

A close-up photograph of two hands, palms up, covered in thick, yellowish-brown mud. The hands are cupped together, holding a small, round ball of the same mud in the center. The background is blurred, showing more mud and some indistinct shapes. The lighting is warm, highlighting the texture of the mud.

# wao

Annual  
Report  
2021

rīpoata  
ā-tau  
2021



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Pictured: Long Lunch, Wao Summit 2021

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# 01 About This Report



Pictured: Robyn Guyton at the Long Lunch, Wao Summit 2021

Kia ora, and thank you for taking the time to read the 2021 Wao Annual Report.

This report reflects back on the incredible impact Wao has achieved in just four short years, not just in the Wānaka community, but across the entire district. This report delves into our achievements to date, with specific focus on the year, 2021.

The report is intended to be read online to save on paper - **there is no need to print it out.**

We are happy for the information provided in this report to be widely read and circulated, but we ask that you respect our copyright, and if you'd like to use any excerpt of this report for your own means we ask that you seek prior permission from us.

For questions about this report or feedback please contact us via [kiaora@wao.co.nz](mailto:kiaora@wao.co.nz)

Noho ora mai,  
Wao

# 02 Welcome from the Chair

2021 was another year of uncertainty for humanity, our living planet and all species that inhabit her. Covid has shown us what we can achieve when we all work together, but also how quickly we focus on ourselves and our closest communities during periods of uncertainty. Like many times past, planetary health has taken a back seat – as seen through a lack of cut-through in both the media and individual priorities when it comes to greenhouse gas reduction commitments.

Of course, it's not all doom and gloom. We have seen momentum in private-sector sustainability, with many companies realising our issues won't be solved by government influence alone and business can indeed be a force for good.

Within Wao we have been focusing on what we can do in our beautiful backyard to make a difference. We're incredibly lucky to have such a supportive community, generously donating time and financial sponsorship.

Our pinnacle event, the Wao Summit, was a great success with so many inspiring speakers and events.

To our dedicated Summit team – thank you. Thank you for the many, many volunteer hours you dedicated to making it happen. It was wonderful to see so many new faces at the talks, tours and workshops this year, and to hear about the changes people are making in their lives, having been inspired by our events. I would also like to thank our stellar board members for the mammoth amount of time they invest in Wao to help our community accelerate towards a regenerative future.

As a grassroots initiative, we are constantly looking for funding to ensure the longevity and lasting impact of our charity. Please do reach out if you or someone you know is in a position to provide financial support. Thank you.

So, let's keep moving! Let's continue to meet and talk, share ideas and celebrate wins, and, most importantly, spark compassionate conversations within our community that help as many people as possible be a little more sustainable today than they were yesterday.

**Darrin Brown**  
Chairperson





# 03 Wao Board

The board is a mix of skills and backgrounds. With a flat structure, many of the members contribute both from an operational and governance level.

[Arna Craig](#), trustee, holds expertise in communications and her business Conscious helps elevate awareness for Wao.

[Dr. Carly Green](#), trustee, has been involved in global Climate Change mitigation for over 20 years and holds a PhD in International Climate Change Policy. Her business Environmental Accounting Services provides technical expertise in Climate Action.

[Claire Akin-Smith](#), trustee, is a human health strategist with expertise in what makes people perform at their best. Her business Applied Movement provides expertise in this to the board and Wao work programmes.

[Darrin Brown](#), trustee and chairperson, has an accounting business in Wānaka, Balanced, and provides financial services to Wao.

[Monique Kelly](#), trustee, has worked at the international level in policy and standards development, is a small business owner and director, systems thinker and Programme Director for Wao.

[Olivia Bonifant](#) has a background in Sustainable Business, supports as secretary to the board and is Programme Manager for Wao.

Thank you also to our advisors to the board, Geoff Tomkins and Mark Sinclair who provided us with invaluable advice in 2021.

## A huge thank you to our outgoing members:

- Keith Stubbs & Rhea Selwan who headed up the Better Building Group in 2021.
- Mandy Bell, trustee, was with us till the beginning of 2021 and is now focused fully on WAI Wānaka.



Pictured: Sustainable Communities Tour, Wao Summit 2021

## BOARD MEMBERS

Arna Craig	Trustee
Dr. Carly Green	Trustee
Claire Akin-Smith	Trustee
Darrin Brown	Trustee & Chairperson
Monique Kelly	Trustee
Olivia Bonifant	Secretary
Keith Stubbs	Better Building
Mandy Bell	Trustee

# 04 Wao Values

Wao is a community non-profit set up to inspire, educate and enable communities of Aotearoa to move towards a regenerative future. We are a true collective - a group of passionate individuals focused on mainstreaming sustainability and regenerative thinking - not just in the Southern Lakes but across the entire country.

The name Wao was chosen for its Māori kupu - forest. The forest symbolises the space between the ecological ceiling and social foundation, which we need to transition from a siloed monoculture into a self sustaining, diverse, ecosystem.

**Wao, the forest, with its intrinsic diversity, natural regeneration and climate regulating abilities.**

The name reflects our core values of connectedness, diversity, unity, partnership, regeneration and sustainability. The Wao tree (pictured on the right) was the imagery chosen to represent Wao in 2021, with each aspect of our community depicted in the tree.



