extended for a second 5-year period to build on our impact and create a sustainable approach across Waitaha.

The purpose of change

The transition to Grow Waitaha 2.0 (2021-2025) was driven by four key objectives:



Building on successes

Grow Waitaha 2.0 aimed to leverage the successes and strong relationships developed over the previous 5-years which had laid a solid foundation for ongoing educational transformation. The second phase sought to deepen and expand these gains.



Responding to changing needs

The educational landscape in the Waitaha region had evolved, with the sector's needs shifting from immediate support during the rebuild phase to the creation of self-sustaining networks of kura, kaiako, and ākonga.



Clarifying impact

To be more strategic and intentional about the specific impact it wanted to achieve over the following five years. By clearly defining and prioritising its impact areas (Futures, Pathways, Equity and Inclusion, and Wellbeing), Grow Waitaha aimed to ensure that every initiative was purposefully aligned with these goals.



Fostering sustainable transformation

The ultimate goal of Grow Waitaha 2.0 has been to create lasting, sustainable change in the education sector through a focus on celebrating past successes, consolidating effective practices, and enhancing collaboration among all stakeholders.

Co-design and transition

Impact areas

Through a comprehensive 12-month process involving research, scoping, and co-design with our partners and stakeholders, four key impact areas were identified to guide all future Grow Waitaha activities from 2021-2025.

These areas were chosen to address the broader goals of educational transformation, ensuring that Grow Waitaha initiatives would be designed, implemented, and evaluated with clear strategic intent. These impact areas were then broken down into 11 specific Impact Statements. These Impact areas and Impact Statements are discussed in detail in the next section of this case study as well as a range of examples of initiatives in each of our impact areas. Each year an annual Impact report was developed – i.e. [Impact Report 2023-2024](#).



Reflective structure

The transition to Grow Waitaha 2.0 introduced a reflective structure to ensure that initiatives were well-considered, effectively executed, and meaningfully communicated. This structure consists of five key processes that form a dynamic cycle.



Reflective structure



1. Scoping

Scoping involves broad and inclusive engagement with stakeholders across the region, including educators, community leaders, and other partners to identify needs, generate ideas and create initial prototypes. This phase involves a wider range of voices than in Grow Waitaha 1.0, making the process more inclusive and ensuring that initiatives are rooted in diverse perspectives.



2. Deciding

After ideas are scoped they move to the deciding phase where initiatives are reviewed, prioritised, and commissioned. This decision-making process is collaborative, involving input from key stakeholders and ensuring that each initiative aligns with the identified impact areas and strategic goals. The deciding phase is critical for allocating resources effectively, setting clear objectives, and determining the scope and scale of each project.



3. Doing

Doing is the implementation phase, where the approved initiatives are put into action. This phase emphasises collaboration and stakeholder engagement, with continuous tracking of progress, enabling real-time adjustments and improvements. Implementation teams are carefully selected based on expertise and the specific needs of each initiative, including the communities that initiatives seek to impact.



4. Storytelling

Once initiatives are underway, storytelling involves capturing and sharing the stories, experiences, and outcomes of the initiatives. Storytelling serves multiple purposes: it helps to communicate the impact of the initiatives, fosters a culture of learning and reflection, and ensures transparency and accountability. By continuously sharing and reflecting on what has been achieved, Grow Waitaha adapted and improved its initiatives over time.



5. Evaluating

This phase provides critical feedback on the impact of each initiative that then influences the scoping and deciding process, helping Grow Waitaha to measure progress against its strategic goals and impact areas.

This cycle allows Grow Waitaha to remain agile, adapting to changes in the educational landscape and the needs of its stakeholders. It also fosters a culture of continuous improvement, where every initiative is an opportunity to learn, grow, and enhance the impact on the education sector. This reflective process is essential to seeing ideas through to impact, then reflecting on these impacts to inform future projects and initiatives.

Ngā mahi i oti i te tau kua hipa Our activities over the last year

Over 10 years Grow Waitaha produced an enormous quantity of work as illustrated by these infographics.

The following pages detail the four impact areas of Grow Waitaha 2.0 and profile some of the initiatives in the impact areas and what they achieved across the sector.

200⁺
Events



12⁺
Sustainable
networks



275⁺
Useful
resources



10
Communities
of practice



150⁺
Schools
involved



90⁺
Impact stories



120⁺
Navigator
support for
schools





IMPACT AREA

Futures

Photo: Mairangatia te Angitu Symposium 2024



Futures Impact Statements

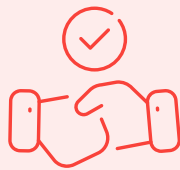


#1



Ākonga are future focused and demonstrate global citizenship.

#2



A broad definition of success is widely understood and implemented.

#3



Learners have increased agency over the direction of their learning.

