

# Waste Free Wanda brings simple swaps to QLDC schools and communities

With support from the Queenstown Lakes District Council Waste Minimisation Community Fund (WMCF), a special one-woman musical has inspired the next generation of environmental heroes across the district.

The Waste Free Wanda show, created by environmental ambassador and performing artist Anna van Riel, follows Wanda, a school kid on a mission to save her local river from pollution. Through catchy songs, interactive dance and plenty of fun, Wanda shows children simple ways they can reduce waste and protect their local environment.

The show was developed to give young people practical tools to tackle waste and plastic pollution, while helping them feel empowered to make a difference at home, at school and in their communities. Through music and storytelling, Waste Free Wanda turned environmental issues into something positive and achievable, giving tamariki practical actions rather than leaving them feeling overwhelmed by the scale of environmental challenges.



The show also connected with the wider Enviroschools and waste education kaupapa, supporting primary schools to explore waste reduction, water and wildlife conservation, and their relationship with the environment.

Thanks to funding from QLDC's WMCF, fourteen primary schools in Queenstown, Arrowtown, Wānaka, Makarora and Glenorchy hosted the show, adding to the more than 11,000 students and teachers across Aotearoa who have now experienced Waste Free Wanda. Feedback from schools shows that many of the show's messages have been taken home and put into practice, with several schools also adopting new waste-reduction initiatives following the performances.

"Waste Free Wanda makes each child a hero," says Anna. "It gives them a voice and the words to help protect Papatūānuku."

By combining music, storytelling and practical action, Waste Free Wanda helped tamariki see that small changes really can make a difference - and that everyone has a part to play in creating a cleaner, more sustainable future for our communities.