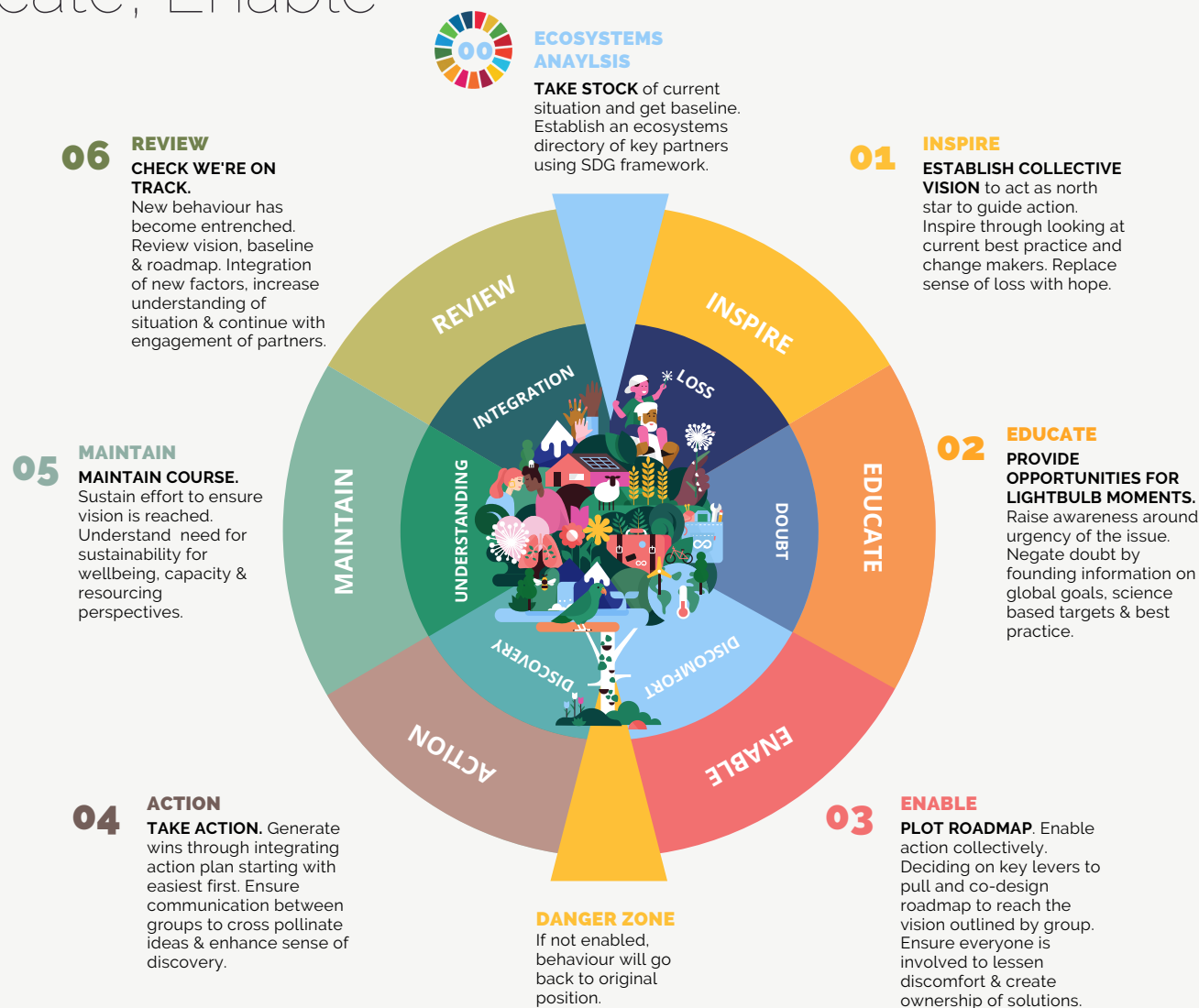


# 05 Our Mission: Inspire, Educate, Enable

Our mission is to inspire, educate and enable communities to transition to a regenerative, self-sustaining future.



Pictured: Construction Waste 103, Designing Out Waste, Wao Summit 2021



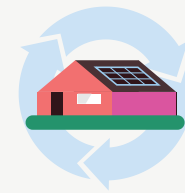
# 06 Sustainable Development Goals

We are based at the headwaters of the mighty Mata-Au / Clutha River. It receives its waters from the rain and snow that lands in the Southern Alps in warm winds from Australia and the Pacific and cold blasts from the Southern Ocean and Antarctica. This water flows through the Otago region and out into the sea. It connects us with our land and other peoples through this water cycle.

Just as we cannot forget that we are part of this natural cycle, we are also part of a global community. This community faces joint challenges that need to be solved through partnership and collaboration. The United Nations (UN) [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) provides not only goals and targets, but also shared language and a framework to measure our joint acts against. Each one of the 17 goals has to be viewed in the context of the whole. They provide us with a comprehensive matrix in which we work.

Our work is based on these goals and inspired by Kate Raworth's [doughnut economics](#) along with [Teina Boasa-Dean's](#) interpretation of this through a Māori lens. The space between whenua (land) and rangi (sky) is where we inhabit, where everything is interconnected. When speaking about climate action, we cannot ignore other species who share this planet with us, the water, air or land just as we have to take into consideration our human, social and economic needs.

This year, we have looked at translating the SDGs into a local context, one which demonstrates more clearly their interconnectedness, reflects our priorities and deepens their meanings. The Wao tree (page 6) and icons on the right illustrate our interpretation of the goals.



**Starting top, left-right:** Better Building, Regenerative Tourism, Life on Land and Under Water, Food & Fibre, Climate Action, Empower Youth, Partnership for the Goals, Democracy, Wellbeing & Connection, Communication for Change, Innovation for Change, Circularity



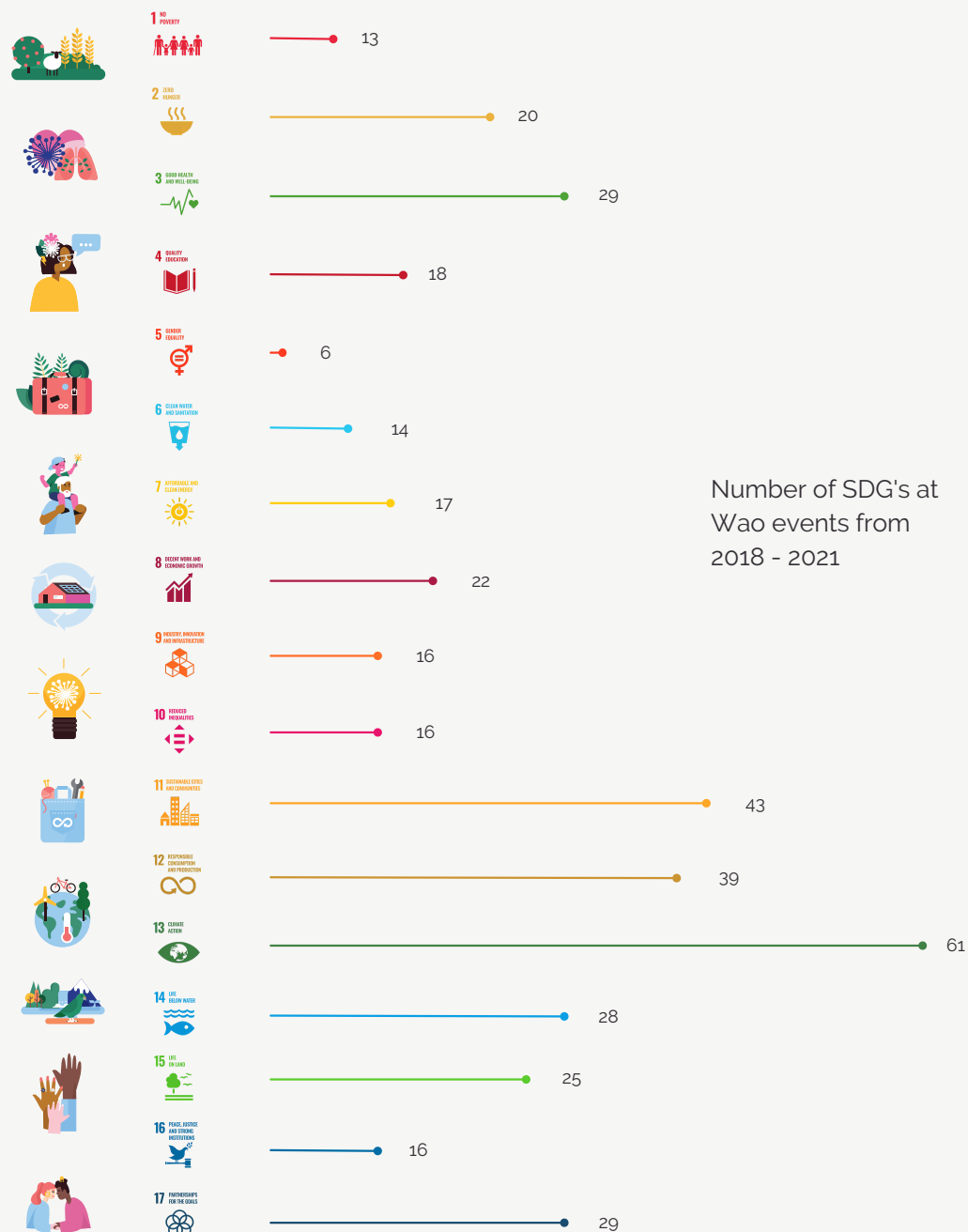
# 07 SDG Stats

The SDG's are fundamental to Wao's way of working. For each of the events that Wao have held over the past four years, we have tagged relevant SDG's being worked towards for each event, workshop or action. Our own interpretation of the SDG's correlate with our Wao icons. The following diagram represents the number of Wao events directly related to each of the goals. Reflecting their interconnectedness, all events, projects and activities have multiple goals linked to them.

