

# Pūrongo Tōnuitanga Sustainability Report 2025

Growing thriving  
communities







# Ngā kai o roto

## Contents

**4**

### **Climate Action**

Our Journey to Date  
Climate Action Plan

**8**

### **Goal 1: Carbon Emissions**

Carbon Emissions Performance  
2025 Emissions Breakdown  
Emission Reduction Initiatives

**12**

### **Offsetting Carbon Emissions**

**14**

### **Goal 2: Sustainable Investment**

2024 Investment Activity Performance  
Portfolio Analysis  
Quarterly ESG Spotlight  
– NZ Bonds

**18**

### **Goal 3: Supporting Communities to Mitigate Climate Change**

Practicing Kaitiakitanga

**20**

### **2025 Granting Highlights**

**26**

### **Hawke's Bay Nature Fund – A Legacy for Biodiversity**

**Eastern  
& Central**  
Community Trust





# Climate Action

At Eastern and Central Community Trust (ECCT), sustainability is more than a goal—it's a responsibility we embrace with urgency and purpose. As climate change continues to impact our communities through extreme weather events, biodiversity loss, and social inequities, we are taking bold, measurable steps to drive change. Guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi and our Climate Action Plan, ECCT is proud to report significant progress: from achieving Toitū Net Carbon Zero certification over three years, to investing over \$1.1 million in environmental grants, and embedding climate resilience into every corner of our operations. This report reflects our journey, our impact, and our unwavering commitment to a just transition for the people and places we serve.





## Our Journey to Date

Eastern and Central Community Trust (ECCT) recognised the significant threat posed by climate change, and in late 2021, ECCT Trustees signed the Funder's Commitment to Climate Action led by Climate Action Aotearoa. This is a collaborative initiative that brings together philanthropic funders committed to addressing the climate crisis through a tika (just) transition to a low carbon society. It is guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi and aims to support equitable, community-led climate action.



A plan was developed to strengthen our commitment, and a **Climate Change Action Plan was adopted by the trustees in December 2022**. This living document sets measurable targets, is reported on annually and is available on our website. The plan focuses on three core areas—operations, investments, and granting—providing a clear roadmap to reduce internal emissions, align our investment portfolio with climate goals, and embed climate considerations into funding decisions.

**The cornerstone of the initiative is a voluntary pledge with seven key commitments.**



**Reflecting Te Tiriti  
o Waitangi in all  
actions**



**Ensuring an  
equitable transition**



**Enabling community  
led leadership  
transition**



**Committing to  
the sharing of  
resources**



**Providing learning  
and growth  
opportunities for all  
trustees and staff**



**The decarbonisation  
of investments and  
operations**



**Reporting annually on  
our progress, in order  
to be accountable,  
and further our own  
development**









# CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

## **1. Embed Climate Responsibility Internally**

Foster a culture of climate responsibility by measuring and publicly reporting our greenhouse gas footprint, and working to reduce and offset emissions to achieve carbon neutrality.

## **2. Lead Through Responsible Investment**

Apply a robust, evidence-based approach to all new investments to reduce the carbon exposure of our portfolio over time, aiming for carbon neutrality by 2050.

## **3. Empower Communities for Climate Action**

Support communities across the Eastern and Central regions to understand, mitigate, and adapt to climate change impacts, while embedding climate action as a foundational principle in our funding framework.







## Goal 1: Carbon Emissions

ECCT began tracking carbon emissions in partnership with Toitū Envirocare in 2022, establishing FY2023 as our baseline year. This marked the beginning of a focused journey toward environmental accountability and sustainability.

In July 2023, ECCT proudly achieved Toitū Net Carbon Zero certification, a milestone that reflects our dedication to reducing our environmental impact. We have maintained this certification in subsequent years, demonstrating consistent progress and commitment.



# Carbon Emissions Performance

Over the past three years, ECCT has significantly reduced its carbon footprint. Our emissions tracking includes both direct and indirect sources, and the results speak for themselves:

Fiscal Year	Total Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	Reduction from Baseline YR
2022–2023 (Baseline)	25.6	-
2023–2024	20.9	18%
2024–2025	15.8	39%

This steady decrease reflects the effectiveness of our targeted initiatives and the collective effort of our team.