Futures Initiatives



A Climate for Change

- + Supporting an event for rangatahi on positive climate change for the environment, hosting networking workshops for secondary kaiako working in this space and creation of useful resources.



Secondary Leaders Community of Practice

- + Growing an Ōtautahi wide network of secondary leaders who grow knowledge, skills and confidence while collaborating on school-based change projects.

[VIEW MORE →](#)



Artificial intelligence

- + Trialling approaches to using AI in secondary learning environments and upskilling kaiako in the why, how, risks and opportunities of AI.



Ōtautahi Secondary Change Leaders Network

- + A network of senior and middle leaders from across Waitaha secondary schools including the development of the *Flexibility in Secondary Learning Mosaic* – a resource used across Aotearoa.

[DOWNLOAD MOSAIC →](#)





IMPACT AREA

Pathways

Photo: Ākonga from Rāwhiti School



Pathways Impact Statements



#4



There are smooth and seamless pathways into, between, and out of schools.

#5



A connected, collaborative, coherent and learner-centred schooling system.

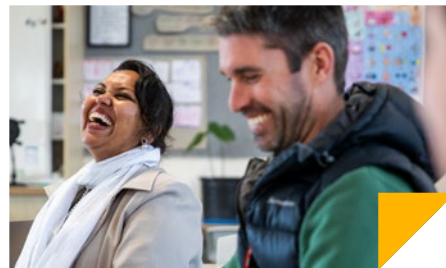
Pathways Initiatives



Kāhui Ako & Clusters Leadership Network

- + Quarterly Kāhui Ako Network hui provide clusters of schools with an opportunity to share ideas, grow leadership, explore pathways and engage with mana whenua.

[READ MORE →](#)



Grow Waitaha Roadshows

- + A series of school-based events showcasing good practice in schools, led by kaiako for kaiako.

[READ MORE →](#)



Kāhui Ako Conference

- + Supporting the growth of a nationwide network of Kāhui Ako so they can build on their successes and impact across the country.

[READ MORE →](#)



Technology transitions pathways years 7 to 10

- + Technology teachers from primary, intermediate and secondary schools exploring consistency of planning, the contexts and materials available to learners, what ākonga said about their learning and the connection to the NZ curriculum expectations. A school guide was developed – *Planning Guide for Technology Transitions*.

[DOWNLOAD GUIDE →](#)





IMPACT AREA

Equity and Inclusion

Photo: Mairangatia te Angitu Symposium 2024



Equity & Inclusion impact statements



#6



Authentic, rich curriculum and pedagogical approaches reflect our bicultural nation.

#7



As te Tiriti partners, schools actively collaborate with mana whenua / rūnanga to support Ngāi Tahu aspirations.

#8



Inclusive education practices are used to identify and remove barriers so that learning is accessible for all.

Equity & Inclusion Initiatives



Mairangatia te Angitu

- + Hosting a large two day symposium for a network of leaders of kaupapa Māori, Kāhui Ako across school leaders and all cultural leaders in education across Waitaha to celebrate Māori succeeding as Māori.

[READ MORE →](#)



Trauma-informed Pacific educators network

- + Partnering with CrossPolynate and Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha University of Canterbury to provide opportunities for Pacific educators to learn together through keynotes, workshops and small group talanoa.

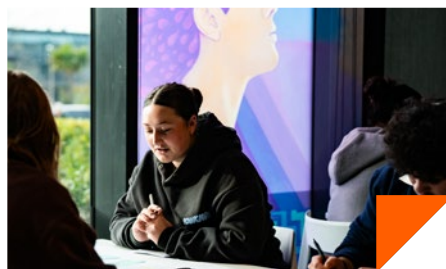
[WATCH →](#)



Kōkirihiā rangatahi

- + Research on destreaming has extended, supporting the mahi of Tokona te Raki through a series of Kōkirihiā Rangatahi workshops – Empowering rangatahi to influence change. Destreaming workshops for maths and literacy met teacher demand for practical support to make the change.

[WATCH →](#)



Empowering gender diverse rangatahi

- + Working alongside leaders and rangatahi to help the education sector to become a safe and empowering place for rangatahi with diverse gender identities. Creating a range of resources and wānanga opportunities for boards, school tumuaki, senior leaders and kaiako.

[WATCH →](#)





IMPACT AREA

Wellbeing

Photo: Ākonga from Pareawa Banks Ave School



Wellbeing Impact Statements



#9



**Kaimahi and ākonga
have a sense of identity,
belonging and place.**

#10



**Students and teachers are
empowered to support
their own wellbeing.**

#11



**Collaborative leadership
is grown, enabled and
informed.**

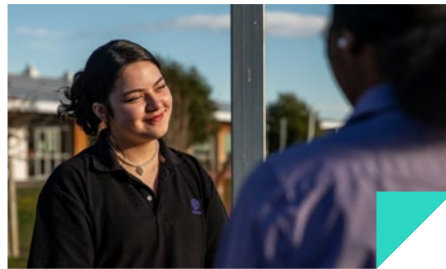
Wellbeing Initiatives



Wellbeing Community of Practice

- + Leaders and kaiako from across Waitaha learning and collaborating together over 3–4 one day hui per year.