The [IPCC March 2022](#) report outlines why **Climate Action (Goal 13)** needs to be one of our core drivers. Action on this front is intrinsically connected to creating sustainable communities and many also address **Waste, Energy and Decent Work (Goals 8, 8, 9, 11 & 12)** as well as **Biodiversity, Land and Water (Goals 6, 14 & 15)**.

**Education for Sustainable Development (Goal 4)** cuts across every everything we do as this is part of our core mission. We are currently looking at ways to address **Equality (Goals 5 & 10)**. We have a predominantly female group of volunteers within the trust, and the majority of our speakers and subject matter experts are female. We recognise the need for a better gender distribution. We aim in the future to have an accurate and fair representation of our community by engaging in genuine partnerships with all ages, genders, ethnicities, backgrounds and demographics.

Finally **Partnership (Goal 17)** is the goal that connects all of our action together, creating exponential impact. It's importance to our work will be discussed further along in the report.

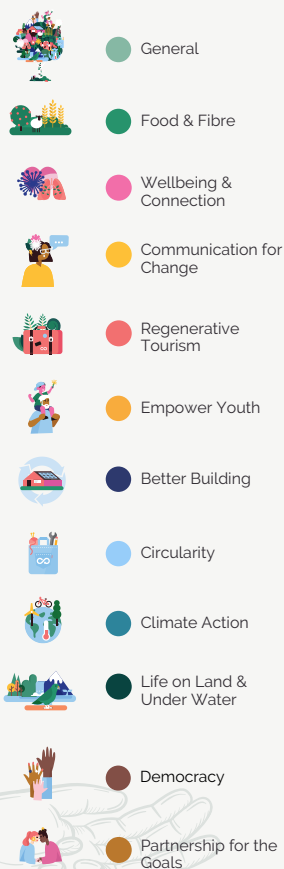


# 08

## Building Soil 2018-2021

Change does not happen over night. Like everything, it takes time. It starts with doing the groundwork by feeding and preparing the soil, planting seeds of ideas, nurturing projects through the seedling stage before you see any fruits. Below is a brief visual outline of some of the work accomplished since 2018 to get us to where we are now. We use this backcasting to look to the future and plan our next year's priorities and needs. When viewed in the context of the work being done by other organisations, the sense of building momentum and progress can be assessed.

### Key



### 2018

- Eco-systems analysis
- First film evenings
- One Summit launched
- Ecofair at One Summit
- TIA workshops
- Better Building Working Group established
- SUC Free Campaign launched
- Te Kakano
- Wastebusters

### 2019

- One Summit 2019
- Harvest Feast 2019
- Support to Food for Love
- WAI Wānaka Food & Fibre programme at Summit
- Ecofair at One Summit
- 52 Weeks challenge
- TIA workshops
- Re+Generation Schools Project
- SDG Schools Summit
- Civil Share - sharing scheme for resources explored
- Better Building Working Group Survey
- Submissions on need to act on climate to QLDC
- Climate Emergency declared
- 45 attendees at Climate Action Workshops
- Wao Submission on Carbon Zero Bill
- Friends of Bullock Creek
- SUC Free Wānaka
- Te Kakano
- Sustainable Coastlines
- WAI Wānaka
- Wastebusters
- Wānaka Backyard Trappers
- Whaiao RCE Otago

### 2020

- Reset Summit 2020
- WAI Wānaka Food & Fibre programme at Summit
- Wao Wellbeing day at Reset Summit
- Gen Wao mental health event
- Rebrand from One to Wao
- Southern Lakes Think Tank launched
- Southern Lakes UN Youth Summit
- Kahu Youth at Summit
- Mates in Construction workshops
- Construction Waste workshop funding with Wastebusters, Waste Minimisation Fund
- Wānaka Community Workshop established
- BRANZ Embodied Carbon Workshops
- QLDC Climate Action Plan adopted
- g6 attendees at Climate Action Workshops
- Wao Submission on Building for Climate Change - MBIE
- Max Rashbrooke democracy event
- QLDC Climate Action Group
- Te Kakano
- Southern Lakes Regenerative Recovery Advisory Group
- SUC Free Wānaka
- WAI Wānaka
- Wastebusters
- Whaiao RCE Otago

### 2021

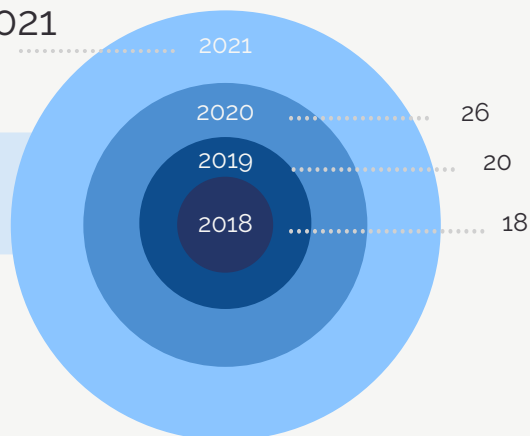
- Wao Summit 2021
- Harvest Feast 2021
- Support to Food for Love
- WAI Wānaka Food & Fibre programme at Summit
- Our Place at the Wānaka A&P Show
- Sustainable Communities Tour
- Rethink Channel (ybc.tv)
- Southern Lakes UN Youth Summit
- Whaiao with Enviroschools & EBNZ earth build workshops
- CAI program for schools launched
- Beach Clean-Up at Summit
- Construction Waste workshop funding, Waste Minimisation Fund
- NZIA accredited education provider
- Host for Wool Roundtable discussion on circular economy
- Gen Wao repair & sexual wellness event
- CAI funding received
- 144 attendees at Climate Action Workshops
- 38 Businesses sign up to CAI
- 9 Schools sign up to CAI
- Get SMART working group established + Survey + Bikeevember
- Wao response to QLDC 10 Year Plan
- Destination Queenstown
- Lake Wānaka Tourism
- Queenstown Lakes District Council
- Southern Lakes Regenerative Recovery Advisory Group
- SUC Free Wānaka
- Te Kakano
- Wastebusters
- WAI Wānaka
- Whaiao RCE Otago