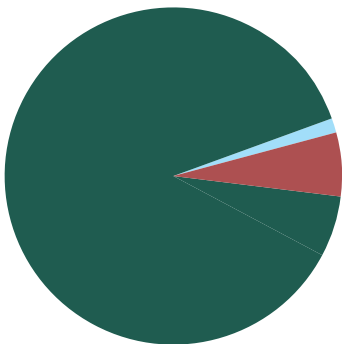
## 2024–2025 Emissions Breakdown

In the most recent fiscal year, **transport-related emissions** remain the dominant source of ECCT’s carbon output, particularly:

- **Air travel**, with larger aircraft contributing more significantly than smaller regional planes.
- **Petrol-powered vehicles**, used for travel across our six operating regions.
- **Accommodation**, associated with business travel for staff and trustees.

For 2024–2025, the chart below shows the breakdown by category, with transport-related emissions dominating—especially air travel and petrol-powered vehicles.

*Breakdown of our total carbon emissions in the last fiscal year (2024-2025).*



tCO<sub>2</sub>e by Category  
(1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025)

location-based method

- Direct emissions and removals: 1
- Indirect emissions from imported energy: 0.9
- Indirect emissions from transportation: 13.8
- Indirect emissions from products used by organisation: 0.2

**Total: 15.8**





# Our Carbon Emissions

Our carbon footprint comes from four key sources, as defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.



## 1. Direct Emissions

From our own operations, such as vehicle use



## 2. Indirect Emissions from Energy

Electricity generated offsite that powers our offices



## 3. Indirect Emissions from Transport

Primarily business travel by air and road



## 4. Indirect Emissions from Products

Covering office supplies and waste



## Emission Reduction Initiatives

Our partnership with Toitū Envirocare has provided valuable insights into our emissions profile, enabling us to take meaningful action. Key initiatives include:

- **Fleet Upgrade:** In March 2023, ECCT purchased two hybrid vehicles for business use. Staff and trustees are encouraged to transition to hybrid or electric vehicles where feasible.
- **Staff Engagement:** One staff member with a 60km daily commute upgraded to an electric vehicle, reducing individual emissions.
- **Programme Changes:** The Rangatahi youth organisation, which previously contributed significantly to travel-related emissions, ceased operations in 2024–2025, resulting in a notable reduction.
- **Renewable Energy:** Solar panels installed at our Hastings office in Q3 2023 have been operational for over a year. Monthly electricity statements show a significant offset in energy consumption.
- **Office Practices:** Staff are encouraged to adopt energy-saving habits, including turning off lights, managing thermostat settings, and reducing waste through recycling and making sensible travel choices.

## Looking Ahead

Reducing our carbon footprint is a team effort, and we remain committed to continuous improvement. With ongoing tracking through Toitū, strategic investments in clean technology, and everyday behavioural changes, ECCT is well-positioned to meet its sustainability goals.

We look forward to building on this momentum and contributing to a cleaner, more sustainable future for our communities.







# Offsetting Carbon Emissions

## Supporting Regenerative and Community-Led Projects

As part of our Toitū Net Carbon Zero certification, ECCT is committed to offsetting any unavoidable emissions through qualified carbon offset projects. These offsets are carefully selected in collaboration with Toitū Envirocare, ensuring they align with our values and contribute meaningfully to environmental and community wellbeing.

---

All offset projects were selected for their dual impact – environmental restoration and community empowerment. These initiatives reflect ECCT's commitment to

- Supporting biodiversity and ecological resilience
- Investing in projects that uplift local communities.

### 2023

#### Hinewai Reserve, Banks Peninsula

In 2023, ECCT purchased carbon credits supporting the Hinewai Reserve project on Banks Peninsula near Christchurch. This initiative focuses on native forest regeneration across more than 1,250 hectares of reserve land. The project uses gorse as a nursery species, enabling the natural return of native flora and fauna.

This project not only contributes to carbon sequestration but also plays a vital role in restoring regional biodiversity—an outcome that strongly aligns with ECCT's strategic goals.