[WATCH →](#)



Waitaha Speaks Slam Poetry Expos

- + Working alongside rangatahi from a range of schools to develop skills to have their voices heard, grow confidence, and ‘teach the teacher’.

[READ MORE →](#)



Student Wellbeing Network

- + Supporting rangatahi to host a student-led network for secondary wellbeing leaders to bring about positive change.

[WATCH →](#)



Learning Support Coordinators Symposium

- + An opportunity for learning support coordinators to gain new skills, ideas and networks focusing on positive responses to challenging behaviour and proactive solutions.

[READ MORE →](#)





Storytelling

Photo: Ākonga from Haeata Community Campus



Storytelling



The Storytelling workstream (formerly Curate in Grow Waitaha 1.0) had a direct link to impact tracking of the initiatives in the four impact areas.

The Storytelling workstream collects, curates and shares stories of impact. However, we responded to the way the sector's needs changed as a result of COVID-19 and shifts in the government's learning priorities, by shifting to the creation of useful resources to support kura, leaders, kaiako, and ākonga with transformational change.

The use of social media ensured that Grow Waitaha actively shared accessible learning events and resources available to kaiako and leaders.



“

There are more stories [now] celebrating collaboration or partnership and building collective strengths and knowledge versus individual school stories. More of our stories are celebrating collaboration and how our diverse communities are supported and reflected.

”

We aimed to widen our impact by celebrating stories, provided a wealth of online resources and shared influential videos.



Ā mātou kōrero / Our stories



Inspiring youth to lead the change



Paparoa Street Roadshow



Impacting Change in Ōtautahi



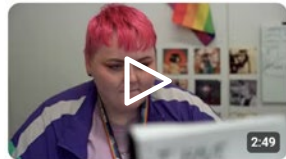
Bringing destreaming to life



Amplifying youth voices through spoken word

PLUS MORE →

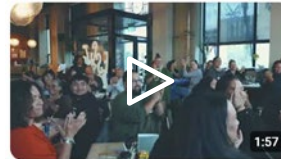
Whakaata / Our videos



Inclusive Education for Gender-Diverse Ākonga – Our Dedicated Rōpū



Kōkirihiā Wānanga Rangatahi



Trauma-Informed Talanoa for Pacific educators 2024



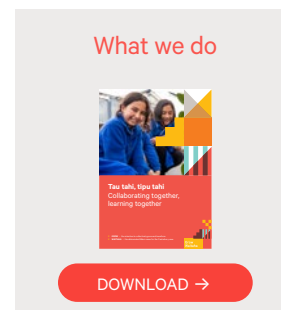
Digi Awards



Embracing AI for Powerful Learning

PLUS MORE →

Ā mātou rauemi / Our resources



PLUS MORE →



Learning and Reflections

Photo: Kaiako from Hagley College



Key strengths



Collaboration and networking opportunities

Collaboration and partnerships among schools, iwi, and other stakeholders provided valuable opportunities for educators to work together, share ideas, and network with colleagues across different schools and sectors. This enabled the exchange of good practices and innovative approaches – reviews consistently mentioned this as an outstanding strength of the programme.

Mana Whenua partnership

Ngāi Tahu educators walked alongside Grow Waitaha, contributing at the governance, planning and implementation of programmes. This critical partnership ensured our ways of working, resource development and programmes honoured Te Tiriti and mana whenua. Incorporating cultural narratives into school design and local curriculum is more prevalent in Waitaha schools than other parts of Aotearoa New Zealand, and Waitaha schools use culturally responsive practices connected with learners' needs more frequently.

Learners at the Centre of Change

Grow Waitaha consistently focused on keeping learners at the heart of its work, focusing on improving outcomes for all learners, especially those from marginalised groups. Learners were involved in co-design of programmes, communities of practice and sharing practice alongside kaiako.



“

The networking that's happened across Waitaha because of the work that Grow Waitaha has been instrumental and is huge in that the conversations that we've been able to facilitate across our schools with that central purpose of making a difference for our children, I think, is a real strength.

—Sector Leader

”

Key strengths



Leading for adaptive change

An uncertain global environment, changes in government priorities and meeting the needs for each school context requires school leaders to be adaptive. Grow Waitaha has helped schools to make sense of complex change, connect ideas and provide tools and strategies to navigate uncertain times. It has been adept at adapting delivery methods to meet changing needs, for example providing bite-sized, easily shareable content.