# 09 Our Progress

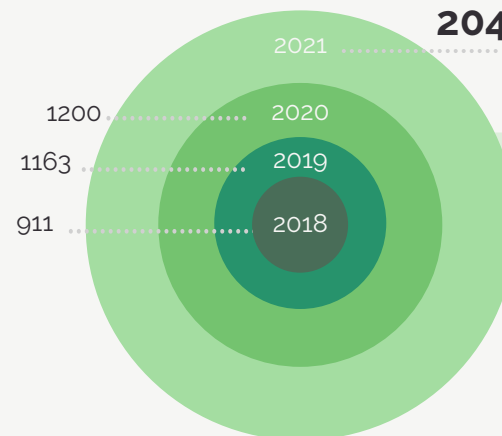
## 42 Events in 2021

**62% increase**  
from 2020



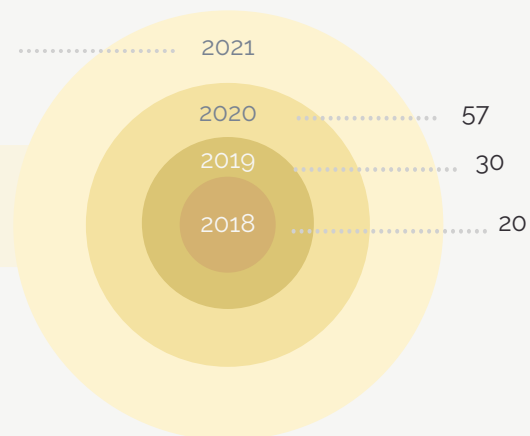
## 2046 Attendees in 2021

**71% increase**  
from 2020



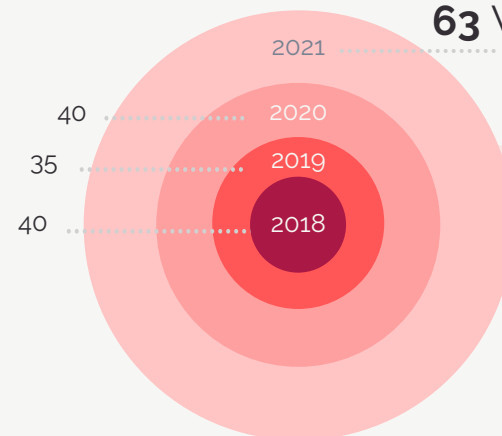
## 96 Speakers & Experts in 2021\*

**68% increase**  
from 2020



## 63 Volunteers in 2021\*

**57% increase**  
from 2020



\*This only includes Wao Summit volunteers and speakers & experts

# 10 Priorities

## 1 Accelerate to Carbon Zero

Wao is addressing the need to create action to drastically reduce carbon emissions in the district and beyond. Education plays a large role in this. The climate action workshops held in the Wao Summit 2021 have snowballed into the grant-funded [Climate Action Initiative](#) (see page 31). These workshops are equipping the district with the tools for a low carbon future.

We are also monitoring the impacts of our own events and mitigating any adverse impacts. Partnering with [Te Kakano](#), we are offsetting emissions and contributing to biodiversity regeneration (see page 25 for Wao Summit GHG Footprint).

## 2 Partnership & Collaboration

Partnership and collaboration are at the core of what we do. With the Wao Summit we bring in regional leaders to cross pollinate ideas and foster learning, while our working groups unite industry change makers toward achieving common goals.

Our board members advocate the values of Wao across the region in various groups, such as the [Climate Reference Group](#), the [Regenerative Recovery Advisory Group](#), [Whaiao Regional Centre of Expertise Otago](#), [WAI Wānaka](#), [Queenstown Lakes District Council](#), [Lake Wānaka Tourism](#) & [Destination Queenstown](#) (see page 32).



Pictured: Monique Kelly at Narrative of Place & How It Shapes People, Wao Summit 2021

## 3 Biosphere Rights

We aim to expose the issues that affect us all, thereby empowering our community. Many of us are familiar with social issue violations, but equally important is understanding our biosphere rights and that it is a human right to live in a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

Our programme of diverse events throughout the year provides a level of understanding around these issues for our community and equips them with the tools to take action.





Pictured: Ernie the Tuna (long finned eel), filled with some of the waste from the Wānaka Beach Clean Up, Wao Summit 2021

# 4 Mainstream Sustainability

The term "sustainability" has moved into the mainstream. Rising attendance and engagement year on year at Wao events and projects is a testament to this. The goal of Wao is not to convert the converted, but to create a ripple effect, open up the discourse and normalise sustainable and regenerative thinking for all.

The **Wao Summit** (see page 21) makes this accessible for people from all walks of life. We provide inspiring discussion, informative workshops and have engaged with over 5000 people through events alone since 2018.

By establishing a framework for **sector driven change**, we are empowering industries to lead the change they

want to see. We have four working groups; [Better Building](#) (page 29), [Generation Wao](#) (page 28), [Get SMART](#) (page 27) and the [Climate Action Initiative](#) (page 31).

We are **raising awareness** and increasing understanding about the interconnections between business, environment & community through our events and projects.

We ensure that sustainability is a core **topic of conversation** within the district, and we do this through advocacy. The Sustainable Development Goals are all interwoven, whether the topic relates to a social, environmental or economic facet.



# 11 Funding

As with any grassroots non-for-profit organisation, funding is crucial to the delivery of our objectives. After three years of being in a 'start-up' phase of the organisations development, supported by our business sponsors and volunteer labour, proving the need, finding solutions to those needs and building our reputation and mana within the community, 2021 saw a growth in support from institutional funders.

The **Southern Lakes Regional Events Fund (REF)** granted significant funding to Wao in 2021, which allowed us to substantially increase our capacity and reach. With joint objectives, it was a privilege to have the REF involved not only as funders, but the organisations managing the fund, in particular **Destination Queenstown** and **Lake Wānaka Tourism**, were also important partners in helping achieve our purpose with a focus on regenerative tourism. Along with **Queenstown Lakes District Council**, they have also financed the delivery of the Climate Action Initiative (see page 31) putting local businesses and schools through a programme to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the district. **Central Lakes Trust** was another significant enabler, providing funding for the 2021 Wao Summit. We are incredibly grateful for the



Pictured: (Grow Wānaka) Sustainable Communities Tour, Wao Summit 2021

support provided by the major funders and the trust they have put in us to deliver on our purpose.

Finally, **to all of the businesses, big and small**, that have sponsored us financially or through their in-kind support, thank you. It is incredible to see how many businesses have, or are bringing, purpose beyond profit into their core operations. We have benefited from this and together helped to grow a unique community where we are genuinely bringing the values of regenerative thinking, being kaitiakitanga of this place, into how we do things here.

# 12 Thank you

The lynch pin to embedding tangible action is partnership. There are countless groups, individuals and partners to thank for supporting Wao over the years. Wao would like to acknowledge the support received in 2021 alone, without which we would not have achieved the incredible impact we did in the last year.