## 2024

### Fair Trade – Birds, Bees, and Business

In 2024, with no suitable domestic offset options available, ECCT supported the Birds, Bees, and Business initiative through Fair Trade. This project operates in the African, aiming to:

- Restore native landscapes and biodiversity
- Provide habitat for millions of migratory birds
- Empower local women through the harvesting and production of Shea-based products

The planting of Shea trees not only supports ecological restoration but also creates sustainable economic opportunities for women-led enterprises in the region.

## 2025

### Permanent Forest Sink Initiative (PSFI) Owenga Reserve, and PSFI Tempello Biodiversity project.

Domestic offsets were once again available in 2025, and two projects in the South Island were selected:

- Owenga Reserve is the largest private conservation reserve on the Chatham Islands. The owners are descended from Moriori and 1400 hectares have been covenanted for conservation and carbon sequestration under the PSFI. Income from the sale of carbon credits aid in the protection of indigenous flora and fauna.
- Tempello biodiversity project is in Marlborough in the Wairau ecological region. It is a regenerate native forest that harbours Rifleman, Tomtit and South Island Robin and the owners have been implementing a conservation policy around weed and pest control.





## Goal 2: Sustainable Investments

### Decarbonising Our Investment Portfolio

As part of ECCT's Climate Action Plan and our commitment under the Funders Commitment to Climate Change Action, our second goal is to become a Sustainable Investor. A key priority within this commitment is to decarbonise our investments, and ECCT is actively working toward achieving carbon zero across our investment portfolio by 2050.

Climate action is now embedded within our Statement of Investment Policies and Objectives (SIPO), guiding our approach to responsible investment. We have begun prioritising sustainability and environmental responsibility across all portfolios, using our investment returns to support our community granting.





# 2024 Investment Activity and Performance

Throughout 2024, our Investment Advisor and Investment Managers were tasked with aligning our portfolio with our climate goals. Key developments and metrics include:

## **New Zealand Equities (16.8% of portfolio)**

- C&ESG score by Forsyth Barr (FB) rated B as of 31 March 2025, down from B+ in 2024
- Carbon intensity tracked via FB's in-house rating system
- 9% of companies held are involved in fossil fuels (unchanged from 2024)
- Companies with net-zero targets increased from 40% to 68%

## **International Equities (66.7% of portfolio)**

- MSCI ESG rating remained at BBB, with the score improving from 4.3 to 5.6
- Weighted Average Carbon Intensity (WACI) decreased from 53.3 to 41.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per \$1M revenue

## **New Zealand Bonds (16% of portfolio)**

- C&ESG rating remained at B+ as of 31 March 2025
- WACI decreased from 51.7 to 31.1
- Portfolio includes four energy companies involved in fossil fuels, all committed to net-zero by 2050

## **Private Equity (11% of portfolio)**

- NZ-based managers are now providing regular sustainability reports and using ESG reporting practices to track progress





# Portfolio Analysis

Listed Equities (65% of portfolio)

Since adopting our Net Zero Carbon policy in November 2022, ECCT’s equity portfolio has been repositioned to reduce exposure to high-emission companies. Carbon intensity is tracked using:

- 1. Forsyth Barr C&ESG rating for NZ equities
- 2. Sustainalytics (until March 2025) for Australian equities
- 3. MSCI ESG rating and WACI for US equities (from March 2025)

Date	FB C&ESG Rating	FB C&ESG Score	Sustainalytics Risk Score	WACI (tCO <sub>2</sub> e/\$1M revenue)
31 Mar 2023	B	64.70%	19 (Low)	105.3
31 Mar 2024	B+	65.20%	22.7 (Medium)	53.3
31 Mar 2025	B	60.80%	17.6 (Low)	42.1

Date	MSCI ESG Rating	MSCI ESG Score
31 Mar 2023	BBB	5.3
31 Mar 2024	BBB	4.3
31 Mar 2025	BBB	5.6



# Quarterly ESG Spotlight – NZ Bonds

Date	FB C&ESG Rating	FB C&ESG Score	WACI (tCO <sub>2</sub> e/\$1M revenue)
30 Jun 2024	A-	67.80%	51.7
30 Sep 2024	B+	67.35%	46.9
31 Dec 2024	B+	67.34%	32.0
31 Mar 2025	B+	67.07%	31.1

Bond Portfolio Metrics	Value
Companies involved in fossil fuels	6 (17%)
Companies reporting Scope 1 & 2 emissions	36 (100%)
Companies reporting Scope 3 emissions	34 (94%)
Companies with net-zero targets	11 (31%)
Companies deriving >50% revenue from climate change	0 (0%)

