

Becoming a carbon neutral community

Ngaio Climate Crew

Climate action is good for us. It can reduce air pollution, increase physical activity, and introduce healthier ways to eat. Ngaio Climate Crew makes it easier for people living in Ngaio and Crofton Downs to reduce their carbon footprint and improve their wellbeing.

The Ngaio Climate Crew wants to show that everyone can take action to reduce carbon emissions and make their neighbourhood a great place to live. The group is part of the Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents Association, and its members are on a mission to supercharge their suburbs' sustainability efforts.

Project leader Ian Turk hopes Ngaio Climate Crew will have a positive impact on people's sense of belonging and connectedness along the way.

"It's not just a place where house is. It's about knowing people, sharing our interests, being part of a bigger community." *- Ian Turk, Ngaio Climate Crew*

Ngaio and Crofton Downs are home to many people with ideas for making small changes together for big impact. A monthly community recycling station collects recyclable items that can't go in curb side recycling, like plastic screw top lids, and food and drink cartons. A repair cafe helps people fix things instead of throwing them out. Residents bike to work together instead of driving. People are cleaning up local streams, restoring native bush, learning about plant-based cooking and composting their food scraps. Ngaio Climate Crew team member Scarlett Tully says connecting people with shared climate action interests is a big part of the group's work.

The Climate Crew is run by local people who want to make it easy for residents to do right by the planet. Two part-time staff keep things ticking, supported by a small group of volunteers and a growing community of people committed to making changes that will help Ngaio and Crofton Downs become the first carbon neutral suburb in New Zealand.

In October 2024, funding through the Climate and Sustainability Fund supported the group to engage and mobilise residents toward this goal. The funding supports household engagement, measuring emissions, and identifying barriers to change - laying the groundwork for a whole-of-community approach to climate action.

When they join the carbon neutral kaupapa, residents sign up to FutureFit - a carbon footprint calculator that lets them see their progress as they reduce emissions in their daily life and household. So far, 40 households have committed to reducing their emissions through FutureFit, helping to build a measurable picture of community-wide impact. People are making big and small changes to the ways they get around, power their homes, spend their money and plan their meals. Ngaio Climate Crew uses FutureFit to measure the positive difference being made by the community at large.

The group's flexible communication approach has helped them grow rapidly. As well as online channels like their website and social media pages, they help people sign up in person. Members regularly attend recycling events and the repair cafe to answer questions and offer guidance, noting that residents have different preferences when learning about actions they can take for the climate.



As they grow and learn, Ngaio Climate Crew is documenting their journey for a ‘playbook’ to help other communities reduce emissions and manage the impacts of climate change. Scarlett Tully imagines this project becoming an example for individuals and groups in Pōneke | Wellington and beyond.

The Climate Crew's expanding kete of tools includes a community climate action map and events like the Open Streets Community Picnic - designed to build visibility, connection and momentum around local climate action. The map shows the many different initiatives happening locally so people can join the growing movement and get to know their neighbours in the process.

Ngaio Climate Crew encourages people to take an active interest in making sure their suburbs are healthy and resilient for future generations. They hope their efforts will make it easier for residents to care for the people and places that matter to them. This could mean growing their own food, composting, using clean renewable energy, enjoying healthy streams, and using public transport or active transport like walking or cycling.

Scarlett Tully says each person’s actions make a difference. She urges people to think about small ways they can reduce their impact on the environment.

> “We’re here for our community, but the impact of our project could be a lot larger.” *-Scarlett Tully – Ngaio Climate Crew*

> “If everyone is doing imperfect climate action, the impact that can have is incredible – way, way more than if one or two people eat a completely plant-based diet and walk or bike everywhere.” *-Scarlett Tully – Ngaio Climate Crew*



Changing how you eat and get around are two ways to take action for the climate. To reduce your carbon footprint, eat more plant-based meals and choose active transport like biking or walking when you can.

To learn more or join Ngaio Climate Crew, visit **ngaio.org.nz**