## Funders

### Wao Summit 2021

Central Lakes Trust  
Southern Lakes Regional  
Events Fund:  
Lake Wānaka Tourism  
Destination Queenstown  
Tourism Central Otago

### Climate Action Initiative

Queenstown Lakes District Council  
Lake Wānaka Tourism  
Destination Queenstown

## Partners & Sponsors

### Pollination Partners

Devold  
Lake Wānaka Tourism  
WAI Wānaka  
Whaiao RCE  
Ybc.tv

### Hive Sponsors

Placemakers  
Wānaka Solar

### Honey Bee Sponsors

Bremworth Ltd.  
Campaign For Wool  
Mitre 10 Mega Wānaka  
MONS Royale

### Nectar Patrons

Applied Movement  
Balanced Accounting  
Cardrona/Treble Cone  
Conscious  
Cook Brothers  
Dunlop Builders  
Ecotricity  
Environmental Accounting Services  
Forage & Feast  
Freshlink  
Glendhu Station  
Hiberna  
Infinite Energy  
Integrity Homes  
Lake Hāwea Station  
Metal Works  
Revology  
University of Otago  
Water Bar





# 13 Wao Team

We wouldn't be here without some key people who volunteered their time and expertise to run events and contributed to the success of Wao and the community. Thank you to everyone who has contributed. Special mention goes to the following:

Amanda Dalglish  
Annabel Burgess  
Alex Leckirzaharic  
Alison Caughey  
Ambrose Ledbrook  
Andy Caughey  
Annabel Burgess  
Ben Acland & team  
Ben Pennycuik  
Ben Wallbank  
Berit Landgraf  
Biddi Rowley  
Brad Rowe  
Brona Parsons  
Camilla Rutherford  
Chrissi Petit & Team Green  
Dan Beck  
David Chambers  
Donnelle & Bryce Dunlop  
Dion Andrews  
Erin & Jess

Fred Leeder  
Geoff Tomkins  
Georgina Wadsworth  
Gina Dempster  
Gizelle Regan  
Jacinta Fitzgerald  
Jan Sippel  
Joel Herbert & team  
Jessica Evers  
Hazel Murray  
Kath Buttar  
Kirsty Taylor  
Lara & Sam Metcalfe  
Lillian Cotter  
Linda Buttle  
Linda Montgomery  
Lorane Verpillot  
Mandy Bell  
Mark Sinclair  
Naomi Lindsay  
Natalie Norman

Nicola Cross  
Penelope Bell  
Pete & Sally Bonifant  
Pete Cousins  
Pierre Marasti  
Prue Kane  
Rhea Selwan  
Ron Bull  
Rory McNamara  
Ruth Blunt  
Sally Norman  
Scarlett Norman  
Shelby Wilson  
Sierra Alef-Defoe  
Sophie Ward  
Stephen Batstone  
Tim Barke  
Tim Davis  
Tim Jones  
Vicki Spearing

# 63+ EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Wao is fortunate to have members of the public put their hand up to get involved with the events; from ticketing, audio and visual running, professional photography, to event staging. This year we had over 63 event volunteers.

# 3k+ VOLUNTEER & WAO TEAM HOURS

Our team of employees and volunteers have a multitude of valuable skills to keep the charitable trust running. 2021 has racked up over 3000 hours of voluntary time - from the team working in the background, to those that give their time to the individual events.

Wao simply wouldn't have the capacity to pull it off without our incredible volunteer army. Thank you all!

Pictured: Long Lunch, Wao Summit 2021



# 14

## How We Delivered

Wao delivers on its priorities through a number of means including working groups, events, projects and partnership with other groups. This page summarises the 2021 activities with more details given in the following pages.

### 42

#### EVENTS 2021

Getting into the community is core to what we do and hosting events are key to this. More information on events can be found pages 18-26.

### 3

#### WORKING GROUPS

Working groups are collaborative groups which have formed around a key priority. More information on working groups can be found on pages 27-29.

[Better Building](#)

[Generation Wao](#)

[Get SMART, Get Moving](#)

### 3

#### CORE PROJECTS

It is exciting to see a number of projects kicking off in 2021, either through grant funding or as part of partnerships. More information on our projects can be found on pages 30-31.

[Climate Action Initiative](#)

[Construction Waste Workshops](#)

[Rethink Channel](#)

### 16

#### KEY PARTNERSHIPS

These are key groups in the community, each involved in amazing things, that we have been privileged to work alongside in 2021. Scroll through to page 32 to read more about these organisations and their work.

Pictured: Ewan Mackie at the Back To Life Hui, Wao Summit 2021





# 15

## Events Throughout 2021

# 42

### EVENTS

One of the ways we deliver on our goals is through key events throughout the year. Despite continued disruptions from COVID-19, Wao were able to put on almost every event planned for 2021.

The year kicked off with the **Autumn Harvest Festival** in April, when we teamed up with the annual Wānaka Apple Drive, organised by Sophie Ward and Naomi Lindsay, to deliver a weekend focused on food and community connection. The **Wao Harvest Lunch** was held out at the beautiful Rippon Hall. Local chefs Brona from Federal Diner and Sam with his team from Raspberry Creek Catering volunteered their time and pulled together a multi-course lunch using local produce harvested in and donated by the community. All proceeds from ticket sales going to Wānaka charity [Food For Love](#) who provide meals for families in need in the Upper Clutha.

**Gen Wao** hosted two events in April and May, aimed at engaging young adults in Wānaka - a repair and care for clothing workshop, in collaboration with Revology and Wastebusters and a discussion with sexual wellness coach Laura Ellen.

The second annual United Nations **(UN) Youth Summit** followed in July. Wao in collaboration with the Otago branch of UN Youth invited 90 students from Central Otago District and Queenstown Lakes District to Wānaka to discuss and debate a crisis situation where the influence of media, misinformation and disinformation were core to the key learnings.





# 16

## Speakers & Experts

# 96

## SPEAKERS & EXPERTS

The team at Wao worked hard to bring incredible thought leaders, both local and national, to our events. The Wao Summit 2021 included an impressive 96 speakers, experts and facilitators volunteering their time, from the likes of Lawyers for Climate Action Jenny Cooper, Afghan refugee and Fulbright Scholar Abbas Nazari, as well as a wide range of youth leadership with young film makers Savannah Walker and Siobhan O'Connor. Each shared their diverse backgrounds and knowledge from various sectors, including waste, food & fibre, impact investing, circular economy, building, climate action and migration, fashion and kaupapa Māori. Thank you to everyone who accepted our invitation!