## Looking Ahead

ECCT remains committed to evolving its investment strategy to meet climate goals. We will continue to:

- Monitor and report on carbon intensity across all asset classes
- Engage with investment managers to improve ESG performance
- Prioritise investments that align with our climate resilience and biodiversity goals

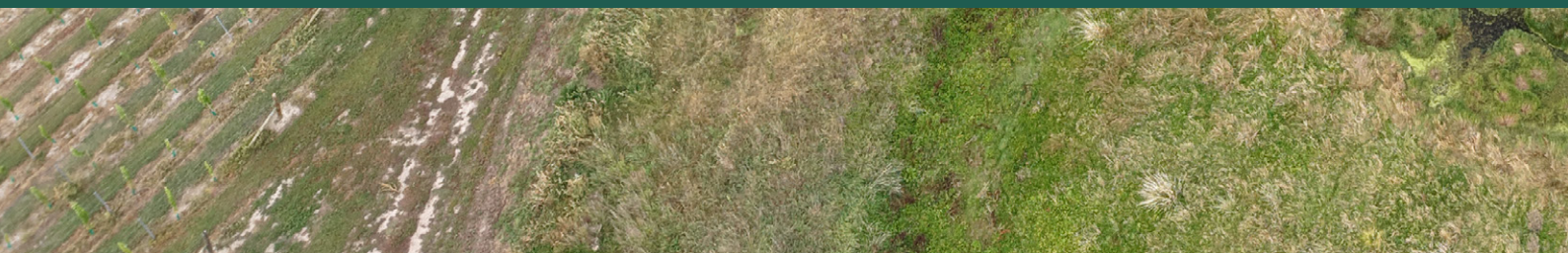
Our journey toward **carbon zero by 2050** is well underway, and we are proud to be using our capital to drive positive environmental and social outcomes.





## Goal 3: Supporting communities to mitigate climate change

The final goal under the Climate Action plan is to support our communities across the Eastern and Central regions to understand and mitigate their climate change impacts and grasp opportunities through embedding climate change as a foundational principle across our funding framework.







## Practicing Kaitiakitanga

This commitment was formalised in April 2023 with the launch of ECCT's new Strategic Plan, where Kaitiakitanga | Environment was established as a key Pou | Pillar guiding our work. Granting under this framework officially commenced in April 2024, marking a significant step forward in our climate action journey.

ECCT is committed to practicing kaitiakitanga—guardianship of the natural environment—to protect and enhance the ecosystems that sustain our communities. Under this Pou, we support initiatives that:

- Address the implications of climate change, including cultural change, leadership, and awareness
- Promote community-led environmental initiatives
- Enable communities to sustainably manage their natural resources





# 2025 Granting Highlights

In our first year of granting under this framework, ECCT awarded over \$1.1 million in funding to 29 organisations across our six regions. These grants supported a diverse range of projects aligned with our environmental goals:



## Biodiversity and Conservation

- Habitat restoration
- Pest control initiatives
- Protection of endangered species, including the Whio (Little Blue Duck)



## Renewable Energy

- Solar panel installations to build community resilience and reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources



## Circular Economy

- Projects promoting waste reduction, reuse, and resource efficiency



## Sustainable Food Systems

- Initiatives supporting local, sustainable food production and community food resilience

## Looking Forward

This first year of climate-focused granting has laid a strong foundation for future impact. ECCT will continue to support innovative, community-led solutions that address climate change, enhance biodiversity, and promote sustainable living. Through our funding framework, we aim to empower communities to become active stewards of their environment—today and for generations to come.



*“To accelerate courageous transformational change, that creates vibrant, more sustainable, and equitable communities.”*





# 2025 Grant Highlights

The following projects reflect our commitment to empowering communities with practical solutions for a changing climate.







## Tairāwhiti Solar Marae Project

Cyclone Gabrielle in 2023 left many rural Tairāwhiti communities without power for weeks, highlighting the urgent need for resilience and reliable energy sources. In response, Trust Tairāwhiti led the Marae Solar Project, a \$2.6 million initiative funded by multiple partners, including ECCT (\$300,000), the Todd Foundation (\$40,000), EECA, Te Puni Kōkiri, Department of Internal Affairs, and the Cyclone Gabrielle Appeal Trust.