Future focused and responsive practice

Grow Waitaha remains recognised for its proactive stance on emerging educational issues, trends and challenges in education providing timely resources and support to help schools navigate new challenges. It remained focused on the need to prepare learners for a rapidly changing world while also listening to the needs of kaiako and learners of today.

Impact storytelling

This unique programme provided high-quality, relevant professional learning and resources that were developed specifically to meet the needs of the sector, with the sector. Resources were easily accessible and could be consumed in small, manageable chunks due to time constraints faced by educators. The ongoing relevance and accessibility of resources and programmes was evaluated regularly and online materials continue to be used locally, nationally and globally.



“

The organisation's ability to bring together diverse voices and expertise is seen as a unique strength, enabling schools to access knowledge and support they might not otherwise have.

—School Principal

”

Lessons learnt



Strong relationships

Strong relationships require constant conversation – a systems response is required, where all schools understand their place in the network and the benefit for all learners across the network.



Collaboration adds impact

Collaboration adds impact – having all stakeholders and providers working together has allowed for exponential innovation and efficient coherent implementation.



Connecting

Connecting face to face is still preferred by kaiako, but online interaction has grown as a tool for learning and extending reach and impact.



Relevance is key

Relevance is key and therefore feedback loops with the sector are vital.



Context matters.

Each school is unique. In supporting schools the first step is to listen and observe so that support genuinely meets needs.



Technological change

The pace of technological change has added more layers for kaiako to learn to navigate.



Navigating complexity

Navigating complexity is a critical capability for schools. This complexity means that schools, leaders and kaiako have limited time and constant pressures. There is a tension between engagement and time constraints / competing priorities.

“

This project has given us an opportunity to see physical, tangible differences that will be here for another 50, 100 years. So that's a real honour to be involved in that space.

—Puaka member

”

Sector and system recommendations



The Christchurch Earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 provided the impetus for the creation of the Greater Christchurch Education Renewal Plan and provided the foresight to establish the Grow Waitaha programme.

Grow Waitaha identified the following transferable recommendations to continue "education transformation through a co-designed collaborative approach in a complex public-sector context".

Public Sector Recommendations

- + Actively promote and fund collaborative opportunities, networks of schools, the sector and wider community.
- + Embed partnership with Tangata Whenua into the design of programmes, appointment of providers, and funding ongoing support.
- + Be open to partnerships and collaborative ways of working that move beyond traditional procurement models.
- + Support school leaders to manage complex change as a systems response.
- + Provide professional learning opportunities that are responsive to changing needs of learners and school contexts.



“

How do we as Grow Waitaha support mana whenua to keep that learning in the school with principal changeovers, with teacher changeovers, so that we don't in five years time have whole schools full of students and staff who don't know the stories, who haven't got it captured in a way that keeps the learning alive.

—Puaka member

”

Sector and system recommendations



School and Network Recommendations

+ Enhance the power of collaboration

Work together across Kāhui Ako, clusters and networks so that all benefit.

+ Look for cross sector collaboration

Expand partnerships with tertiary institutions, social services, and other youth-focused organisations to create a more comprehensive approach to supporting young people's education and wellbeing.

+ Develop and implement a succession plan

Specifically on how to maintain institutional knowledge and cultural narratives when staff change.

+ Continue the focus on learners

It is essential to keep learners at the centre of change by involving them in revisioning the future.



How will schools be supported to collaborate for the betterment of all learners post Grow Waitaha?

What mechanisms will be put into place to support mana whenua involvement in schools and school networks, and to keep cultural narratives alive, despite principal and teacher turn over?



Final thoughts



After the 2011 Christchurch earthquakes, Grow Waitaha emerged as a unique educational initiative that reshaped Canterbury's education sector. This case study explores the strengths, challenges, and future possibilities for Grow Waitaha, based on insights from key stakeholders including principals, educators, and iwi representatives.

There are many influences on education – globally, nationally and locally – that require the ability to lead in complex times and adapt approaches to learning, teaching and professional development. In particular, this requires the ability for schools to collaborate, understand systems thinking, maintain partnership with mana whenua and tangata whenua, and to keep learners at the centre of change.

While the Grow Waitaha programme concluded at the end of June 2025 there were lessons learnt that will continue to add value and influence further programmes. This unique opportunity has been possible because the Te Tahuhu o te Mātauranga Ministry of Education played a key role not just as funders but as partners.

**There is still important work to be done.
We've got expertise, we've got people, we've got relationships. Let's build on these.**



“

Every time I come to a Grow Waitaha meeting, I learn something that makes me grow, that makes me bring a different aspect to what I want our team to be doing.

—Mana whenua Puaka partner

”

Tau tahi, tipu tahi

Collaborating together, learning together

The goal of Grow Waitaha is to enable schools and kura to reimagine education for young people across the region.