Abbas Nazari  
Alex Baker  
Andrew Dalziel  
Anna Mckay  
Annabel Burgess  
Ash Rabel  
Barry Coates  
Becky Lloyd  
Ben Acland  
Billy Hunt  
Briony McKenzie  
Brona Parsons  
Carly Green  
Caroline Thalund  
Catrin Smith  
Chloe Rowe  
Claire Keeling  
Darren Rewi  
David Chambers  
David Norton  
David Woods  
Dean Dunning  
Delia Bellaby  
Dennis Dowling  
Elisha Watson  
Elizabeth Guthrey  
Esther Whitehead  
Ewan Mackie  
Felicity Thomas  
Fiona Clements  
Florence Micoud  
Friends of Bullock Creek representative  
Gina Dempster  
Glenn Coates  
Hamish Mckay  
Hon Damien O'Connor  
Isabel Huther  
Jacinta FitzGerald

James Brasington  
Jen Anderson  
Jenny Cooper  
Jodie Kuntzsch  
John Campbell  
John Darby  
John Rodwell  
Natalie Norman  
Kath Buttar  
Kelly Forster  
Leslie Van Gelder  
Lillian Cotter  
Lorane Verpillot  
Madeline Sharpe  
Malcolm Dodds  
Mandy Bell  
Peri Drysdale  
Markus Hermanns  
Mary Hunt  
Maureen Mooney  
Megan Williams  
Michelle Chambers  
Michelle Morss  
Kate Smith  
Monique Kelly  
Sarah Jamieson  
Paul Abbot  
Paulette Tamati-Elliffe  
Simon Stokes  
Pierre Marasti  
Rachel Brooking  
Rachel Cooper  
Maree Baker Galloway  
Mike Casey  
Ray O'Brien  
Robyn Guyton  
Rohan MacMahon  
Ron Bull  
Sam Mann

Sam Rodney-Hudson  
Samantha Jones  
Rhea Selwan  
Richard Burdon  
Savannah Walker  
Tim Barke  
Sarah Burdon  
Siobhan O'Connor  
Stacey Anderson  
Stephen Batstone

Sophie Handford  
Tim Baty  
Tim Jones  
Tom Gerlach  
Trent Yeo  
Vicki Spearing  
Wānaka Community Workshop  
Wānaka Recreation Centre  
William Bakker



Pictured: Leslie Van Gelder at Narrative or Place & How It Shapes People, Wao Summit 2021

# 17 Our Reach



Pictured: Ron Bull at the Long Lunch, Wao Summit 2021

# 2046

## PARTICIPANTS

Each year without fail we increase our reach and impact. Despite another year of significant disruptions from COVID-19, in 2021 over 2000 people from the Southern Lakes community and beyond attended a Wao event.

In 2021 we saw our audience start to shift. The Wao Summit started as a predominantly local event for the Wānaka community. To be agile in a pandemic environment, the Wao team implemented live streaming and online offerings for the event. Prior to this, the team pushed to bring those from outside the Southern Lakes District to Wānaka for the event. As a result, we had a combination of attendees tuning in online as well as in person locally and from outside the region, such as Tauranga, Wellington, Canterbury, Southland, wider Otago and even overseas.

One of the core values of Wao is **Whanaungatanga**, which to us means leaving no one behind. With such a mix of events that appeal to all walks of life, our participants vary in age, gender, interests and backgrounds. Our audiences include school kids, young adults, parents, grandparents, those in the building and construction, rural, hospitality, tourism, business, non-profit and public sectors.



# 18 Wao Summit 2021

The Wao Summit is our pinnacle event for the year. It provides businesses, individuals and the community at large with a time to look how far we have come in the last year, see where we are at now and set priorities for the next year. It is the drumbeat for action.

The week began and ended out at Glendhu Station Woolshed and was book ended with with Narrative of Place on the Tuesday and a Long Lunch on the Sunday. Overlooking Lake Wānaka, Ron Bull, Paulette Tamati-Elliffe and Leslie Van Gelder set the scene for the week ahead, placing us in this space by talking about the footsteps that walked before us, including those of **mana whenua** and humanity as a whole and our **place as a species within the natural environment**. Ron, along with Robyn Guyton, then concluded the Summit focusing on **food security** and **community connection** over a Long Lunch using locally sourced produce, acknowledging the mana of the week.

Day one workshops and talks kicked off with **regenerative tourism**, starting with a hui bringing together tourism operators from across the region and beyond, prioritising action as an industry experiencing a global reset, followed by a community discussion. Operators were then invited to attend a **greenhouse gas emissions** calculation and reductions workshop.

Day two and three began the Better Building program, with a Construction Waste 101 workshop out at the Wānaka Community Workshop, addressing the **problem of construction waste**, followed by 102 the next day, setting up a plan. 103 took architects and designers steps before the construction phase to look at **designing out waste**. The annual Better Building evening explored how good urban design can create better **connected and equitable communities**, as well as a panel on **energy resilience**.



Pictured: Bidli Rowley at the Long Lunch, Wao Summit 2021

A focus on wool and other natural fibres threaded itself through a number of conversations including that on slow fashion and building. The **Circular Wool Discussion** roundtable with industry leaders honed in on some of the challenges and solutions to bringing the wool industry into the **circular economy mindset**.



“

Firstly – I wanted to say FANTASTIC job at the Summit. The sessions I went to were fantastic – but I also spoke to a lot of people after the event and have had such great feedback from so many different people! – Kate Meyer, Planetary Accounting Network (PAN)



Pictured: Destination Management Plan display from Lake Wānaka Tourism. Photography: [Kirsty Taylor](#)

The evening talks throughout the week included inspiring speakers speaking to the **climate emergency** – both from the youth and legal perspective and **impact investing**, delving into how the financial world is addressing environmental and social challenges. Stories of Collective Intelligence drew the connections between **incredible local initiatives**, and the people driving them. Another discussion looked at **mental health in an age of overwhelm**. Moving a number of events online mid-week due to COVID-19 cases arising in the South Island, the annual fashion and textiles talk was held online with a panel of experts on how we **buy less, and buy better**.

Day three saw a series of **greenhouse gas** workshops, this time for building, retail, hospitality and business, as well as a workshop for builders and designers on **embodied carbon** in building materials.

Day four and five was a deep-dive into Food & Fibre, led by WAI Wānaka. The day started with an **indigenous biodiversity** workshop, which

flowed into a greenhouse gas emissions workshop for agriculture and another workshop on **mitigating emissions through forestry**. The annual Food & Fibre evening delved into innovation in the rural food sector followed by a breakfast event with updates on **climate for the rural sector**.

A screening of For The Blue, a film by a group of young kiwis exposes the nations impact on **plastic waste** globally, the challenges we face as a country followed by a frank, informative discussion by panel members afterwards.

Day 5 was packed with tours. The second Food & Fibre Farm Tours took attendees on an exclusive peek into our local growers worlds, showcasing local efforts towards **planting, biodiversity and water monitoring**. The Sustainable Communities Tour on the other hand focused on the urban side of town, taking attendees via bike to 15 Wānaka locations, visiting people and places who make this town a **thriving, sustainable community** (see more on page 23).

Utterly loved Wao! I attended a couple of the talks and loved them, plus have already had some very meaningful conversations in relation to reducing our wastage further. – Alexis Fletcher-Reid, Kekoa

”

# 19 Sustainable Communities Tour

What does a sustainable community look like? We don't need to look into the distant future to see what is already being done right here, and now. The Sustainable Communities Tour was launched in the Wao Summit 2021 to take the community around Wānaka visiting people and places who make this town a thriving, sustainable community.