The project is equipping 22 marae across the region with solar power systems. As of now, 20 marae are fully operational, with the remaining two undergoing facility upgrades before installation. All Tairāwhiti iwi are represented, including the recent addition of Te Pahou Marae (Rongowhakaata).

This iwi and hapū-led initiative prioritises community engagement and local employment for installation and maintenance. By reducing electricity costs and ensuring reliable power, marae can continue to serve as vital hubs during emergencies—providing essentials like warmth, food, connectivity, and shelter.

Minister for Energy and Climate Change, Simon Watts, visited Tapuihikitia Marae, praising the project as “a great example of a community working with local and central government, funding agencies, and iwi Māori across the East Coast to deliver real benefits.” Installations are expected to be completed by the end of the year, creating a legacy of resilience for Tairāwhiti.





**Kindergartens**

Te Matau-a Māui

**Hunter Park**

Te Puna o Pukekaihou



## Heretaunga Kindergarten Association – Solar Panels Project

In 2024, ECCT granted \$100,000 to the Heretaunga Kindergarten Association to install solar panels across 16 kindergartens in Hawke's Bay. Many of these kindergartens serve communities in low socio-economic areas, where additional support for tamariki is often needed.

The project's impact goes beyond sustainability. By reducing electricity costs, the savings are being redirected into resources that make a real difference for children and families. Outcomes include hiring an early intervention speech and language therapist, providing food and clothing for tamariki who need extra support, and offering 50% more free hours to ease financial pressure on families.

The impact is already clear: October 2025, average power costs dropped to \$45 per kindergarten, compared to \$250 at the same time last year—even after a 10% increase in power prices. Installation across all sites was completed in September 2025, and the benefits continue to grow. This initiative demonstrates how renewable energy can deliver both environmental and social equity outcomes—creating stronger, more resilient communities for the future.

Camberley Kindergarten  
Ellen Stevenson Kindergarten  
Frimley Park Kindergarten  
Frimley Hall  
Harold Mayo Kindergarten  
Havelock North Central Kindergarten  
Hunter Park Kindergarten  
Irongate Kindergarten

Lakeview Kindergarten  
Lucknow Kindergarten  
Mahora Kindergarten  
Mayfair Kindergarten  
Parkvale Kindergarten  
Peterhead Kindergarten  
Raureka Kindergarten  
Te Mata Kindergarten  
Waipawa Kindergarten







## Slash for Cash - Tolaga Bay Inn Charitable Trust

Following Cyclone Gabrielle, woody debris was washed onto beaches, waterways, and farmland across Tairāwhiti and Wairoa, causing severe environmental damage and posing ongoing risks to communities. In response, ECCT granted \$100,000 to support Slash for Cash, an innovative social enterprise project led by Thabiso Blak Mashaba, an international Edmund Hillary Fellow, under the Tolaga Bay Inn Charitable Trust.

The initiative transforms woody debris waste into smokeless charcoal briquettes and organic biochar fertilizer, using a low-emission carbonization process. These products provide sustainable alternatives for cooking and heating, while biochar improves soil health and acts as a long-term carbon sink—capturing up to 50% of carbon that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere.

Beyond environmental benefits, Slash for Cash is creating real social impact. The project has trained 42 local people through in Ruatoria, Ūawa, and Wairoa, equipping them with skills to produce biochar and briquettes at scale. This community-led approach not only addresses waste and erosion but also generates employment opportunities and supports local initiatives.

By turning disaster into opportunity, Slash for Cash exemplifies circular economy principles and mana-enhancing solutions for the East Coast.

Slash for Cash was the winner of the Sustainable Business Network – Transformational Leadership Award 2025. Their judges noted *“Born out of the devastation of Cyclone Gabrielle, Slash for Cash has turned a regional crisis into an inspiring example of community-led innovation. By converting forestry waste into useful products like biochar and bricks, they’re creating jobs, protecting waterways and building local resilience. Their response blends ingenuity with manaakitanga. Slash for Cash is not just community-led but iwi-hapuu led, with the umbrella organisation (Tolaga Bay Inn Charitable Trust) run by Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti, the mana whenua of the Tolaga Bay rohe. It’s a kaupapa Māori, place-based leadership model.”*







## Hawke's Bay Biodiversity Trust

ECCT committed \$330,000 over three years in November 2024 to the Hawke's Bay Biodiversity Trust, an organisation driving a coordinated, community-led effort to restore and enhance indigenous biodiversity across the region. Established in 2018, the Trust acts as a regional hub—connecting people, projects, and partners to deliver on the goals of the Hawke's Bay Biodiversity Strategy 2015–2050.

In partnership with the Hawke's Bay Regional Council, the Trust removes barriers for individuals and groups wanting to take action by providing administrative, financial, and project management support. It fosters a "network of networks," enabling collaboration between community groups, councils, and government agencies.

A portion of ECCT's grant supplements the annual contestable grant pool, alongside funds from HB Regional Council, accelerating grassroots biodiversity initiatives. The additional funds also allow a second round of applications to be considered.

Through this work, the Trust is not only supporting the restoration of ecosystems but also growing public awareness and engagement with biodiversity and sustainability. ECCT's investment is helping to build a thriving, resilient natural environment—one that is healthy, functioning, and collectively cared for by the people of Hawke's Bay.

In its first year, the Environmental Enhancement Contestable Fund has supported 27 successful projects across Hawke's Bay in 2025. These projects were delivered by community groups, iwi/hapū, farmers, schools, and local organisations, each engaging their own networks of whānau and households.

- First 2025 round (April): 17 projects funded, ranging from wetland restoration to predator control initiatives.

- Second 2025 round (October): 15 projects funded, including urban predator control, riparian planting, and bat conservation.

Through these projects, hundreds of households and whānau have been directly involved in biodiversity restoration activities such as planting, trapping, fencing, and monitoring. Indirectly, the benefits extend to thousands of residents across Hawke's Bay, who enjoy healthier ecosystems, improved recreation spaces, and stronger cultural connections to te taiao.





## Hawke's Bay Nature Fund – A Legacy for Biodiversity

A significant development in 2024/25 was the creation of the Hawke's Bay Nature Fund, an initiative designed to restore and protect the region's unique ecosystems. The fund was made possible through an extraordinary \$13.7 million bequest gifted to the Department of Conservation by an individual who dreamed of "recloaking Hawke's Bay in native vegetation and filling the trees with birds". This bequest was in turn gifted on to ECCT to manage in perpetuity.

ECCT has invested this endowment to generate an annual return of approximately \$500,000, which will be distributed to projects delivering long-term sustainability and nature-based solutions. Funding will focus on predator control (70%) and revegetation efforts (30%), supporting biodiversity and climate resilience across the region.

The fund adopts an integrated landscape approach, enabling iwi, community groups, private landowners, and agencies to work collaboratively. To ensure impact and continuity, Hawke's Bay has been divided into priority areas, with funding concentrated on one area for three years before rotating. The first priority area (2025–2028) covers the northern Hawke's Bay region, including the Esk River coastline through to Kaweka Forest Park.

All applications will be reviewed by an independent panel made up of representatives from Community, Iwi, Regional Council and Department of Conservation.

This fund represents a legacy—creating thriving habitats rich in native flora and fauna and delivering nature-based solutions to some of Hawke's Bay's biggest environmental challenges. The inaugural funding round attracted 15 applications, with 6 successful applicants announced in December.

### Hawke's Bay Nature Fund successful applicants:

**Arohiwi Station** – Arohiwi Bush Restoration Project, including fencing, wetland planting, and predator control network installation.