Pictured: (left) Te Kākano, (right) Wānaka Backyard Trappers, Sustainable Communities Tour, Wao Summit 2021



The best part? It was all done on bike (or electric vehicle for those who could not bike), exploring 15 locations around Wānaka looking at energy efficiency and sustainable building techniques in select homes and land developments, local food resilience and the impacts of urban life on biodiversity.

This tour made us realise how incredible it would be to have this as a tour that anyone can do at anytime. When we talk about ways to connect not only locals but also visitors to the community, this provides an exponential learning opportunity. Any funders who would like to contribute to getting permanent QR codes for community hotspots and maps organised, please get in touch! For other groups, the idea can be replicated and scaled anywhere. Get in touch if you want to find out more.

Check out a short clip of the tour [here](#).



# 20 Youth Events



Pictured: Wānaka Primary School Beach Clean Up, Wao Summit 2021

2021 has been a great year for youth involvement. Wao's mission is to educate, inspire and enable all ages of the community, from 0-99. Being able to engage with school age children ensures inclusivity and that we are taking an all of community approach.

Starting with primary school age, at the Wao Summit we were able to host Wānaka kids for a Wānaka **beach and surrounds clean up**, as well as **Earth Building sessions** run by **Whaiao RCE** and **Enviroschools**. The **Sustainable Communities Tour** was also enjoyed by kids and their families, taking them around by bike to spots they may never have visited in their own backyard.

For the high schoolers, the **UN Youth Summit** engaged students from Wānaka, Queenstown and Cromwell for a day of strategic thinking, learning about global systems and issues.

Now with the Climate Action Initiative kicking off with the schools, students will have the opportunity to learn their school greenhouse gas number and design action plans with school senior leadership teams to reduce them.



Pictured: Te Kura O Take Kārara Earth Building Workshop for Kids, Wao Summit 2021



# 21 Wao Summit 2021

## Greenhouse Gas Footprint

Wao Trustee Dr. Carly Green and her team at Environmental Accounting Services (EAS) has conducted a greenhouse gas (GHG) footprint report of the Wao Summit 2021 which ran over 6 days in October 2021. The GHGs from this event were estimated from travel and accommodation related to facilitators and volunteers, staff travel, waste produced over the week, and electricity emissions from facilities used. The emissions from participants travelling to the events were not included.

We estimate our GHG impact so that we can understand our contribution and work through options to reduce emissions where possible. To contribute to biodiversity we donate to the **Te Kakano Aotearoa Trust** who operate in Wānaka specialising in propagating plants of local origin in support of native habitat restoration. Wao purchased 31 trees from Te Kakano, and the board members will be planting the trees themselves in 2022.



Pictured: Food scraps for worm farm from Wao Summit 2021

The breakdown of GHG emissions is presented in Tables 1 & 2. It is estimated that the Wao Summit 2021 contributed 1.95 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) as a result of the 6 day event (which is a 35% net decrease in GHG emissions from the Wao Reset Summit 2020). Our policy of using local suppliers wherever possible, zero waste, and speakers being unable to fly to the event meant a significant reduction in GHG emissions. This provides us with learnings we will take into the 2022 event and the future.

Pictured: Ewan Mackie at Stories of Collective Intelligence, Wao Summit 2021



Table 1: Total Emissions by Scope	
Scope	Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)
Scope 1 - Direct Emissions	0
Scope 2 - Emissions from Purchased Electricity	0
Scope 3 - Indirect Emissions	1.96
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.96</b>

Table 2: Emissions by Activity				
Activity	Quantity	Unit	Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	% of Total
Third Party Electricity	1681.92	kWh	0.17	8.69%
Hotel NZ	12	Nights	0.15	7.83%
Domestic Flights	8568	km	1.11	56.64%
Staff Commute Petrol (Distance)	630.2	km	0.17	8.50%
Staff Commute Diesel (Distance)	19.8	km	0.01	0.27%
Staff Commute EV Car	230.4	km	0.01	0.31%
Waste to Landfill	8	kg	0.01	0.48%
Organic Waste Composting	20	kg	0	0.18%
Petrol for Transport (Third Party)	1267.5	km	0.34	17.10%
<b>Total</b>			<b>1.96</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



# 22 Get SMART, Get Moving

In 2021 Wao kicked off a new campaign called **Get SMART** (Sustainable Modes of Active and Resourceful Travel), **Get Moving** to change the way we move in Wānaka and surrounding areas. Transport emissions make up over 50 percent of our total emissions as a district and changing the way we move is one of the easiest ways we can make an impact on reducing these.

The group consists of community members passionate about modal shift and have undertaken a number of projects under the [Get SMART, Get Moving](#) campaign. The campaign started with a **survey** to find out where the barriers and opportunities are lying in and around transport and to track



Pictured: Get SMART team members at the Wao Summit 2021

our impact over time to see how long it takes us to flip the fleet. The group also ran a series of events in November as part of **Bikevember** as well as a **28 Reasons to Bike** social media campaign as part of the **February Aotearoa Bike Challenge**.

The next steps for the group are to analyse the survey results for how and why we are getting around, organise another bike month in October alongside the Wao Summit 2022, collaborate with our partners, such as **Link Upper Clutha** to help create a safe transport system and reduce impacts on the climate. The group also plan to work with **Mount Aspiring College's Team Green** to change the way kids and adults are travelling to and from school, as well as advocacy for decarbonising the national fleet through electric vehicles, boats and bikes.



# 23 Gen Wao

4  
EVENTS

250  
ATTENDEES

Started in 2020 to provide a space for the younger generation to connect. A space for like-minded individuals in their 20's to collaborate, bounce ideas off one another and keep the conversation going. An extension of Wao, the groups purpose morphed into a place of inclusivity for all age demographics, with the twist of being organised by the younger voices in town.

The group has run events from **Don't Know S\*\*t About Politics**, a talk about understanding New Zealand politics ahead of the 2020 elections, to **Ripped Jeans and Holey Socks**, a clothing mend and repair workshop. Earlier in 2020 the group hosted a chat about **mental health** and resilience strategies, with local Wānaka legends talking through their experiences with mental health. And finally, a **discussion around sexual wellness**, learning about connection, communication and breaking down the barriers of sex as taboo.



Pictured: Ripped Jeans and Holey Socks Gen Wao workshop

# 24 Better Building

Established following the first Wao Summit in October 2018, the Better Building Working Group's mission was to partner with like-minded individuals and businesses and see how to make the sector more sustainable. The three points of focus were raising awareness around energy efficient homes; decreasing construction & demolition waste; and addressing the mental health and wellbeing of those working in the sector.

2021 brought it's own challenges and opportunities. Wao was awarded money from the **Waste Minimisation Community Fund** to run a series of **workshops for construction waste**. These workshops address the problem, how to set up a waste minimisation plan and how to design out waste. Joel Herbert, Trade Sales Manager at Placemakers and a founding member of the group, talked during the Construction Waste 101 Workshop about the increasing supply pressures builders are facing and the growing need to be resourceful with materials.

Ben Acland, a founding member of the Working Group along with Gwilym Griffith-Jones established the [Wānaka Community Workshop](#) (WCW), a key activity Ben had raised to address both materials waste, mental health and community connection.