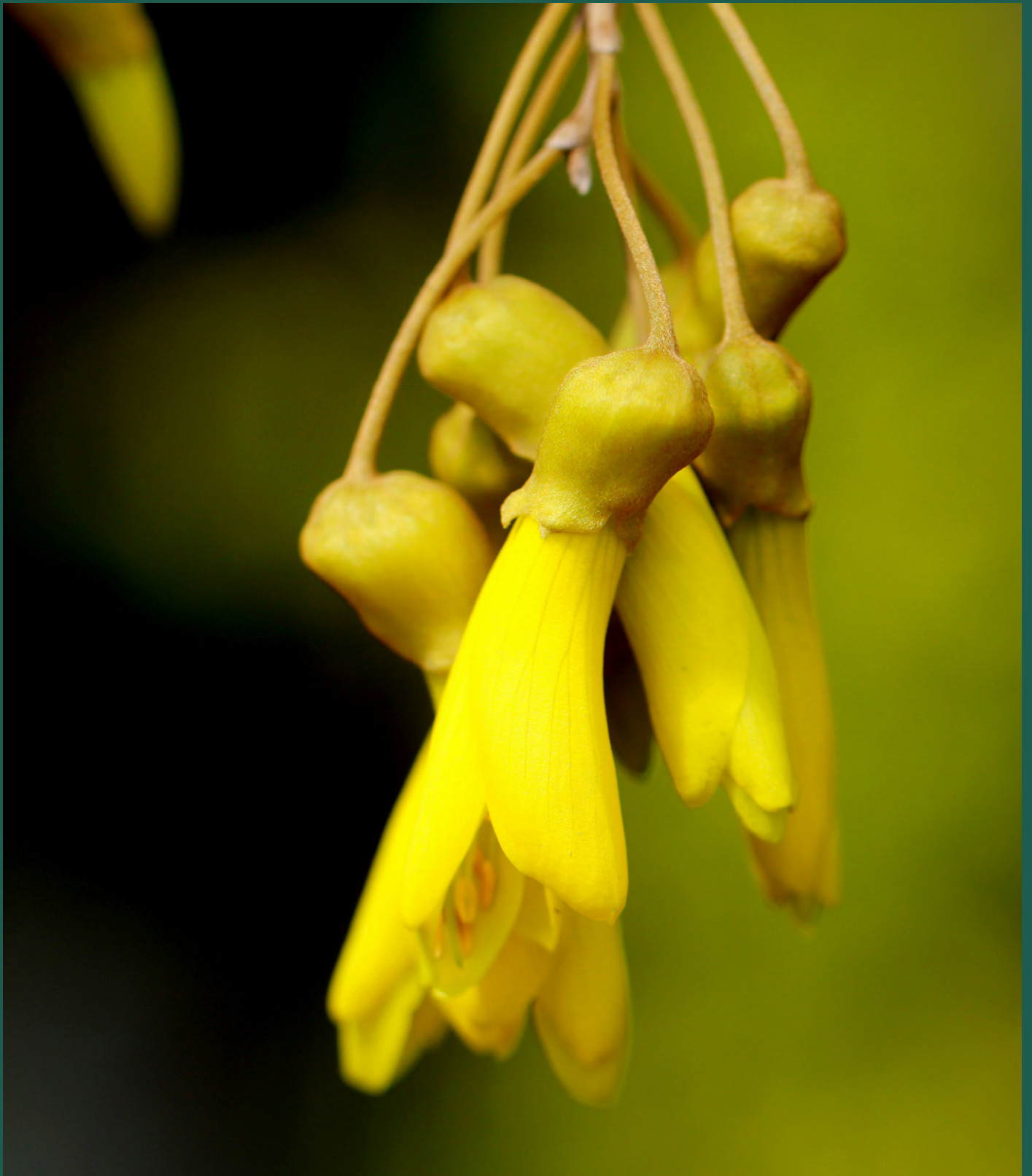
**Guardians of Tutira and Districts Inc** – Restoration and protection of biodiversity at Guthrie Smith Wetlands.

**Maungaharuru-Tangitū Charitable Trust** – Predator control around Opouahi Scenic Reserve and regionally significant wetlands.

**Hawke's Bay Biodiversity Trust** – Installation of deer fencing to restore the Rough Block to native bush by excluding pests.

**Department of Conservation** – Predator control and fencing to protect the nationally endangered *Powelliphanta maungaharuru*, a rare land snail endemic to the Maungaharuru Range.

**Toronui Station Partnership** – Trapping and baiting programme to protect an important bush remnant.





# Eastern & Central Community Trust

207 Nelson Street South, Hastings 4122  
PO Box 1058, Hastings 4156

Free Phone: 0800 878 720 Ph: 06 878 7200  
Email: [info@ecct.org.nz](mailto:info@ecct.org.nz)

[www.ecct.org.nz](http://www.ecct.org.nz)