Pictured: Construction Waste 101: What's The Problem, Wao Summit 2021

Wao became a **New Zealand Institute of Architects** approved education provider for its building workshops and talks at the Wao Summit, recognising their impact in advancing the conversations.

This year the focus was on how urban design can improve health outcomes and energy resilience. The Sustainable Communities Tour integrated examples of good urban design, visiting [Bellbird Developments](#), inspiring conscious community development, which incentivises the building of energy efficient homes, and looked at an example of a low emissions, solar household with [Dean Dunning](#) and his team at Wānaka Solar.

# 25

## ReThink Channel

During a detailed review of our activities in 2019, we recognised that Wao could amplify the work we do at our events, workshops and annual summit via clever use of digital media. We formed a collaboration with yBC.tv to focus specifically on extending our reach via digital media through capturing and sharing the brilliant thinking and experience of experts and commentators from around the country, and indeed the world.

During 2020 the team at yBC began interviewing dozens of international leaders in regenerative thinking, climate change,

grassroots movements and activism, the politics of change, economic theory, circular economy and numerous other topics close to the heart of our work to educate, inspire and enable New Zealanders. By the end of 2020, the yBC team had captured dozens of hours of interviews and was ready to start with editing and programming.

In June, 2021, yBC launched [ReThink : Regenerate](#), a video series which focuses on the big, bold, joined up thinking required to secure a better future for all of us. The premise of the series is that Covid-19 has provided an opportunity for us to pause, breathe and rethink our future. The series covers a range of topics which reimagine a world where a drive towards "unchecked consumption" is replaced by the principle of regeneration underpinning every aspect of our lives.

The first five episodes, featuring around 20 experts, were published during 2021, with further shoots taking place in Wānaka and at the University of Otago in Dunedin. We now have high quality content from well over 50 experts. We plan to work with yBC in 2022 and beyond to create more content for ReThink : Regenerate to reach more people, inspire action and change and enable New Zealanders to make a difference, whether they can attend our events in person or not.

Click [here](#) to view the episodes.



Pictured: Donnelle Dunlop talking construction waste on the ReThink Channel



# 26 Climate Action Initiative

## Whakawhiti Ara Transition Pathway

In September of 2021, a proposal put forth by Wao to support greenhouse gas reductions for businesses and schools in the Queenstown Lakes District was granted funding by Queenstown Lakes District Council, Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism.

The initiative is split into two phases: **'Calculate for Climate'** provides the tools to understand and measure greenhouse gases within a business or school. The second phase, **'Fast Track to Neutral'** involves a series of workshops and resources to help participants work through emission reduction strategies and develop their own reduction response plan.

The criteria for the businesses were those within the tourism ecosystem (accommodation, tourism operators, hospitality, services, transport and food manufacturers). The programme received overwhelming response from 60 businesses, with a total of 47 businesses completing the first phase, either through Wao or other programmes. At the time of writing this report, the second phase is due to commence for the businesses. The schools programme is in the early stages of phase 1, with 9 schools engaged so far. The programme is due to be complete in May of 2022, with its continuation to be determined based on the success and impact of this pilot programme. Find out more about the programme [here](#).



# 27 Advocacy & Partnership

One of the golden rules of the SDGs when they were adopted is that all goals need to be viewed as interconnected and not in isolation. This underlines the interconnected nature of our action towards creating not just self-sustaining, but also regenerative communities, as well as the fundamental truth about the interconnected nature of all species and the planet. Goal 17, Partnership, is the lynch pin, the mycelium (roots) in our community, creating the networks which help connect people, communities and action towards achieving our collective goals.

Wao has had volunteer members on the Queenstown Lakes District Council formed [Climate Reference Group](#), whose purpose is to implement the district Climate Action Plan, as well as the [Regenerative Recovery Advisory Group](#) whose purpose is to contribute to the evolution and achievement of the Recovery Plan ([final report here](#)). Wao has also been an active member of [Whaiao RCE Otago](#), a United Nations recognised organisation set up to advance education for sustainable development. Wao has been privileged to have worked alongside a number of local and national organisations. Please click through to find out the incredible work they are doing and impact they are creating.

[Community Networks Wānaka](#)  
[Destination Queenstown](#)  
[Food For Love](#)  
[Ignite Wānaka Chamber of Commerce](#)  
[Kahu Youth Trust](#)  
[Lake Wānaka Tourism](#)  
[Link Upper Clutha](#)  
[Plastic Free Wānaka / SUC Free](#)

[Queenstown Lakes District Council](#)  
[Sustainable Queenstown](#)  
[Te Kāhui Whaihanga NZ Institute of Architects](#)  
[Te Kakano Aotearoa Trust](#)  
[WAI Wānaka](#)  
[Wānaka Community Workshop](#)  
[Wastebusters](#)  
[Ybc.tv](#)



Pictured: (Wastebusters) Sustainable Communities Tour, Wao Summit 2021

# 28 What Next?

In recent years Wānaka has begun to make a name for itself as a hub for sustainability. Both historically and spiritually Wānaka is known as a place of learning. With the demand for urgent change and action, the Queenstown Lakes District has the opportunity to become a leader in sustainable, regenerative thinking and action.

The next decade will be one of transition. We need to change the way we move, consume and behave. This in itself is not easy but looking back over the last four years, we are already on the path.

The wider geo-political environment and global pandemic has both increased pressures as well as provided us with opportunities to accelerate change. Being energy and resource efficient is now not only about climate, but also about insulating ourselves against reliance on fossil fuels. It also brings into sharp relief our need to focus on food resilience and security and the importance of partnership and connection.

This being said, our **three priorities in 2022** are **how we eat, how we move** and **how we connect**.

Our programme for 2022 will begin in May with our first ever Wao Film Festival, to be held in Wānaka.

Following two successful UN Youth Summits, COVID permitting, we are looking to work with the schools to deliver a student event to develop creativity, leadership and future thinking.

Throughout the year we intend to host a handful of "Green Drinks", with the purpose of providing more opportunity for connection and touch points in the year. These will be held in locations throughout the district and will be planned in collaboration with our partners.

Finally, in October the Wao Summit 2022 will focus on food security and resilience, modal shift and greater district-wide connectivity and awareness. We hope to strengthen our online offerings to broaden and develop our talks, workshops and events.

Pictured: Ben Acland (Wānaka Community Workshop) at Construction Waste 102: Setting Up A Plan, Wao Summit 2021





# 29 Arohanui

Thank you for taking the time to read the 2021 Wao Annual Impact Report. If you'd like to discuss anything in the report in more depth you can get in touch with us on [kiaora@wao.co.nz](mailto:kiaora@wao.co.nz)

We cannot emphasise enough the multitude of incredible people involved with Wao, so we sincerely hope we haven't missed anyone in the list below. A huge thank you to:

- Our community – without you we would not be here, thank you for the energy and support that keeps us moving.
- Our team – for being awesome and giving up your valuable time for the cause.
- Our partners – for enabling us to deliver.



Pictured: Sustainable Communities Tour, Wao Summit 2021